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# **CAREER AS A CALLING: THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Doctoral Thesis  
Summary**

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## INTRODUCTION

Calling appears to have the role of a constant in human experience, one that is profoundly related to one's self, identity, and well-being. Individuals look for calling to define their future, as well as to offer their life predictability and control. In today's society, ruled by identity crises and dynamics of an unprecedented career, the search for calling acquires new valence. Moreover, the fourth industrial revolution enforces increased attention directed towards personal and professional experiences that offer meaning and individual purpose, linking personal values, spiritual beliefs and social and cultural contexts. The informational overload comes along with unpredictability, insecurities, and questions one's identity, leading the individual to question the purpose of his/her actions, beliefs about one's self, the world, and life itself. In this context, the process of defining calling, identifying meaningful work as an important dimension of identity becomes a stability and authenticity factor, which can build a crucial anchor for upcoming digital generations exposed to continuous challenges.

The necessity of meaning to humankind is a reality for each one of us, regardless of age, cultural background, educational level, social status etc. Thus, the mental process of building meaning and significance in career, of discovering a calling which reflects the self with its beliefs and values and connects these dimensions with the social environment, brings a solid perspective in what concerns understanding the relationship between one and their professional future. Furthermore, this process also encourages the individual to explore the limits of present, strained by anxieties and insecurities, opening possibilities of identifying significance in the personal career, which allow opening that transcend the self and contribute to personal development and other's well-being. (Lysova, Dik, Duffy, Khapova & Arthur, 2019).

A fairly strong argument for studying career as a calling is the ever-so-growing importance that the individual assigns his or her career so that the attention shifts from the organization to the personal needs for development and providing work meaning. All of the above result in a decreased importance of work itself and increased relevance of personal experience and self-knowledge. Practically, given the fact that nowadays the contemporary man spends significantly more of his time involved in professional activities, it is likely that he defines himself through his work, which accordingly becomes a major reference point to himself. (Duffy, Blustein, Diemer & Autin, 2016). To that end, a study published 10 years ago, emphasized the fact that approximately 85% of Generation Y representatives (born between 1981-1996) accord much higher importance to the social value of their work, their relationship with others, mentoring and personal growth, than to financial revenue (Hewlett, Sherbin & Sumberg, 2009). Thereby, the subject of purpose and meaning became more frequent in debating work and career (Dik, Zinta, Byrne & Steger, 2013).

Having said that the majority of people spend one-third of their time involved in professional activities, the topic of calling has been a source of inspiration over time, not only in research but also in practice, idealism and positive orientation (Lysova, Dik, Duffy, Khapova & Arthur, 2019). People are often wondering with respect to their true designation, which determines researchers to further invest resources in understanding the nature of calling, its antecedents and effects, and practitioners are preoccupied with guiding their clients towards the discovery or the construction of their own calling. Per se, the importance of perceptions regarding the role of professional experiences in one's existence is indisputable. What's more, conceptualizing career as calling provides a suitable framework for us to construct a life full of meaning and purpose, at an individual as well as social level (Wang & Dai, 2017). Hence, given the complexity of the concept, the approach perspectives and their implications, the aim of the present research is to contribute to the advancement of science knowledge concerning psychological factors associated with calling, and also its utility in psychological, educational, vocational and organizational practice.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **WORK AND CAREER IN THE 21st CENTURY**

#### **1.1 New careers- unpredictability and flexibility**

At the beginning of the 21st century, a new social commitment to work brings into discussion new challenges and questions for researchers who investigate work and career. The characteristics of work and careers which are less and less defined and predictable, with transitions becoming increasingly frequent and difficult, requires orientation towards developing new abilities and skills, different than those needed in the previous century (Cohen-Scali et al., 2018, Ahrtung & Vess, 2016). Job insecurity, amidst the outburst of the informational era, it is flexibility rather than stability the one that provides new and various opportunities (Savickas, 2009). These new characteristics of today's society bring up the idea according to which career belongs to the individual, and not to the organization (Duarte, 2004, Chakraborty & Wang, 2015).

In other words, the characteristics of today's society talk about the perspective of dynamic, protean, unpredictable and multidirectional careers. We live in an overly complex environment in which people have multiple identities (Ibarra, 2003), multiple commitments (Cohen, 2003), a rich variety of obligations (Burke, Greenglass & Schwarzer, 1993) and an increased level of stress and anxiety (Cooper, Dewe & O'Driscoll, 2002). Organizations go through a fast process of change and become global and more competitive (Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick & Kerr, 1995, Bartlett and Ghoshal, 1989, DeVos and Cambré, 2017)

More and more psychologists, sociologists and organizational theory specialists suggest that changes in the nature of the work and organizations announce the end of the traditional careers. Instead, other concepts appeared such as protean career, career without boundaries, career based on performance and new career. Most of these models support that individuals should improvise, adapt and build career inside as well as outside the organization (Straub, Vinkenburg & Kleef, 2019). These new freshly acquired definitions of the concept of career posit the fact that more than ever, career is about the individual and the individual's need to accomplish and gain subjective success. To that end, we are talking about self-determined career, driven by personal values, in the detriment of organizational rewards, a career that serves the person, the family, and the personal purpose of life, the leading success criteria being psychological success (Briscoe, Hall and DeMuth, 2005, Updike & Jürgen, 2017). This career-oriented work, dynamic, protean and in a never-ending process of redefinition, it's defining for the individual who's interested in learning and continuous growth, open to new opportunities, and prone to reach their potential (Hall & Mirvis, 1996 Uy, Chan, LooSam, Ho & Chernyshenkod, 2015)

#### **1.2 The tripartite model of guidelines in work – the path from the organization to the individual**

As we've discussed in the previous section, the concepts supporting the theories on career developed in the 20th century need reformulating such as to match the postmodern economy. Classical approaches are based on assumptions of generalization and consistency. Including new concepts such as career identity, career planning, career development, are conceptualized as constant sequences and stages- which is insufficient for conceptualizing career in the 21st century (Barley, Bechky & Milliken 2017).

Moreover, instead of conceptualizing career in stages, new theories (Katane, Irena & Korna-Opincane, 2019) should approach a career in an individualized way (Savickas et al., 2019)

In what concerns orientation regarding work, according to the contents of psychology and sociology, professional activity can be experienced by the individual in three distinct manners: job, career, calling (Baumaister, 1991). These categories represent different orientations about work, which guide related purposes, include beliefs about the part that work plays in everyday life and are reflected in emotions and behaviors related to professional activity (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997, Wrzesniewski, 2003). Theorists of the tripartite model of orientation regarding work: job, career, calling (Baumaister, 1991; Bellah et al., 1985; Schwartz. 1986, 1994; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997) define these behaviors as further shown:

- “Job” implies orientation towards financial and material benefits that enable spending free time outside the work environment
- “Career” is centred on rewards such as organizational advancement, prestige, status, power etc.
- “Calling” refers to the expression of the self in the professional life framework (Bellah et al. 1985; Dik & Duffy, 2009; Hall & Chandler, 2005; Novak, 1996)

An approach that completes the perspective mentioned previously is the one that belongs to Pratt and Ashforth (2003). They propose the same three major guidelines regarding work, but divide calling into three categories: craftsmanship, service orientation, and kinship. This approach has its roots in the research made by Bellah and others (1985).

In conclusion, the three guidelines regarding work and professional activity, namely work seen as a job, career or calling, despite being fundamentally different, they are not completely separated from one another. These guidelines offer various explanations concerning the motivation that triggers individuals to get a job, the meaning and significance that they provide to it, and all this brings into discussion the possibility of the three guidelines to coexist.

### **1.3 Career development- contemporary theories and perspectives**

The literature that addresses career development is extensive, incorporating a series of perspectives: from the person-environment fit (Holland, 1997), development path (Super, 1980), self-efficacy and expectations (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994), the circumscription, the compromise (Gottfredson, 2005) and the career construction (Savickas, 2005). A central topic, common to all these models would be the approach of personal characteristics which model career-based decisions, thereby trying to incorporate new career development directions.

In what follows, two major approaches regarding career will be presented, that cover up our entire research approach from a theoretical point of view.

#### **1.3.1. The theory of career construction (Savikas, 2005)**

The theory of career construction (Savickas, 2005) is currently one of the most complex and efficient theories that explain the evolution of career, attempting and responding the post-industrial society's challenges to offer relevant vocational directions in a world more dynamic and more fragmented than ever. As such, construction theory includes constructs and models from major vocational theories of the 20th century, involving them in an approach that focuses on the capacity of an individual to incorporate career in personal identity and to make permanent decisions that offer meaning and significance.

An important assumption of the Theory of career construction implies that one's career is a reflection of the vocational behavior and the direction that it takes, which focuses on current events as the present occupation (objective career) and on the meaning of this occupation (subjective career). Per se, career expresses a story that entails a meaning and a significance,



both of which explain in a coherent manner the continuity and change of the vocational self over time (McAdams, 1993; Niles & Bowlsbey, 2016).

The theory of career constructions explains vocational behavior throughout life. From the perspective of the psychology of individual differences, the theory examines vocational personality and vocational interests of people. From a developmental psychology point of view, this theory examines the processes of social adjustment and the way in which individuals cope with vocational development tasks, occupational transits and traumas at the workplace. From the narrative psychology perspective, the theory examines the dynamic of meanings that the individual attaches to his or her work. Simultaneously, this theory comes from the idea that individuals build their careers by assigning meaning to their vocational behaviour. This way, the theory assumes interpretative and interpersonal processes through which individuals impose direction and meaning to their career. Within this theory, *life themes* represent the component that centres in the reason and motivation of vocational behaviour. *Life themes* are the ones being used to make meaningful decisions and to adapt to different roles the job requires. The second important component of the theory is the *vocational personality*. This refers to the abilities, needs, values and interests related to one's career. Lastly, the third component of the theory of career construction is *adaptability*. Life themes guide the expression of personality through work, meanwhile this process is handled by career adaptability. Adaptability is directed by five vocational behaviours: orienting, exploring, stability, management, disengagement (Savickas & Walsh, 1996).

### **1.3.2. Social cognitive theory of career (TSCC Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994; Hackett & Betz, 1981; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994 apud Lent et al., 2000)**

The social cognitive theory of career is grounded by the socio-cognitive theory (Bandura, 197, 1986, 1997). TSCC starts from the assumption that any human behaviour is a function of dynamic interaction between the beliefs system, the person's characteristics, and the characteristics of the environment of living. The lead role in this person-environment negotiation is played by one's beliefs regarding one's self, more specifically, self-efficacy and life expectations.

Further on, we will present the main constructs of the theory, which circumscribe career studies. First of all, the theory posits the importance of self-efficacy beliefs in career and beliefs related to a person's capacity of successfully performing certain actions with the purpose of achieving set goals. The second construct refers to life expectations, namely the expectations that one develops with regard to the results of one's actions. These expectations can develop as an effect of direct experience or of vicarious learning (Bandura et al., 2001). The relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and those regarding results is a positive one. Therefore, people have positive expectations in the fields in which they feel the most effective (Bandura et al., 2001). TSCC also has applications in the field of career counseling.

### **1.4 Meaningfulness- key component of new approaches on career**

From the existing literature that we have examined so far, it can be concluded that the dynamic of the contemporary world requires a new conceptualization of career, of the way human beings define their career, its structure and its implications in personal life. Given the fact that the individual, more than the organizations in which he activates, is responsible for his or her own career directions – the part personal values play has become of the utmost importance in guiding career (Wrzesniewski & Tosti, 2006). Therefore, we can affirm a transition from career, towards calling, through the inclusion of purpose and personal meaning, which the individual rediscovers. In the following paragraphs we will present this transition based on the literature dealing with this phenomenon.

Meaning in the professional field refers to a subjective meaning which people assign to their professional activity (Pratt & Ashforth, 1997). More specific, meaning is an instrument used by a person to impose consistency on their existence (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). While the

shape of these aspects satisfies the need for consistency differs, the basic tendency that remains is the need to identify a way of interpreting the more profound meaning or significance of what every human accomplishes in their professional activity.

The most recent three main theoretical approaches concerning work, meaning, and significance which individuals find are the bidimensional model of Rossosi et al. (2010), the model of work as meaning of Steger and Dik (2010), the model of meaning, Park (2012). None of the above hasn't been directly tested, but each of them provides a starting point for assimilating research on meaningful work into other areas of study, including those which have already developed useful applications.

Thus, according to the existing literature, purpose and significance can be cultivated in the workplace and through vocation development. The meaning of calling is present when the person is feeling determined to follow a certain career which aligns with a broader sense of a life purpose and which includes expression of prosocial values (Dik & Duffy, 2009)

In what follows, we will go through the conceptualisation of calling as a construct as it is described in the scientific literature, along with other possible elements that support the development of this concept. Up until this point, we have presented transition from job (workplace) to career, and subsequently, the emergent calling through the need of meaning and significance, as well as a few approaches that can determine the applicability of the construct.

## CHAPTER 2

### CALLING- conceptualization and impact in developing a career

#### 2.1. Conceptualization of calling in the scientific literature

The term „calling”/ vocation has deep religious origins, being a product of Christian theology. Emphasis on the importance of calling as a concept is largely due to changes in the nature of work. People spend more time at work and change jobs more frequently than in the past (Sennett, 2005).

In attempting to answer the question *What exactly is calling?* we can encounter certain difficulties, as defining this concept has always been problematic. According to the allegations of Berg and others (2010), calling has been associated from a historical point of view to the Lutheran idea of „calling”. A „calling” is traditionally defined as an attraction towards activities that are meaningful to the individual- socially, morally and personally (Baumeister, 1991).

In 1996, Novak identifies four particular attributes of calling: calling of every person is unique, it implies certain abilities, openness to discover the calling, and passion for the work that the personal calling entails. Furthermore, calling provides energy, vitality and implies effort and reflection, persistence and orientation towards career-developing activities.

Subsequently, Wrzesniewski and others (1997) have conducted a series of studies regarding the beliefs which presumably have an implication in the construction of the meaning of work and career. They highlighted three investigational routes: - (1) implication in work and the centrality of work, (2) orientation towards work and (3) calling. Firstly, implication and centrality refer to investigating the extent to which career and work play a lead part in the individual's life (Kanungo, 1982). Research dealing with work orientation also examine the way in which individuals' beliefs about work and career influence the meaning they assign to it (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler & Tipton, 1985; Wrzesniewski et al, 1997). However,

these studies target general beliefs about career and work, not only about the current situation of the two.

Calling refers to expressing the self in the framework of professional life (Bellah et al., 1985; Dik & Duffy, 2009; Hall & Chandler, 2005; Novak, 1996). In a secular sense, calling is defined as a call with meaning towards activities that are morally, socially and personally significant (Wrzesniewski, Dekas, & Rosso, 2009). Consequently, in the contemporary times, calling has a root in its secular definition, being a way to connect with the profound inner self, not just as a superficial relationship (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009; Levoy, 1997; Novak, 1996). Research suggests that when work offers individuals the opportunity to value their calling, they tend to view their work as more meaningful because they live it with personal relevance and have a major impact on the outside (Berg, Grant, & Johnson, 2010; Dobrow, 2004).

Forwards, the modern perspective- accentuates the existence of intrinsic motivation of self-achievement or joy in the moment of choosing a career. Dobrow, Tosti-Khars, Hall & Chandler are the most representative researchers in this perspective. Dobrow & Tosti-Khars define calling in the terms of “*mental structure, subjective and intrinsic, a powerful individual experience full of meaning which determines individuals to invest a lot of energy into their profession, making it unimaginable for them to even consider working in a field of another type*”(p. 1003). Hall and Chandler (2005) define calling as “*one’s intention to work as a primary purpose in one’s life*” (p. 160). This modern perspective enlightens the importance intrinsic motivation when choosing a career, giving lower attention to the social value of work and other external variables. What the authors suggest is that having a calling is an individual perception, a subjective experience. Likewise, they propose a secular view of calling, where (1) the source of calling comes from within the individual; (2) calling serves the individual and/or the community; (3) calling is defined as a mean for introspection, reflection, meditation, and/or affiliated activities; and (4) the meaning of calling is achieving the goal leading to personal fulfilment. In addition, Dobrow and Tosti-Khalsa (2011) define this construct as a passion offering meaning to human existence. Dobrow (2014) distinguishes seven components of calling: compassion, identification, the experience of meaning, urgency to accomplish work, longevity, conscientiousness and field specific self-esteem.

In contrast to the modern perspective, the neoclassical perspective on calling focuses not only on the voice within the individual but also on individual external choices, consistent with society’s needs. This perspective accentuates the relevance of personal values and the importance of satisfaction and compliance with society’s needs. The main researchers who studied this perspective, Dik, Duffy, Bunderson and Thomson, define in their research (ex. Bunderson & Thompson, 2009), calling as a “*mission, detached from the self, with the aim of reflecting or obtaining a feeling of importance regarding the way in which a certain role in life can be approached and other values that target a common goal*” (p. 427, Duffy, Dik & Steger, 2010). Another group of researchers that adopted the same perspective (Elangovan, Pinder & McLean, 2010) define the concept as “*a series of actions with a pro-social tendency, united mainly in the hierarchy of goals the individual has for what he wishes to do, should do, and eventually does.*” (Wang & Dai, 2017, p.95)

A popular perspective in the literature is that belonging to Dik and Duffy (2009). They conceptualize calling as a transcendent vocation experienced as being foreign to the self, for coming close to a part of life in such a manner that is oriented towards drifting a meaning and which entails values targeting others and goals as primary sources of motivation. The manner of conceptualizing calling according to both authors covers two overlapping aspects of the construct: the search and presence of calling. Each of the two aspects implies three dimensions (Dik & Duffy, 2009).

1. A first dimension, according to the authors, would be the *transcendent calling*, experienced as foreign to the self. It helps the individual cope with the challenges of his career and positively correlates with self-efficacy in decision-making in career and at the workplace (Constantine et al., 2006; Duffy & Blustein, 2005; Duffy & Lent, 2008; Robert, Young, & Kelly, 2006).
2. The second dimension refers to the *acquisition of a particular role in life*, also leaning towards obtaining the meaning of one's existence. This dimension positively correlates with job satisfaction, career decision, adaptability and low levels of stress (Duffy & Blustein, 2005).
3. Their dimension is the pro-social one, according to which *the primary source of motivation is represented by the values and goals oriented towards others*. To help others is a protecting factor against burnout, that predicts high levels of cooperation, volunteering, satisfaction, performance (Dik & Duffy, 2009). In conformity with the two authors, calling is a transcultural construct that implies an evaluation process of the goal and meaning of work and it is not immediately discovered. Moreover, this definition implies that every person has the potential of finding a calling and that can occur in relation to any job or profession (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997).

Among the previously mentioned perspectives, we find there are significant differences. The classical perspective assigns the meaning of calling strictly to divinity, whereas the modern perspective considers meaning of calling coming from the individual's self. The neoclassical perspective argues that the meaning of calling includes not only the individual but the environment, which indicates that the function of work is to determine the individual to value himself while contributing to overall well-being of the community.

Despite the fact that the presented theories established connotations of calling in consistency with the research these rely on, there is a general lack of consensus on what concerns the general definition of the construct. In future research directions, in order to understand the true value of the concept and its impact on individuals and organizations, the connotation of calling should be verified regarding the various characteristics and differences in the cultural backgrounds of participants. And research concerning the origin of calling be relocated, not only semantically, but in the classical and Christian culture of social thinking.

## 2.2 Measuring instruments of calling

In agreement with theories of calling, a series of instruments have developed in the attempt of measuring the construct.

In what follows we will meticulously describe the main measuring instruments present in the existing literature:

Essentially, The Work-Life Questionnaire; WLQ; Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin & Schwartz, 1997), has been developed in one of the first-ever conducted empirical studies regarding calling. Authors defined calling as an activity usually seen as having social worth, involving activities that could but aren't necessarily pleasant.

To continue, Engagement in Meaningful Work Scale (Treadgold, 1999), registers intrinsic motivation for the workplace as being the most important aspect of calling, and the Neoclassical Calling Questionnaire (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009) is another unidimensional instrument for calling which consists of six items that cover the experience of passion, destiny and person-environment fit.

Yet another instrument, Calling Scale; CS (Dobrovo & Tosti-Kharas, 2011)- has defined calling as a searing passion, meaningful, which people experience in a certain domain.

The Brief Calling Scale, BCS (Dik, Eldridge, Steger & Duffy, 2012), evaluates both individual search for calling as well as the presence of calling.

The Calling and Vocation Questionnaire, CVQ (Dik et al., 2012) is a multidimensional measuring instrument consisting of 24 items and divided into six subscales which form the scores (CVQ-Presence and CVQ-Search). Calling has been conceptualized in compliance with the definition offered by Dik and Duffy (2009).

Regarding the concept of living calling, this can be measured with the Living Calling Scale (Duffy, Bott, Allan, Torrey and Dik, 2012).

Similar to the last two presented instruments, the Multidimensional Calling Measure; MCM (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012) conceptualized calling as a career we strongly identify with and which contributes to our life's meaning.

As far as that goes, instruments that measure calling and are addressed to a certain part of psychological development, Praskova, Creed and Hood (2014) elaborated the Career Calling in Emerging Adults, CCEA. The questionnaire consists of three subscales: orientation towards others, personal meaning, proactive involvement.

To conclude, theoretical and methodological perspectives on the issue of calling are diverse. Particularly, researchers have the tendency to investigate singular factors or processes that play a part in career meaningfulness, more than to develop a comprehensive approach. A few instruments that turn out to show fairly good psychometric proprieties of calling have been developed, nonetheless, they still reflect the diversity of the definitions and conceptualizations of calling that they rely on. Therefore, having to choose from one of the instruments is a matter of assuming one conceptualization, keeping in mind the characteristics of the population subjected to study, the culture, field of work, expectations of the ongoing study etc.

### **2.3 Predictors and results of calling**

In what follows, we will briefly present *the main correlates of calling, their typologies, and future research directions opened by the existing empirical studies*. We will particularly insist on the categories that are, in one way or another, related to the studies of this thesis. In this chapter we are attempting to categorize variables in terms of predictors and results of calling, despite that conceptually, a series of difficulties exist regarding where they stand on the construct we investigate, given the fact that a considerable amount of studies entail transversal, correlational, non-experimental and even qualitative methodologies. Besides, in the preamble of each study, we will deal extensively with the relationship that ever construct has with calling.

#### **Predictors**

Concerning predictors or antecedents of calling, studies are notably fewer as opposed to those which investigate results or effects of calling. Nevertheless, relatively new studies *consider calling a result of specific attitudes about work*. For instance, a couple of recent studies had concluded that individuals are prone to the perception of calling when being satisfied with their job (Duffy et al., 2014), when they feel attachment towards the field of their career (Dobrow, 2013) or when they experience or search for meaning in their work (Duffy et al., 2011 c; 2014a,b). Other lines of research argue that *the occurrence of calling is more favourable for individuals with stronger motivation* (Peterson et al., 2009) and with *high vocational clarity* (Duffy et al., 2014b). In addition to other mentioned antecedents of calling, researchers suggest that this presumably is the result of embracing certain strengths along career evolution (Harzer & Ruch, 2012). Likewise, the perception of the fact that today, the individual is without constraint when choosing a career, constitutes a predictor of calling (Duffy et al., 2016a). Finally, vocational development seems to be a predictor of calling among doctors (Duffy et al., 2011c), along with religiousness (Curlin et al., 2007).

## Results

After the analysis of the existing literature, more constructs were identified to be placed in different studies as predicted by the presence and/or expression of calling. The most frequent conclusions met associate calling with the following results: efficient choices in career, flexibility in career, well-being, prosocial behaviour, commitment in work, professional success carieră (Pérez-López, José, González-López & Rodríguez, 2019, Akkermans & Tims, 2016). Calling is also positively related to the attachment of an individual towards the organization he or she belongs to (Cardador et al., 2011), towards their occupation (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009) and towards their work goal and life (Praskova et al. 2014, Steger & Dik 2009). Numerous studies indicate the fact that individuals with high level of calling are less prone to withdrawal attitudes, as well as burnout (Yoon et al., 2017) and are more resilient (Chen , 2018). Moreover, calling leads to increased psychological adaptation (Stager et al., 2010), to more efficient personal development, associating simultaneously with positive perceptions on the chosen career and on life, with a general state of psychological well-being (Conway et al., 2015). Referring the results of behaviors linked to the presence of calling, Xie and other (2017) have demonstrated the existence of a *connection between prosocial behaviour and calling*. Theoreticians have demonstrated, for instance, that *people who experience calling report subjective and objective success in their careers* (Chen et al., 2018), more job opportunities (Lysova et al., 2018) and increased professional competence (Guo et al., 2014). An important category of attitudinal effects of calling refers to the implications of calling in developing adaptability in career (in conformity with the conceptualization from the Theory of Career Construction- Savickas, 2002).

### 2.4 Characteristics among the populations among which calling has been investigated

Up until now, the majority of the studies regarding calling have been conducted on samples of populations from North America, which meanwhile the unfolding research, they either had a job or were enrolled in university courses as students. There are a few exceptions, Torrey and Duffy (2012) studied how calling and life satisfaction are related for unemployed adults, and other researchers (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012; Hirschi, 2011, 2012; Hirschi & Hermann, 2012, 2013), studied calling in German students and employed adults. Likewise, studies on fairly large samples of American students of employed adults did not emphasize any significant differences in the experience of calling on racial groups (Duffy & Austin, 2013; Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010). In other words, the research up until now has focused on investigating calling and its correlates in Western Europe and the USA where the culture is different from the one in Romania, post-communist country currently in transition. After the fall of the communist regime, Romania was marked not only by the state of permanent economic instability is experienced, but also by the increase in job opportunities. Unemployment, which by that time was considered offensive because the state ensured jobs for everyone, has become a „social disease” (Broadman, 2004).

### 2.5 Considerations on career and the importance of studying calling and vocation in Romania

Romania is a country that only recently, with the fall of communism, has been in a transition from collectivist tendencies (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010), towards more and more western habits (eg. Individualist attitude), (Fülöp & Ross, 2005, apud Negru-Subtirica, Pop & Crocetti., 2017). At the same time, in Romania the emphasis is strongly placed on education, but very little on vocational guidance or calling in general. Education is considered to be the necessary ingredient for both personal and professional success (Karaś, Ciecuch, Negru & Crocetti, 2015; Negru, 2012). However, this idea is supported by the fact that parents are investing significantly in the education of their children, maintaining a bond of financial support and guidance until late in their youth (Negru-Subtirica & Damian, 2017; Negru-Subtirica et al., 2017). The current context is therefore characterized by a *focus on educational training*, which will prepare young generations for further education (eg faculty), rather than

for preparing for the labour market (Damian, Negru-Subtirica, Pop & Baban, 2016; Pop, Negru & Opre, 2015; apud. Negru-Subtirica et al., 2017). Moreover, with this post-communist transition, vocational training is viewed negatively as a final alternative for those who fail to have higher education.

Also, the transition of young people from the education system to the labour market is strongly influenced by the rapid changes in the social and economic context in Romania, contributing to a lack of clarity and preparation for this transition.

Therefore, we consider that studying vocation in the Romanian context can provide valuable information about the way in which currently active people in the labour market or those who will be, conceptualize and internalize their vocational roles.

## **2.6 From challenges to new perspectives- open questions and directions for future research resulting from the analysis of the scientific literature**

The theories, models and empirical results presented in this chapter show that contemporary research on vocation tries to assert itself within applied psychology literature, the progress being somewhat slowed by:

- a. lack of conceptual clarity
- b. the challenges regarding the generalization of the construct;
- c. lack of clear directions for highlighting the impact of calling in research and practice.

### **The challenge of defining the construct- from competition to conceptual integration**

First, the conceptual challenge is certainly an important one for researchers interested in the particular field of vocation. As it could be seen, at the beginning of this paper we reviewed all the definitions and conceptualizations of the calling present in the literature, concluding with Clinton et al. (2017, p. 29) that "the articles published in the existing literature on calling reveal little consensus on how the concept can be defined." In short, research in this field has failed to provide a clear definition of calling, which complicates efforts to compare results.

### **The relevance of generalizing calling as a construct**

Secondly, an important challenge present in the literature investigating calling concerns the extent to which it is relevant, regardless of the field and the culture from which the participants come. The question remains whether calling has the same resonance in non-Western societies, as well as in those dominated by different religions. Also, the question of relevance in the case of the less privileged populations from the socio-economic point of view is raised.

### **The applicative relevance of studying calling**

Third, future research is needed to establish the practical implications and effects of career perception as a calling. To date, most empirical studies on work as a calling focus on attitudinal outcomes such as satisfaction, dedication, significance, and intentions to make a career change, with new studies being needed to investigate other measurable or behavioral effects of performance.

### **Open questions on calling in the literature**

The analysis carried out in the theoretical foundation section of the paper, reveals a series of challenges and limits that need attention from the researchers in the field of vocation. We present below the most discussed aspects from this point of view:

First, the scientific literature on calling indicates a high variety of possible conceptualizations and measuring instruments of this construct.

Second, the literature on calling highlights a variety of correlates, but their positioning as a predictor or outcome of calling is still debatable. Therefore, new studies are needed to provide conclusive results on the background and effects of calling.

Third, given the differences in approach and conceptualization of calling, it remains a challenge for researchers to define and characterize calling from a point of view of the components differentiated by groups of individuals, taking into account the specific characteristics of the sample.

Fourth, practical applications (such as counseling, mentoring, or *coaching*) that include vocational identification techniques, as well as recommendations derived from vocational research, are limited. In the following, we will present some directions by which the present paper tries to answer some of the limits mentioned in the literature that investigates calling.

## CHAPTER 3 GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE THESIS

### 3.1. The objectives of the thesis

**The general objective of the thesis was to contribute to the advancement of the scientific knowledge regarding the psychological factors associated with calling, but also regarding its usefulness in the psychoeducational, vocational and organisational practice.**

From the general objective, I derived the following specific objectives, presented below:

Therefore, the first objective was to create a comprehensive theoretical synthesis of the literature that is questioning the calling from a psychological perspective, emphasizing the conceptualization of the construct, the predictors, the results, the evaluation instruments and the practical implications.

This was a precondition to accomplish the second objective: the identification of the right measurement instruments to evaluate the calling in the Romanian cultural context by adapting and validating, on Romanian samples, two of the most used instruments that investigate the calling. (Study II: *The adaptation and the validation of the scales that measure the calling on the Romanian population*)

The third objective of the thesis was to explore: a. to what extent the vocational construct, as it is made operational in the western research literature, is relevant to the Romanian population. b. the socio-demographic factors associated with the calling (Study I: *The demographic factors associated with calling*)

Given the challenges concerning the conceptualization of calling and of its relations with other relevant constructs, the fourth objective was to develop some explanatory theoretical models of calling. More specifically, we have selected from the literature the predictors and the effects of calling with the highest explanatory value and relevance for the selected samples and we have built and tested 3 theoretical models for 2 types of distinct samples (the emerging adult students, teachers). (Study III: Predictors and consequences of calling, sub-studies (*studies 3.1 Calling and vocational competencies amongst the students in Romania – the mediator role of the adaptability, 3.2 Antecedents and consequences of the calling – testing certain explanatory mechanisms amongst the students in Romania, 3.3 The calling's role in satisfying the teachers in Romania – testing a descriptive model*))

Using a typological approach, focused on the individual, the purpose of the fifth objective was to create some profiles of the calling that reflected its central components on two distinct samples. (Study IV, Sub studies 4.1, 4.2 *Profiles of the calling amongst the students*)



*and teachers in Romania)*

Starting from the results of the previous studies and from the importance of the mentoring in the career development, I derived the sixth objective, the drafting and testing of various techniques of calling identification within a mentoring program for students. (*Study V Students' perception of mentoring in the calling development: a qualitative study.*)

### **3.2 An overview of the studies**

**The first two chapters** were an introduction to the topic of the research concerning the construct of calling, going back to its historical roots and analysing its importance in the contemporary studies of psychology, in general, and in the career development, in particular. **The theoretical analysis** investigated how the calling is conceptualized and researched in the psychological literature, as well as the constructs associated with it over time. Being a relatively newly studied construct in psychology (approximately 25 years), there are still several gaps and limits concerning the definition of the construct, its measurement and applicability to other populations than those belonging to the western culture. The main discussions, limits and theoretical, methodological and practical challenges were studied extensively, leading to conclusions that guide the conducted empirical studies enunciated in the previous section of this chapter (**third chapter**)

**The fourth chapter** presents the results of the investigations I have carried out, whose main theme was the calling. The first empirical study was an exploratory one, focusing on the extent to which calling as a construct can be applied in the Romanian context by investigating the frequency of calling's presence and the demographic factors associated to it, using a sample of students enrolled in various faculties of the Babes-Bolyai University.

**The second major study** wanted to adapt and validate, on two Romanian samples (students and academic staff) of two scales that measure the calling according to a neoclassical conceptualization *Calling and Vocation Questionnaire* (Dik, Eldridge, Steger & Duffy, 2012) and *Multidimensional Calling Measure* (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012).

**The third study** has tested 3 explicative models of the calling using three different samples: two of emerging adult students and one of the teachers. Study 3.1. was intended to investigate the relationship between calling, career adaptability and three career competencies on a sample of students from Romania. Study 3.2. had an essential contribution to the understanding of relations between career identity, calling, commitment to career and life satisfaction amongst students from Romania. Study 3.3 wanted to investigate the relations between calling, career competencies, vocational self-efficacy, life satisfaction and subjective success in career on a sample of teachers from Romania.

**The fourth study** analysed vocational typologies that accentuate the central components of the calling within a sample of emerging adult students and a sample of teachers from the undergraduate education system in Romania.

**The fifth study** explored the perceptions of the emerging adults regarding the impact of mentoring on the development of the calling, aiming to identify the practical implications of studying the calling.

In the end, the last chapter of the thesis (**the fifth chapter**) shortly describes the conclusions and the contributions of this paper, simultaneously debating the limits of our research effort and proposing several directions for further discussion or research. In this last chapter, the central ideas of the thesis are highlighted through a series of practical recommendations in the psychological, educational and organizational domains.

## CHAPTER 4 CONDUCTED EMPIRICAL STUDIES

### 4.1. STUDY: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH CALLING

Recently, the study of calling has become a topic of interest for researchers, given its implications in career development and positive relationship with career identity, positive emotionality, meaning of life and career decisions (Duffy and Sedlacek, 2007; 2010; Steger, Pickering, Shin, and Dik, 2010; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997).

As we have already presented in the theoretical part of the paper, there are several conceptualizations of calling, which brings an additional challenge in the investigation of the construct. In this study we will adopt the definition of calling proposed by Dik and Duffy (2009), according to which calling has its origin outside the self and implies the closeness of a particular life role oriented towards the derivation of personal meaning, also having a prosocial orientation (*"a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness, that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation."*) (p. 427).

A series of research approaches calling through individuals employed in different professional fields. However, calling also seems to be relevant for students entering college, being related to the choice of specialization (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010). In a study by Hunter et al. in 2010, the relevance of this construct to students was shown, implying that they are seeking to build career meaning after choosing the field of study (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010). Regarding the prevalence of calling in the population, several studies have suggested that a significant proportion of respondents reported the presence of calling. In this regard, a study conducted on a sample of adult employees highlighted that about 1/3 of the participants reported the presence of calling. In another study conducted on a sample of students, it was highlighted that this construct is relevant to the way they perceive their career (Hunter, Dik and Banning, 2010). Moreover, in a study conducted in 2010 on a sample of 5000 students in the first year of college, more than 44% of them reported the presence of calling (Duffy and Sedlacek, 2010). Several other previous investigations have concluded that the idea of calling has become relevant for young adults and the way they make career decisions (Gales and Lenz, 2012).

Investigating the perceived aspects of calling in a sample of emerging adults is extremely important, given that one of the major developmental tasks for this age group is the development of career direction (Arnett, 2000).

Starting with the ones presented above, we set out to investigate the frequency of attendance and the search for calling and its associated factors in a sample of emerging adults in Romania (students).

Thus, we formulated the following specific objectives: a. Exploration of calling on a sample of emerging Romanian adults/students; b. Investigating the frequency of the perceived calling on a sample of Romanian students; c. Investigating intergroup variations regarding age, gender, specialization, socio-economic level, environment of origin by vocation dimensions; d. Investigating the relationship between perceived vocation and living / expressed vocation.

<sup>2</sup> Part of this section was published as Dumulescu D., Opre. A., Buzgar. R. (2015). "Is your career meaningful?" Exploring career calling on a Romanian students sample, *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 187 Issue: 1 p553-558

From the objectives specified above, we derived the following hypotheses:

- i. More than 1/3 of the students participating in the study report increased levels of calling
- ii. There are significant differences between men and women regarding the perceived calling, respectively the expression of calling
- iii. There are significant differences between students in rural areas and those in urban areas in terms of perceived calling, respectively the expression of calling
- iv. There are significant differences between students in the perception of the presence of calling, respectively its expression, depending on the field of study
- v. There are significant differences between students in expressing their calling between students who volunteer and those who are not involved in such activities.

### ***Methodology:***

#### ***Participants and procedure:***

The participants were 497 undergraduate students, in the first year of study at Babeş-Bolyai University. Of these, 73.6% were female and 26.4% were male ( $M = 20.78$ ,  $SD = 4.8$ ). The 497 participants in the study were students in the following faculties: Psychology and Educational Sciences, Theology, Letters, Law, Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences.

#### ***Instruments***

*The questionnaire with demographic data* (information was collected on age, gender, education level, ethnicity, domicile and degree of involvement in the field of work, but also of extra-curricular activities, volunteering in general and in the field they study).

*Multidimensional Calling and Vocation Questionnaire* (CVQ) (Dik et al., 2012)

*Living calling scale* (Duffy, Bott, Allan, Torrey, & Dik, 2012)

### ***Results***

In order to investigate the frequency of perceived calling in the selected sample, we performed a frequency analysis, using the visual binning function to set the cut-off point to  $\pm 1$  standard deviations. The results showed that approximately 46% of the students reported scores above the selected threshold in terms of perceived calling. Regarding vocational search, 53% reported higher scores on this dimension.

Also, we have investigated the differences in living calling, respectively in the presence of calling, according to some demographic variables: age, domicile, gender. There were no notable differences in age and domicile. Regarding gender, t-tests revealed some significant differences: girls reported the presence of calling to a greater extent ( $t = -2.16$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), but also its search ( $t = -1.61$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Also, they were more oriented towards a particular type of calling on a meaningful work dimension, than the boys. ( $t = -1.84$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, the second hypothesis was partially confirmed, considerable differences to be found for the presence of calling and for the search of it, for one of the three types of calling, the search for calling, meaning and significance. None of the differences regarding the search for or presence of calling in relation to age, place of origin, or ethnicity was significant. Therefore, the third hypothesis has not been confirmed.

We also investigated the potential effect of the chosen specialization on the perceived calling. Due to the fact that the distribution on the faculties was not equal, we excluded from the study the students of the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences. Using the analysis of variance, we compared the averages obtained by the students of the different

specializations on the scale of expressed/living calling, respectively on the scales of the presence and the search of calling. The results indicate a significant difference for the expressed/ lived calling  $F(4, 456) = 4.86, p = .0002$ . The post-hoc Scheffe test indicated a significant difference between students in Theology and those in Psychology ( $MD = -4.29, p = .0016$ ), but also between those in Theology and those in History ( $MD = 5.36, p = 0.004$ ). Also, a significant difference was identified for the presence of the self-perceived calling:  $F(4, 443) = 10.18, p = 0.001$ .  $MD = -4.47, p = 0.001$ , between students in Letters and those in Theology ( $MD = 5.31, p = 0.001$ ) and between those in Theology and those in History ( $MD = 5.42, p = 0.001$ ). significant differences regarding the presence of the perceived calling depending on the chosen specialization, however, these differences are not noticeable in the case of searching for calling  $F(4, 442) = 2.09, p > .05$ .

Next, we evaluated whether there are differences in the way of living and experiencing calling depending on the volunteering activity of the students. We conducted the t-test for independent samples to identify if there are significant differences between students who volunteer and those who do not have this type of vocational activity. The Levene test allows us to assume the equal variance of the groups ( $F = 3,808; p = 0.053$ ). We obtained a significant effect of the volunteering activity,  $t(1497) = 3.818, p < 0.01$ . Calculating the effect size, we obtained Cohen's  $d = 0.6$ , so we have an average size of the effect of the volunteering activity on living calling, the students who carry out volunteering activities having higher scores than those who do not volunteer.

### **Discussions and conclusions:**

The purpose of this study was to explore calling on a sample of emerging adults (students) from Romania. Our results suggest that almost half of the students participating in the study perceive the presence of a calling for a particular career direction. These results are consistent with those obtained by Hunter et al (2010) and Duff and Sedlacek (2010). Also, our conclusions suggest that this construct is important for Romanian students and that its exploration in the Romanian cultural context is relevant for educational and career interventions. Moreover, gender differences are significant in terms of perceived calling. Thus, the girls reported the presence of the perceived calling to a greater extent, but at the same time, they are the ones who are looking for a calling more frequently. In particular, girls are more oriented towards a particular type of calling, the one that implies meaning in the career. These results are similar to those obtained by the authors of the scale in a study conducted in 2012 (Dik et al., 2012), which showed differences between boys and girls, in the sense identified in the present study. The practical implication of this result may suggest that the use of this construct in counseling may help to identify a balance between professional and family life (Sellers et al., 2005).

Furthermore, students of Theology have reported significantly higher scores on the presence and experience of a calling, which is in agreement with previous research suggesting that religiosity is related to calling (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010). In addition, the present study emphasizes the importance of volunteering activities for expressing/ living calling. Based on these results, we can support with empirical evidence the necessity of volunteering as a means of personal development and of proactive involvement in self-directed career management.

Therefore, it is important to note that there are no significant differences in what concerns the construct investigated, according to the environment of origin, age, ethnicity, and gender is only relevant in a particular situation. On the other hand, the field of study seems to be significant for the extent to which emerging adult students relate to calling, both in terms of its presence and in the search for calling. Thus, these results provide insights for counselors working with emerging adult students, for guidance in the process of identifying a career meaning, for setting goals that are consistent with the experienced calling, or for integrating calling into the career development process.

## 4.2 STUDY II. ADAPTATION AND VALIDATION OF CALLING MEASURING SCALES ON THE ROMANIAN POPULATION

A major challenge in the literature regarding calling, is the way of measuring the construct. In the last three years, researchers have validated several new measurement scales based on recommendations from previous researchers (Dik, Eldridge, Steger, & Duffy, 2012). Although important steps have been taken in measuring the construct, there are still debates about the most effective way of measuring it. In addition, the scales were developed in Western cultures, which is why a validation on non-Western cultures is necessary to draw conclusions regarding the cross-cultural validity of the construct.

From our knowledge, 9 instruments for measuring calling have been developed and validated so far. Although all these instruments of measurement seem to measure aspects of the basic construct, the different conceptualizations and operationalizations of calling have resulted in the inclusion of slightly different components (eg prosocial impact, passion, transcendental orientation etc.) from one instrument to another.

### 4.2.1 Adaptation and validation of the Multidimensional Calling Measures instrument (Studies 2.1.1. and 2.1.2)<sup>3</sup>

The Multidimensional Calling Measure (MCM, Hagmaier & Abele, 2012).

Hagmaier and Abele conceptualized calling as a significant career, to which the person strongly identifies, which contributes to the meaning of life, while being guided by principles/ values that transcend the self. The MCM consists of three subscales: *Identification and Person-Environment Fit-IP*, *Transcendent Guiding Force-TGF*, *Sense and Meaning and Value-Driven Behavior-SMVB*. The questionnaire comprises 9 items grouped on the three subscales corresponding to the three types of calling presented above. The answers are given on a 6-step Likert-type scale, from 1 ("does not characterize me at all") to 6 ("characterizes me very well"). The three subscales and the distribution of items on each subscale can be seen in the following: a. Identification and Person-Environment Fit-IP: items 1,2,3 b. Sense, Meaning and Value-Driven Behavior-SMVB: items 4,5,6 c. Transcendent Guiding Force-TGF: items 7,8,9.

In the present study, we set out to contribute to the adaptation and validation of the Romanian version of the Multidimensional Calling Measure instrument (Hagmaier and Abele, 2012) that measures the construct of calling. We examined the Romanian version of MCM by analyzing its psychometric properties on a sample of employees in the educational field (teachers) (study 2.1.1) and a sample of students (study 2.1.2). We also analyzed the three-factor factorial structure proposed in the original validation studies.

#### 4.2.1.1 Adaptation and validation of the Multidimensional Calling Measure instrument (Hagmaier and Abele, 2012) on a sample of Romanian teachers

##### *Method*

##### *Participants and procedure*

In the extracted sample, 856 teachers were included. The mean age was 42.4 years (SD = 9.6), 128 were male (14.8%) and 737 were female (85.2%).

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<sup>3</sup>Part of this section was published as: Dumulescu D., Balazsi R., Manuil A., Opre A. (2019). The validation of Multidimensional Calling Measure on a sample of Romanian teachers. *Cognition, Brain, Behavior* 23 (3).

## ***Instruments***

We used the Romanian language versions of the following instruments: The Multidimensional Calling Measure (Hagmaier, Abele, 2012), Career Satisfaction Scale (Greenhaus et. Al, 1990), Satisfaction with life scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, Griffin, 1985).

### ***1. Multidimensional Calling Measure scale - MCM; Hagmaier and Abele, 2012)***

To measure calling we used the Romanian version of the MCM. It consists of three subscales: Identification and Person-Environment Fit (IP), Transcendent Guiding Force-TGF, and Sense and Meaning and Value-Driven Behavior-SMVB. The questionnaire comprises 9 items grouped on the three subscales corresponding to the three types of calling presented above. The answers are given on a 6-step Likert-type scale, from 1 ("does not characterize me at all") to 6 ("characterizes me very well").

The Romanian version of the *Multidimensional Calling Measure* instrument (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012) that was developed in compliance with the ITC rules and specifications for cultural adaptation (Hambleton, 2001). Thus, we translated the instrument into Romanian and performed the retroversion. The items were translated from English by two translators, with a double-blind procedure. Based on the results of the process, we considered the final version to be adequate. We have included the instrument in Romanian language in section Annex 2 of this paper.

***2. Career Satisfaction Scale*** (Greenhaus et al., 1990) is a scale that measures satisfaction in the career field and contains 5 items, an example of it being: *I am satisfied with the success that I have achieved so far in my career.*

***3. Life Satisfaction Scale*** (Diener, Emmons, Larson & Griffin, 1985) is composed out of 5 items (eg "Most of my life is approaching my own ideal." and "So far I have achieved the important things I want from my life").

## ***Results***

Regarding the fidelity of the scale, we calculated the coefficient of internal consistency of the items  $\alpha$  Cronbach. For the factor I-Identification and person-environment fit, the coefficient Alpha is 0.78, for the factor II- Sense and self-directed behavior, the coefficient Alpha obtained is 0.78, and for the factor II-Transcendental orientation, the coefficient Alpha is 0.80. For all items, we obtained values greater than 0.5, which indicates their adequacy in relation to the scale for our sample.

The results of the confirmatory analysis suggest a rather poor fit for the proposed three-factor model. Specifically, the value of  $\chi^2$  is 551,753 (DF = 24, N = 930). CFI = 0.877, GFI = 0.884, TLI = 0.816, RMSEA = 0.16, RMM = 0.142. We examined the results and identified a problem at item number 9, which loaded on two factors, which can probably be attributed to the meaning of the word in Romanian. It is possible that the meaning of this item activates different cognitive representations to the participants, given that it refers to the meaning of the term *destiny*, which could mean both a relation to the transcendent, as well as to personal significance.

After removing item 9 from the scale structure, we obtained a significant improvement of the model's matching indices. Thus, the results showed a very good match. Specifically, the value of  $\chi^2$  is 142,357 (DF = 18, N = 930). CFI = 0.96, GFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.93, RMSEA = 0.09, RMR = 0.27. Therefore, the most appropriate version of the scale is the one with three factors: transcendental orientation (2 items), Identification and person-environment fit (3 items), Meaning, significance and behavior directed towards values (3 items).

Regarding criterion validity, we have identified positive associations between MCM subscales and career success, respectively life satisfaction. Specifically, the IP subscale was positively correlated with career success,  $r = .35$ ,  $p < .01$ , with life satisfaction,  $r = .36$ ,  $p < .01$ . The TGF subscale also correlated positively with career success,  $r = .34$ ,  $p < .01$ , and with life satisfaction,  $r = .33$ ,  $p < .01$ . Similar to the other two subscales, SMVB correlated positively with life satisfaction  $r = .17$ ,  $p < .01$ .

#### **4.2.1.2 Adaptation and validation of the Multidimensional Calling Measure instrument (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012) on a sample of Romanian students**

##### ***Method***

##### ***Participants and procedure***

The sample included 445 undergraduate and master students from three universities in Romania: Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, University of Bucharest, West University of Timisoara. Among these, 80% were undergraduate students, 20% were masters students. In terms of gender distribution, 75.1% were female and 24.9% male, with a mean age of 21.94 years ( $SD = 4.7$ ).

##### ***Instruments***

*Multidimensional Calling Measure- MCM*; Hagmaier&Abele, 2012)

*Satisfaction Scale* (Greenhaus et al.,1990)

*Life Satisfaction Scale* (Diener, Emmons, Larson& Griffin, 1985)

##### ***Results***

Regarding fidelity, we calculated the coefficient of internal consistency of the items Cronbach  $\alpha$ . For the factor I-Identification and person-environment fit, the coefficient Alpha is 0.87, for the factor II- Meaning, significance and behavior directed towards values, the coefficient Alpha obtained is 0.82, and for the factor III-transcendental vocational orientation, the coefficient Alpha is 0.85. For all items, we obtained values greater than 0.5, which indicates their adequacy in relation to the scale for our sample.

The results of the confirmatory analysis suggest a fairly good fit of the proposed three-factor model. The results indicate that the proposed model is appropriate. Specifically, the value of  $\chi^2$  is 174,117 ( $DF=24$ ,  $N=458$ ).  $CFI=0.94$ ,  $GFI=0.92$ ,  $TLI=0.90$ ,  $RMSEA=0.067$ ,  $RMR=0.17$ . The factor loading was also good. Only one item, item number 9 shows similar charges on two factors, which could be explained by problematic aspects of the translation and transposition of the item meaning into Romanian.

Although for the student sample, the model showed a better fit than the one made on the teacher sample, as in the previous case, we decided to test the three-factor model and after excluding item 9, to which the model showed a very good match. The results of the confirmatory analysis suggest a very good fit for the proposed three-factor model. The results indicate that the proposed model is appropriate. Specifically, the value of  $\chi^2$  is 52,761 ( $DF = 18$ ,  $N = 458$ ).  $CFI = 0.983$ ,  $GFI = 0.971$ ,  $TLI = 0.974$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.05$ ,  $RMR = 0.142$ . Therefore, the factor loadings were also very good.

In what concerns convergent validity, we identified positive associations between MCM subscales and career satisfaction, respectively life satisfaction. Specifically, the IP subscale correlated positively with career satisfaction,  $r = .29$ ,  $p < .01$ , with life satisfaction,  $r = .34$ ,  $p < .01$ . The TGF subscale also correlated positively with life satisfaction,  $r = .26$ ,  $p < .01$ , and the

SMVB subscale correlated positively with career satisfaction,  $r = .29$ ,  $p < .01$ , and with life satisfaction,  $r = .31$ ,  $p < .01$ .

### ***Discussions and conclusions***

Our study confirmed the factorial structure of the Multidimensional Calling Measure instrument (MCM, Hagmaier & Abele, 2012). As we anticipated, the multidimensional model indicated a good fit for both the investigated samples (teachers and students), which reveals that the original three-factor model is adequate to measure calling. For the student sample, we recorded better psychometric data and a more accurate model fit than for the one represented by teachers. Given that for both samples, item number 9 loaded on both the original factor, *Transcendental Orientation*, and the *Sense and Meaning and Value-Driven Behavior* factors, we decided to test the measurement model without this item. For both samples, the fit of the measurement model improved, having very good values.

This multidimensional model of vocation has also been supported by previous studies (Dik et al. 2012; Hagmaier and Abele, 2012). We also demonstrated the convergent validity of the scale by testing correlations with career success and life satisfaction. Both teachers and students who reported high levels of calling showed career success and high life satisfaction (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010).

#### **4.2.2 Adaptation and validation of the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ - Dik, Eldridge, Steger and Duffy, 2012)**

*Calling and Vocation Questionnaire* (CVQ) (Dik, Eldridge, Steger and Duffy, 2012). Dik and his collaborators conceptualized calling based on the definition proposed by Dik and Duffy (2009), a definition that describes calling by referring to three major dimensions: (1) external, transcendental calling that implies a form of authority superior to the individual, (2) assuming a particular career role oriented towards demonstrating a goal or derived from living a career meaning and (3) pro-social values and orienting towards the needs of others as the main sources of motivation in the career. This conceptualization allowed to differentiate between the presence of calling and the search for it. Thus, a person may perceive the presence of a calling and behave in accordance with it, while other persons may be actively seeking it. Also, the presence and active search of a calling are not mutually exclusive of each other, but can coexist.

The *Calling and Vocation Questionnaire* (CVQ- Dik, Eldridge, Steger & Duffy, 2012) comprises 24 items and measures the construct of calling according to the multidimensional conceptualization, through 6 subscales, 3 for the presence of calling and 3 for the search of calling. For each of them, the scale measures the following dimensions: transcendent summons, purposeful work, prosocial orientation: CVQ - Presence – transcendental calling: items 1, 8-reverse coded, 11, 23; CVQ - Search – transcendental calling: items 2, 13, 18, 19, CVQ - Presence - meaningful work: items 3, 15, 20, 24; CVQ - Search - meaningful work: items 4, 6, 14, 21; CVQ - Presence - prosocial orientation: items 9, 12, 17, 22; CVQ - Search - prosocial orientation: items 5, 7, 10, 16. At the same time, the scale allows to calculate the total score for the presence and search of calling: CVQ - total presence of calling: items 1, 3, 8-reverse coding, 9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24; CVQ - total vocation search: items 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21.

##### **4.2.2.1 Adaptation and validation of the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ-Dik, Eldridge, Steger & Duffy, 2012) to a sample of Romanian teachers**

###### ***Method***



## ***Participants***

In the extracted sample 856 teachers were included. The mean age was 42.4 years (SD = 9.6). Of these, 128 were male (14.8%) and 737 were female (85.2%).

## ***Instruments***

*Calling and Vocation Questionnaire* (CVQ-Dik, Eldridge, Steger and Duffy, 2012) is an instrument based on Dik and Duffy's (2009) theoretical conceptualization of calling, which includes 3 dimensions: (1) transcendent calling, (2) expressing and extracting meaning / purpose through work (3) a prosocial orientation in work. This instrument also measures two aspects of vocation: presence and search. The CVQ has 24 items, 12 items for the presence of a calling and 12 for the search of a calling, for each of the 3 areas conceptualized by Dik and Duffy (2009): transcendental calling, work with purpose and prosocial orientation. The measurement is performed on a Likert scale and uses 4 points: 1- never true for me, 2- somewhat true for me, 3- mostly true for me, 4 absolutely true for me. The internal consistency coefficients for the CVQ subscales are as follows: presence of transcendental vocation:  $\alpha = .85$ , search of transcendental vocation  $\alpha = .86$ , presence of purposeful work:  $\alpha = .88$ , presence of prosocial orientation  $\alpha = .88$  and orientation of prosocial seeking  $\alpha = .92$ . Total scores showed internal consistency similar to  $\alpha = .89$  for CVQ-presence and  $\alpha = .87$  for CVQ-search. The Romanian version was developed similar to the one of the *Multidimensional Calling Measure* tool (Hagmaier and Abele, 2012).

*Brief Calling Scale* (BCS) is a 4-item scale with unidimensional scores, which assesses the presence or search of a calling.

*Short version of Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale* (Schyns and von Collani, 2002) is the short version of the Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale and contains 8 items.

*Life Satisfaction Scale* (Diener, Emmons, Larson & Griffin, 1985)

## ***Results***

For fidelity, we computed the internal consistency coefficient of the Cronbach  $\alpha$  items. For factor I-transcendental calling - presence, the Alpha coefficient is 0.118, thus indicating a problematic internal consistency for this factor. For factor II - transcendental calling - search, the Alpha coefficient is 0.69, for factor III - meaningful work - presence, the Alpha coefficient obtained is 0.72, for factor IV - meaningful work - search, the Alpha coefficient obtained is 0.56, for factor V - prosocial orientation - presence, the Alpha coefficient is 0.76, and factor VI - prosocial orientation - search, the Alpha coefficient is 0.68. Therefore, the values obtained at the items of 5 scales indicate their adequacy in relation to our sample, and for the *transcendental calling – presence* scale values indicated a low internal consistency. As a result of the analysis of the items that belong to this scale, we found that items 8 and 11 are problematic, consequently being eliminated.

The hypothetical model proposed for the validation of the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ) scale is the original one, with six factors: transcendental vocation - presence: items 1, 8-reverse coding, 11, 23, transcendental vocation - search: items 2, 13, 18, 19, meaningful work - presence: items 3, 15, 20, 24, meaningful work - search: items 4, 6, 14, 21, prosocial orientation - presence: items 9, 12, 17, 22, prosocial orientation - search: items 5, 7, 10, 16. The proposed hypothetical model allows the possibility of covariance between factors.

The results of the confirmatory analysis suggest a good fit for the proposed six-factor model. The results indicate that the six-factor model is adequate, having a relatively good fit for our sample. Specifically, the value of  $\chi^2$  is 893.177 (DF=154, N=856). CFI=0.90, GFI=0.91, TLI=0.85, RMR=0.6, RMSEA=0.07. The factor loading was also good.

With regard to criterion validity, we have identified positive associations between the CVQ-total attendance subscale and career self-efficacy and life satisfaction. Specifically, the total CVQ subscale was positively correlated with career self-efficacy,  $r = .28$ ,  $p < .01$ , and life satisfaction,  $r = .28$ ,  $p < .01$ . At the same time, the CVQ scale correlates positively with the BCS scale (Brief Callingscale): the CVQ total presence subscale correlated positively with the BCS-presence subscale,  $r = .29$ ,  $p < .01$ , and the total CVQ-search subscale correlated positively with the BCS-search subscale,  $r = .59$ ,  $p < .01$ .

#### **4.2.2.2 Adaptation and validation of the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ-Dik, Eldridge, Steger & Duffy, 2012) to a sample of Romanian students**

##### ***Method***

##### ***Participants and procedure***

The sample included 445 undergraduate and master students from three universities in Romania: Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, University of Bucharest, West University of Timisoara. Of these, 80% were undergraduate students, 20% were masters students. In terms of gender distribution, 75.1% were female and 24.9% male, with a mean age of 21.94 years ( $SD = 4.7$ ).

##### ***Instruments***

*Calling and Vocation Questionnaire* (CVQ-Dik, Eldridge, Steger & Duffy, 2012)

*Brief Calling Scale* (BCS) (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007)

*Short version of Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale* (Schyns & von Collani, 2002)

*Life Satisfaction Scale* (Diener, Emmons, Larson & Griffin, 1985)

*Work Hope Scale* (Juntunen & Wettersten, 2006). Career hope was measured with the *Work Hope Scale*. It is composed of three subscales: agency, pathways and goals.

##### ***Results***

We calculated the coefficient for internal consistency of the Cronbach  $\alpha$  items. For factor I- transcendental calling - presence, the Alpha coefficient is 0.39, for factor II- transcendental calling - search, the Alpha coefficient is 0.67, for factor III - meaningful work - presence, the Alpha coefficient obtained is 0.80, for factor IV- meaningful work - search, the Alpha coefficient obtained is 0.54, for factor V - prosocial orientation - presence, the Alpha coefficient is 0.84, and for factor VI - prosocial orientation - search, the Alpha coefficient is 0.81. Therefore, for the items of 5 factors, we obtained good internal consistency. As with the validation of the scale on the population of teachers, and in the case of students, the factor of *transcendental calling - presence* was a problematic one. When examining the components of this scale, we noticed that items 8 and 11 were problematic.

The results of the confirmatory analysis suggest a good fit for the proposed six-factor model. The results indicate that the proposed model is appropriate. Specifically, the value of  $\chi^2$  is 486.898 ( $DF = 182$ ,  $N = 445$ ).  $CFI = 0.92$ ,  $GFI = 0.9$ ,  $TLI = 0.9$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.06$ ,  $RMR = 0.05$ . The factor loading was especially problematic for item 8, but also for item 11.

Concerning the convergent validity, we identified positive associations between the CVQ-total attendance subscale and the hope for work, the self-efficacy related to career and life satisfaction. Specifically, the total CVQ subscale was positively correlated with job expectancy,  $r = .15$ ,  $p < .01$ , career self-efficacy,  $r = .16$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $r = .15$ ,  $p < .01$ , and with life satisfaction,  $r = .14$ ,  $p < .01$ . Also, the total CVQ-search subscale correlates positively with job expectancy,  $r = .25$ ,  $p < .25$ . At the same time, the CVQ scale correlates positively with the BCS

(Brief Calling scale): the total CVQ-presence subscale correlated positively with the BCS-presence subscale,  $r = .22$ ,  $p < .01$ , and the CVQ-search total subscale positively correlated with the subscale BCS-search,  $r = .56$ ,  $p < .01$ .

### ***Discussions and conclusions***

Our study aimed to examine the psychometric properties and the factorial structure of the calling measuring instrument – *Calling and Vocation Questionnaire* (CVQ) (Dik et al., 2012) on two different samples of students and employees (teachers) in Romania. Using the confirmatory factorial analysis, we confirmed the factorial structure of the mentioned vocational measuring instrument. The original model indicated a good fit for both of the investigated samples, teachers sample and students sample, which shows that the original six-factor model is appropriate in relation to the investigated samples. Following the analysis of the items, it was found that two of them (item number 8 and item number 11), belonging to the transcendental-presence calling factor, were problematic, which is why we excluded them from the final form of the instrument in Romanian. For both samples, the fit of the measurement model improved, having very good values.

Regarding the internal consistency of the instrument, the instrument showed high Alpha Cronbach coefficients, except for one of the six factors, respectively the Transcendental Orientation factor-presence. Two of the items on this scale were excluded to increase the explanatory power of the measurement model. A possible explanation of the explanatory differences of this factor may be related to the personal definition of calling. It is possible that a more secular or sacred interpretation of calling may have influenced some responses, ergo the results. (Steger et al., 2010)

Additionally, the convergent validity was good for both the factors associated with the presence of calling and for those associated with its seeking. In establishing the convergent validity, we investigated the relationships with constructs identical and similar to those investigated in the original validation studies. Thus, we identified a significant positive relationship between the presence of calling and career self-efficacy, job expectancy and life satisfaction. Also, the presence of calling correlated positively with calling measured with the Briefcalling scales instrument. Therefore, these results are similar to those obtained previously by Dik and Duffy (2009), respectively Dik et al., (2012).

### **4.3 STUDY III PREDICTORS AND CONSEQUENCES OF CALLING**

The psychological conceptualization of calling emphasizes the importance of the perceived meaning of work and career as a representation of a higher purpose, having both personal and collective significance (Dik and Duffy, 2009). This conceptualization of calling is related to positive variables in career psychology, such as vocational self-clarity and career maturity (Duffy, Allan, & Dik, 2011; Duffy and Dik, 2013). Hence, the presence of calling has been repeatedly associated with a strong career identity, high clarity of vocational self and well-being (Duffy and Sedlacek, 2007). These findings suggest that perceiving a calling refers to identifying a meaning that aligns with one's personal interests and attributes.

Secondly, regarding the relation of calling with other constructs that are relevant to career development, adaptability plays a central role. Its importance in relation to calling derives from the fact that this adaptability implies orientation towards the future, and anticipation of new career tasks (concern about the career) and beliefs of self-efficacy in achieving the career goals (trust), thus helping individuals to manage their career transitions. (Savickas, 2005).

Third, according to the career construction theory, people with high calling are more motivated to develop relevant career skills to successfully cope with professional challenges and transitions. (Dik and Steger, 2011; Duffy, Manuel, Borges and Bott, 2011; Hirschi and Herrmann, 2013).

Fourth, given that calling develops in conjunction with the profession and work experience, it is related to the occupational/vocational self-efficacy (Rosso et al, 2010).

Regarding the relationship that calling as a construct has with different emotional consequences, there is multiple evidence supporting a strong relationship with psychological variables in the sphere of well-being. Over the past 10 years, quite a number of authors have positively related calling to well-being on student samples (Duffy et al., 2012; Duffy and Sedlacek, 2010) and employees (Duffy et al., 2013; Peterson et al., 2009), with job satisfaction, job meaning, career commitment (Bundersonşo Thompson, 2009; Duffy et al, 2012; Duffy, Dik and Steger, 2011; Hirschi and Hermann, 2013).

Finally, another category of outcomes associated with calling refers to proactive behaviors in career development.

Although we have previously presented a series of studies that relate calling to other cognitive psychological constructs (adaptability, vocational self-efficacy), emotional (life satisfaction, career satisfaction), behavioral (career commitment, career skills) and personality (career identity), there are still a number of shortcomings in the literature concerning the relationship between calling and these dimensions. First, relatively few studies have been published that have developed and tested theoretical models that simultaneously address complex and multiple relationships between these variables. Secondly, the samples that most of the studies were carried out belong to Western cultures. Last but not least, there are still debates in the literature involving the direction of the relationship between variables.

Thus, in the following studies, we set out to develop and test some explanatory models of the relationship between calling and the constructs presented above. In the construction of the models, we considered the inclusion of those variables and relationships that have strong empirical support, but also the addition of some that theoretically bring a strong additive explanatory value to the model.

Further, we will describe the studies conducted on two samples of emerging adult students and a sample of education employees (teachers) in Romania.

#### **4.3.1 Calling and vocational competence among Romanian students- the role of adaptability as a mediator (Study 3.1)**

Starting from the previously mentioned theoretical aspects, we set out to examine the mechanisms that underlie the relationship between calling and the constructs analyzed in the introductory section of the research, within two studies conducted on two samples of students from Romania.

In the first study, we investigated the mechanisms underlying the relationship between calling, adaptability and career competencies. Thus, we argue that adaptability allows people to prepare more effectively for their chosen career. A high level of calling will drive the efforts of individuals to use the adaptability resources that, in turn, will facilitate the process of developing and implementing career competencies. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to

examine the relationship between calling, career adaptability and three career skills (networking, self-profiling, work exploration).

Our hypothesis is that career adaptability will partially mediate the relationship between calling and career competencies.

## Method

### Participants and procedure

The participants were 511 students with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from three Romanian universities. Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca, University of Bucharest, West University of Timișoara. They were emerging adults ( $M = 22.02$ ,  $SD = 4.3$ ), mostly women (72.3%), men (27.6%). Regarding the field of study, 84% study human and social sciences, and 16% study natural and technical sciences. Among these, 68% were at the bachelor level and 32% at the master level. Participants were recruited through student organizations and student leaders. Participation was voluntary.

### Instruments

For measuring the investigates constructs, the following instruments have been used:

*Multidimensional Calling Measure- MCM*; (Hagmaier & Abele, 2012)

*Career Adaptabilities Scale- CAAS*; (Savickas & Porfeli, 2012)

*Career competencies questionnaire- CCQ* (Akkermans, Brenninkmeijer, Huibers & Blonk, 2013)

### Results

Data analysis highlighted significant positive relationships between calling, dimensions of career adaptability and career skills. All scales proved to have fidelity of good internal consistency, with the Cronbach alpha coefficients having values that exceed 0.80. Regarding the correlation coefficients, calling showed a strong relation to career adaptability ( $r = .46$ ) and to networking ( $r = .46$ ). Also, calling was positively related to career exploration ( $r = .30$ ) and self-profiling ( $r = .33$ ). A powerful correlation was also found between career adaptability and networking ( $r = .65$ ) and self-profiling ( $r = .50$ ) and moderate correlation between career adaptability and career exploration ( $r = .37$ ). All correlations were significant at the  $p < .001$  threshold.

To further examine the mechanisms underlying the relationship between calling, career adaptability, and career competencies, we developed a descriptive model in which career adaptability mediates the relationship between calling and career competencies. (see Figure 1 for model specification).

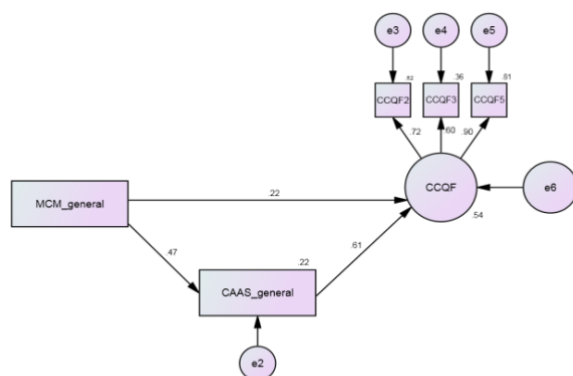


Figure 1

In what concerns the structural model, the computed  $\chi^2$  was 13.85 (df = 4, p = .008),  $\chi^2 / df = 3.464$ , CFI = .98, GFI = .98, SRMR = .025 and RMSEA = .076.

Career adaptability has mediated the relationship between calling and vocational skills. Calling had a significant, positive and direct effect (b = .46) on career adaptability which, in turn, had a significant direct effect on vocational skills (b = .60). A significant part of the variance (.54) of vocational skills was explained by this model.

### ***Discussions and conclusions***

The results of the mediation analysis supported the hypothesis that career adaptability partially mediates the relationship between vocation and vocational skills (work exploration, self-profiling and networking). Thus, our results revealed that students who possess a sense of calling, have more communication skills and behaviours that are relevant to their career, and this relationship can be partially explained by the meta-competence of adaptability in the career. Precisely, students who perceive their career as a calling, are more efficient in developing of the professional social network, communicate optimally about their own competencies, actively explore career opportunities, in part due to the fact that they use their career adaptability cognitive resources (trust, curiosity, control and concern).

### **4.3.2 Antecedents and consequences of calling - testing of explanatory mechanisms among Romanian students (Study 3.2)**

In the second study conducted on a sample of students, we investigated the relationship between career identity, calling, vocational self-efficacy, career commitment and life satisfaction. Starting from the existing data in the scientific literature, we built and tested a structural explanatory model for the relationships between these constructs.

More specifically, we formulated the following assumptions of a multiple mediation model: a. Career identity and vocational self-efficacy, b. Career identity and career commitment c. Career identity and life satisfaction. At the same time, the second major hypothesis was that vocational self-efficacy mediated the relationship between calling and career commitment. Finally, the third tested hypothesis was that career commitment will partially mediate the relationship between a. Calling and life satisfaction, b. Vocational self-efficacy and life satisfaction.

### ***Method***

#### ***Participants and procedure***

The targeted sample by this study is made up of 566 students from Romania, namely students from Cluj-Napoca city. Most of the respondents were students of Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj Napoca (69%). Of the total number of students, 82.3% were students in human and social science specializations, and 17.7% were in mathematic and naturalistic science specializations. The mean age of the sample was 21.4 years (SD = 2.9). Regarding the distribution based on the gender of the participants, 23% of them are boys, and the remaining 77% were girls.

#### ***Instruments***

Calling Measure- MCM; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012

*My vocation situation scale*- MCV, Holland et al., 1980

*Career Engagement Scale* - CES, Hirschi, 2011

## Results

To further examine the mechanisms underlying the relationship between career identity, calling, vocational self-efficacy, career commitment, and life satisfaction, we developed a descriptive model developed based on the theory of career construction. It tests multiple relationships between the investigated variables (see Figure 2 for model specification)

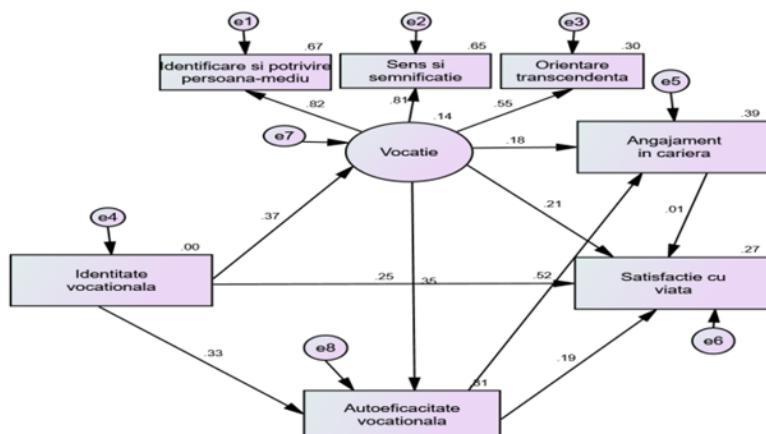


Figure 2

The structural model showed a very good fit: ( $\chi^2$  (df = 47) = 1.36,  $p = .196$ ; CFI = 0.996; TLI = 0.991; SRMR = .02; RMSEA = .029, 90% CI = 0.06– .073 ). Within the model, all the pathways specified were significant, the direct effects indicating that: career identity predicts calling ( $\beta = .37$ ), vocational self-efficacy ( $\beta = .32$ ), and satisfaction with life. ( $B = .25$ ). Also, calling predicts vocational self-efficacy ( $\beta = .346$ ), career commitment ( $\beta = .17$ ) and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .215$ ). Vocational self-efficacy predicts career commitment ( $\beta = .52$ ) and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .189$ ). In addition, the indirect effects identified were in the direction of our hypotheses. Therefore, an indirect effect of career identity on vocational self-efficacy was identified through the calling mediator: ( $\beta = 0.129$ ). At the same time, the career identity had an indirect effect on the career commitment, mediated by the presence of calling ( $\beta = .30$ ), and an effect on life satisfaction, mediated by the presence of the calling ( $\beta = .168$ ). Concerning the presence of calling, an indirect effect on career commitment mediated by vocational self-efficacy was observed ( $\beta = .18$ ). Moreover, career commitment mediated the relationship between presence of calling and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .06$ ). Lastly, career commitment mediated the relationship between vocational self-efficacy and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .04$ ). The total effect of career identity on vocational self-efficacy is  $\beta = .455$ , on career commitment -  $\beta = .30$ , on life satisfaction  $\beta = .419$ . The overall effect of the presence of calling on career commitment is  $\beta = .36$ , and on life satisfaction  $\beta = .283$ . Additionally, the total effect of vocational self-efficacy on life satisfaction is  $\beta = .193$ . (Table 4.3.2. 5)

## Discussions and conclusions

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationships between career identity, calling, vocational self-efficacy, career commitment and life satisfaction through an explanatory model, elaborated based on the study of the existing literature.

An important conclusion of our study reflects the importance of career identity as a predictor of the presence of calling. In other words, a well-defined career identity leads to the identification and perception of the presence of calling. Indeed, this conclusion is supported by a number of authors who argue that the two constructs have a similar conceptual relationship, in fact the development of career identity having the effect of identifying meaning and meaningful goals for one's career (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010, Dik and Duffy, 2009; Elangovan et al., 2010; Hall and Chandler, 2005).

Another conclusion to be drawn is that a significant proportion of the variance of vocational self-efficacy, career commitment, but also life satisfaction, is predicted by career identity and calling. In other words, a feeling of clarity of the vocational self, in conjunction with the feeling of a meaningful career and of the values reflected in the vocational path, is an important indicator for increasing personal confidence in the ability to handle situations related to career management. Likewise, the same feelings drive individuals to engage in behaviors with the purpose of professional development, but also general satisfaction.

Also, calling is a powerful predictor for vocational self-efficacy and life satisfaction. In addition, the results showed that an increased level of vocational self-efficacy predicts engagement in proactive career-related behaviors. In other words, students who have a stable, strong self, high vocational clarity, develop a perception of the presence of their own calling. As calling gives them meaning, that enables them to also develop their self-efficacy in career evolution.

Simultaneously, a sense of calling, along with the perceived self-efficacy in the career, leads to increased life satisfaction and to the engagement in behaviors associated with career development. Therefore, students who are perceived as capable and confident about career tasks are more involved in career development and more satisfied with their own lives, aspects consistent with previous studies (Empiric, Judge and Bono, 2001, Duffy, 2012, Elangovan et al., 2010).

### **4.3.3 The role of calling in job satisfaction for Romanian teachers - testing a descriptive model (Study 3.3)**

Traditionally, the concept of calling has been associated with the teaching career (Mattingly, 1975). There is a number of empirical evidence that reveals a sense of calling is common among teachers (Dinham and Scott, 2000). In addition to the multiple studies that have concluded that calling is associated with a various positive effects (Duffy and Sedlacek, 2010; Peterson, Park, Hall, and Seligman, 2009; Steger and Dik, 2010; Wrzesniewski, et al., 1997), Bellah et al. (1985) suggest that this construct seems to be particularly relevant for jobs that involve frequent social interactions. As is the case with the teaching profession.

Previous studies have shown that most teachers in Western countries reported the presence of calling (Farkas et al., 2000; Priyadharshini and Robinson-Pant, 2003), while for the Eastern European countries, a single study was performed on a sample of teachers from Croatia and Slovenia. Its results showed that 83% of teachers in Croatia, respectively 68% of those in Slovenia, reported increased levels of perceived calling. (Bunerson and Thomson, 2018).

Beginning with the importance of calling for the teaching career and analyzing the literature in the field, we have developed and tested an explanatory model of the relationship between calling, career skills, vocational self-efficacy, life satisfaction and career satisfaction (subjective success in career). In the elaborated structural model, we tested, through the path analysis, the following hypotheses: career competencies partially mediate the relationship between: a. Calling and vocational self-efficacy b. Calling and subjective satisfaction/success in career c. Calling and life satisfaction. Also, vocational self-efficacy partially mediates the relationship between career skills and career satisfaction/ success.



## Method

### Participants and procedure

In the group of this study, 801 teachers were included. The mean age was 40.2 years (SD = 7.6). Of these, 121 were male (15.1%) and 680 were female (84.9%). The domicile of the participants was mainly in the urban area (77.5%).

### Instruments

*Multidimensional Calling Measure- MCM*; Hagmaier&Abele, 2012

*Short version of Occupational Self-Efficacy Scale- OSES*, Schyns& von Collani, 2002

*Career competencies questionnaire- CCQ*; Akkermans J., Brenninkmeijer, V., Huibers, M., &Blonk, R.W.B, 2013

*Life Satisfaction Scale- LSS*, Diener, Emmons, Larson&Griffin, 1985

*CareerSuccesss Scale* (Greenhaus et al.,1990)

### Results

For the data analysis process, we used AMOS 18.1 with the purpose of testing the proposed structural model to explain the relationships between calling, career skills, vocational self-efficacy, life satisfaction and subjective success in career. The results revealed significant positive relationships between the investigated constructs.

To further examine the mechanisms underlying the relationship between calling, career skills, vocational self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and subjective career success, we developed a descriptive model, based on the theory of career construction. It tests multiple relationships between the investigated variables (see Figure 3 for model specification).

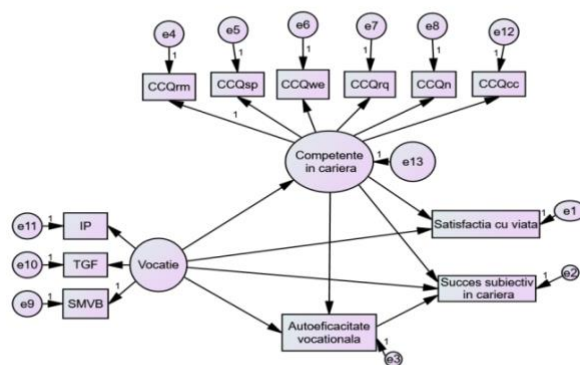


Figure 3

Our model showed a very good fit ( $X^2(df = 47) = 3.2, p = .1$ ; CFI = 0.948; TLI = 0.927; SRMR = .043; RMSEA = .080, 90% CI = 0.07– .0.89). We have included a correlation of errors for career skills. According to Byrne (2009), error correlations may be added if there are strong arguments to support them. In our case, the two constructions are related, they are part of the same factor, which explains a partial overlap between them.

Within the model, all the pathways specified were significant, the direct effects indicating the following: vocation predicts career competencies ( $\beta = .52$ ), vocational self-efficacy ( $\beta = .16$ ), career success ( $\beta = .356$ ) and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .183$ ). Also, vocational self-efficacy predicts career satisfaction with  $\beta = .189$  and life satisfaction with  $\beta = .126$ . Career competencies predict vocational self-efficacy ( $\beta = .513$ ), career satisfaction ( $\beta = .179$ ) and life satisfaction ( $\beta = .321$ ). Regarding indirect effects: an indirect effect of calling on vocational self-efficacy was identified, through the help of career competencies as a mediator ( $\beta = 0.26$ ). At the same time, calling had an indirect effect on career satisfaction/ success, mediated by career competencies ( $\beta = .24$ ), respectively on life satisfaction, mediated by career competence ( $\beta = .093$ ). Also, vocational self-efficacy mediated the relationship between career competencies and career satisfaction / success ( $\beta = .26$ ).

### ***Discussions and conclusions***

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between calling, career skills, vocational self-efficacy, life satisfaction and subjective success in a sample of Romanian teachers. About 70% of the teachers reported a vocational orientation, while 30% reported a low orientation.

The results of the present study support the previous researches that posit the idea that individuals that found their calling have more career competencies, have high vocational self-efficacy and are more satisfied with their life and career. The relationship between calling and vocational self-efficacy was partly explained by career competencies. The feeling of the didactic calling thus facilitates reflective skills regarding career, communication skills regarding the career, but also behavioral skills in this field. All this leads to increased self-efficacy and general and professional satisfaction. Second, our results explain two positive effects of calling, career competencies and self-efficacy. More specifically, these lead to satisfaction with life and to subjective success in career, a form of professional satisfaction. Thus, developing career competencies and career self-efficacy may be a mechanism that explains the way in which the presence of calling leads to these positive effects.

Therefore, we can say that the presence of calling is a goal that contributes to the well-being of the teachers and to the feeling of success in the career, but also a process that involves a series of cognitions (self-efficacy), motivations and actions (skill practising in career) that increase the chances that calling will be lived professionally.

### **Conclusions, implications, contributions and limitations of the studies 3.1, 3.2, 3.3**

In the following we will briefly present the conclusions and contributions of studies 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3, highlighting their importance for advancing research on predictors and outcomes of calling in the Romanian cultural context.

From the theoretical point of view, the studies presented above reveal important conclusions and contributions to the understanding of the relationships between calling and complex personal dimensions of personality, cognition, emotionality, motivation and behavior. On the other hand, one of the studies investigates the influence of identity on calling, which adds value in understanding the mechanisms that predict the recognition of the career as a calling. On the other hand, a major theoretical contribution of these studies concerns the way in which the calling changes the cognitive representation of the career and of work, as well as the positive emotional and behavioral effects that the presence of calling brings.

Developing the perception of a present calling is a result of the fact that the individual has clear and defined goals, knows his interests, abilities and decision-making directions in the career. Secondly, the emotional outcomes of calling include a general feeling of satisfaction with one's life and profession. Thus, identifying a calling that connects and brings together meanings, values, social contribution and spirituality, but also belief in one's own ability to handle the challenges a career brings, are essential for the overall well-being of an individual. Another

important result of the perception of a present calling is the increase of the ability to use the cognitive and motivational resources that the person disposes of. Also, our conclusions support the idea that calling includes an adaptive mental orientation, translated into confidence in career decisions, curiosity, control over the vocational process and constructive orientation towards identifying solutions in problematic career situations.

Nevertheless, these implications are limited by a few methodological issues that are worthy of our attention and which we assume, especially since the research regarding the construction of calling in non-Western cultures has only just begun. As mentioned in the section dedicated to the limits of each study, our research is cross-sectional. Another important limitation of the study may be the fact that the respondents were selected voluntarily to participate, and it is likely that those who are proactive in participating in the study will have a specific combination of features or characteristics, which would be a confounding variable. Also, the fact that our samples were consisting of students, emerging adults and teachers, respectively, could limit the generalization of the results among populations with other demographic characteristics, such as the level of education.

Beyond the theoretical implications already discussed, our results and conclusions lead to solid contributions and implications, potentially informing educational and organizational practices.

#### **4.4 STUDY IV: CALLING – PROFILES. CENTRAL AND PERIPHERAL COMPONENTS**

The scientific literature on calling reveals that there are a number of personal dimensions significantly related to calling. We have selected here those constructs that have empirical support through the results of previous research, carried out on samples similar to those investigated in the present paper (teachers, students), but also those that have strong theoretical relevance. Among them, we will analyze career identity, adaptability in the career, personality, intrinsic religiosity, personal growth initiative, values, emotional exhaustion.

Career identity is the central mechanism in career development (Super, 1990). Several studies have shown that career identity is positively related to psychological adaptation and satisfaction in life (Skorikov and Vondracek, 2007). The second psychological construct that has received increased attention from researchers in career development is adaptability. From a theoretical point of view, but also considering practical implications, the construct of adaptability in the career is relevant in relation to calling (Guo et al., 2014; Praskova, Hood, and Creed, 2014). Another important dimension investigated in vocational studies is personality. We will investigate central assessments related to the self (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003), defined as central self-assessments of personal values, efficiency, and abilities. Also, the personal growth initiative conceptualized as a stable proactive personality trait has repeatedly been related to career identity, meaningful work, and exploring career opportunities (Solberg et al., 1995). Furthermore, behavioral engagement and involvement in the field of calling, as well as mentoring, substantially contribute to the development of a calling (Mack, 2007; Bott et al., 2017). At the same time, people with calling have values regarding work that transcend the self (altruism and relationships with others). As such, we will include self-transcendent values in our analysis of the calling profiles. Concerning the relationship between religiosity and calling, a meta-analysis by Hernandez et al. (2011) concluded that reporting to God is a variable that influences perceived calling, career path and professional satisfaction. Last but not least, emotional exhaustion as a component of burnout is a construct associated in recent studies with meaningful work.

##### **4.4.1 Profiles of calling among Romanian students: a typological analysis (Study 4.1)**

The aim of the present study is to extract some typologies of calling within a sample of emerging adults, students from Romania. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of studying calling in emerging adults, given that this period of development is par excellence one of identity evolution (including vocational) and exploring career opportunities (Duffy and Sedlacek, 2007, 2010).

Based on the recent results extracted from the scientific literature, presented in the previous section, we formulated the following hypotheses:

H1 The presence of calling is significantly and positively associated with an increased career identity

H2 The presence of calling is significantly and positively associated with positive central self-assessments.

H3 The presence of calling is positively associated with personal growth initiative

H4 The presence of calling is significantly and positively associated with career commitment

H5 The presence of calling is positively associated with intrinsic religiosity

## **Method**

### ***Participants and procedure***

The sample consisted of 430 students at different specializations within the universities of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The mean age was 21.7 years ( $SD = 3.7$ ). Of these, 108 were male (25.1%) and 322 were female (74.9%). The participants' domicile was mainly in the urban area (81%), compared to only 19% in the rural area. Of the total number of participants, 316 were undergraduates and 44 were masters students.

### ***Instruments***

*The Multidimensional Calling Measure (MCM; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012)*

*The Core Self Evaluations Scale (CSES. Judge, Erez, Bono & Thoreson, 2003)*

*Religious Orientation Scale, revised (Tili-Opoulos et al., 2007).*

*Career Engagement Scale (Hirschi, 2011).*

*Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II –PGIS (Robitschek, 1999)*

*My Vocation Situation scale-MCV (Holland et al., 1980)*

## **Results**

To analyse the results we used the statistical software SPSS 22.0. We performed a descriptive analysis (table 3) and calculated the correlation coefficients for the evaluated variables. The results are presented in Table 4. They confirmed the hypotheses and revealed that calling correlates significantly with core self evaluation, intrinsic religiosity, career commitment, career identity, personal growth initiative (intentional behavior, planning, preparation for change, use of resources).

To derive a typology of callings, cluster analysis was applied.

Cluster 1 ( $N = 93$ ) consisted of participants who had negative scores on calling ( $z = -0.63$ ), but also on the other dimensions investigated. We named this cluster *Absence of Calling*.

Cluster 2 ( $N = 187$ ), is made up of participants who showed a negative perception of their own calling ( $z = -0.13$ ), reported negatives to career identity ( $z = -0.29$ ), central self-assessments ( $z = -0.34$ ), planning ( $z = -0.06$ ), preparation for change ( $z = -0.16$ ), intrinsic religiosity ( $z = -0.006$ ). Regarding positive scores, these participants reported positive scores on career commitment ( $z = 0.05$ ), intentional behavior ( $z = 0.11$ ), resource use ( $z = 0.03$ ). We named this cluster *Vocation Search Orientation*.

Cluster 3 (N = 150), is composed of participants who reported the presence of calling ( $z = 0.56$ ). Unlike the other two clusters, cluster 3 reported positive scores in all dimensions investigated. We named this cluster *Vocation for Personal Development*. ANOVA tests showed that the differences between clusters on the analyzed dimensions are statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) for all comparisons. (coefficient F has values between 6.19 and 400.07).

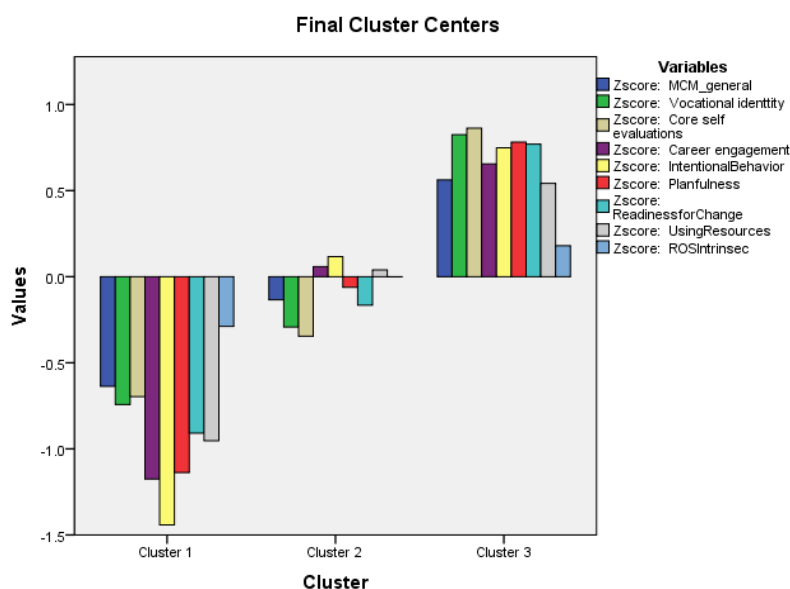


Figure 4

Figure 4- Graphic representation of clusters. The y-axis represents the standardized scores (z). These represent the distances between the cluster averages and the standardized average of the total sample. The z scores represent the distances between the cluster averages and the total standardized sample mean and can be interpreted as effect sizes. The variables in the figure: general MCM (Calling); Vocational Identity; Core Self; Career engagement; IntentionalBehavior; Planfulness; Readiness for Change; UsingResources; ROSIntrinsec (Intrinsic religiosity).

### Conclusions and discussions

The first cluster, representing 21.6% of the participants, constituted the cluster with lack of calling. It was characterized by problematic career identity, which indicates the lack of clarity of the vocational self and poor self-knowledge. Also, students in this cluster have negative central self-assessments, low career commitment, low intrinsic religiosity, which implies the lack of a secure relationship with the divinity. Moreover, the dimensions of the personal growth initiative construct are negative. Specifically, these students lack proactivity and driven behavior, they are characterized by lack of planning of the areas of life, they are not prepared for the changes in their life and do not use their resources effectively. The students of the second cluster are those with a slightly below average calling, and as important central characteristics, it can be observed that they have above-average career commitment, meaning they have proactive behaviors in the direction of career development. Additionally, they have intentional behavior, which can mean that they are seeking for their calling, that they are concerned with identifying a meaning and a purpose in their career. Last but not least, efficient resource use and positive intrinsic religiosity are characteristics of this cluster. Concerning the negative characteristics, as the students from the first cluster, those from cluster 2 have negative central self-assessments regarding themselves, problematic career identity, and poor planning. The third cluster is the one represented by students with high calling. This cluster is composed of participants with positive calling scores, increased career commitment, increased career

identity, increased intrinsic religiosity, and positive personal growth initiative (positive intentional behavior, planning, efficient use of resources, preparation for change).

Therefore, analyzing the obtained results, we can state that students with high calling scores a. Have a clear career identity, b. They are proactively involved in the development of their career, c. They positively evaluate themselves as individuals, d. They initiating personal growth, e. Have a secure relationship with God.

#### **4.4.2 Profiles of calling among teachers in Romania: a typological analysis (Study 4.2)**

The teaching career is essentially one that involves increased motivation, complex vocational mechanisms, and meaning derived from individual values and community values. Over time, it has been considered that the teaching profession is par excellence a vocational profession. However, there are few studies that investigate the didactic calling using a psychological conceptualization of it.

A series of studies have exposed that teachers who have reported a calling in their career, have been actively involved in teaching activities, have focused mainly on the positive aspects of the career, on social interactions as sources of meaning and significance (Hansen, 1995, Duffy and Sedlacek, 2007). Furthermore, Buskist et al. (2005) concluded that teachers who evaluated their career as a personal calling, reported a sense of achievement derived from the positive impact of their profession on the others.

The **aim of the present study** was to extract some typologies of calling from within a sample of teachers enrolled in pre-university education in Romania. However, we have taken into account a few new variables, introduced following the analysis of recent literature and following the results of previous studies conducted on Romanian samples (Dumulescu, Filip and Opre 2015, Dumulescu, Balazsi and Opre, 2015).

Based on the results found in recent literature, presented in the previous section, we formulated the following hypotheses:

H1 Calling positively and significantly correlates with the core self evaluation

H2 Calling significantly correlates with career adaptability.

H3 Calling positively and significantly correlates with values that transcend the self (altruism, relationship with others)

H4 Calling is positively associated with intrinsic religiosity

H5 Calling is significantly and negatively associated with emotional exhaustion

#### ***Method***

##### ***Participants***

The sample consisted of 756 teachers. The mean age was 42.1 years (SD = 9.4). Of these, 115 were male (15.2%) and 641 were female (84.7%).

##### ***Instruments***

*The Multidimensional Calling Measure (MCM; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012)*

*The Core Self Evaluations Scale (CSES. Judge, Erez, Bono & Thoreson, 2003)*

*Religious Orientation Scale, revised (Tili-Opoulos et al., 2007).*

*Workvalues (Cable & Edwards, 2004)*

*Career Adapt-Abilities Inventory -CAAS-forma internațională (Savickas, 2012)*

## Results

For analysing of the results we used the statistical software SPSS 22.0. We first performed the descriptive analysis and calculated the correlation coefficients for the evaluated variables. They confirmed the five formulated hypotheses and showed that calling significantly correlates with career adaptability (trust, concern, control curiosity), core self evaluation, intrinsic religiosity, self-transcendent values (altruism, relationships with others) and negatively with emotional exhaustion).

To derive a typology of callings, cluster analysis was applied.

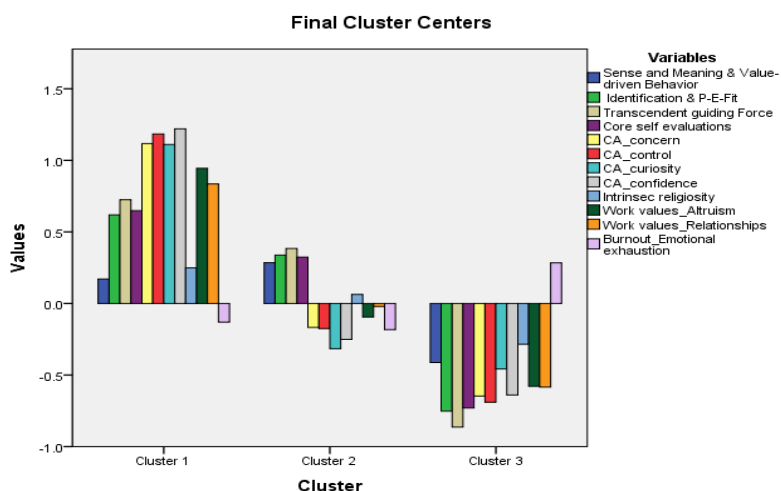


Figure 5

**Graphical representation of clusters.** The y-axis represents the standardized scores (z). These represent the distances between the cluster means and the standardized mean of the entire sample. The z scores represent the distances between the cluster means and the total standardized sample mean and can be interpreted as effect sizes. The variables in the figure: SenseandMeaning & Value-driven behavior; Identification & P-E Fit; Transcendent guiding Force, Core self evaluations; CA concerns; CA control; CA curiosity; CA confidence; Intrinsic religiosity; WorkValuee\_Altruism; WorkValues\_Relationships; Burnout-EmotiunalExhaustion

Cluster 1 (N = 215) grouped participants who had high scores on all three dimensions of calling (meaning-oriented behavior and significance -  $z = 0.17$ , identification and matching of the average person -  $z = 0.61$ , transcendental orientation -  $z = 0.72$ ), high scores on the dimensions of career adaptability (concern- $z = 1.11$ , curiosity- $z = 1.11$ , confidence- $z = 1.22$ , control- $z = 1.18$ ), of self-assessments ( $z = 0.64$ ), intrinsic religiosity high ( $z = 0.24$ ), altruism as central value ( $z = -0.94$ ), relationship with others as central value ( $z = 0.83$ ). This cluster had low/negative scores on emotional exhaustion ( $z = -0.13$ ). We named this cluster *Transcendent and Prosocial Active Calling*.

Cluster 2 (N = 255), is composed of participants who showed a positive perception of their own calling (meaning-oriented behavior and significance -  $z = 0.28$ , identification and matching of the average person -  $z = 0.33$ , transcendental orientation -  $z = 0.38$ ). Also, participants included in this group reported high scores on core self evaluation ( $z = 0.32$ ), intrinsic religiosity ( $z = 0.06$ ). We called this cluster a *Self-Centered Calling*.

Cluster 3 (N = 288), gathered the participants who have a negative perception about calling (they reported the absence of the didactic vocation), respectively meaning-oriented behavior  $z = -0.41$ , person-environment fit  $z = -0.75$ , transcendental orientation  $z = -0.86$ . In terms of career adaptability, this group reported low scores (concern-  $z = -0.64$ , curiosity-  $z = -0.45$ , confidence-  $z = -0.63$ , control-  $z = -0.69$ ). At the same time, this group revealed negative core

self evaluations  $z = -0.73$ , negative intrinsic religiosity ( $z = -0.28$ ), lack of altruism ( $z = -0.57$ ), lack of value placed on relationships with others ( $z = -0.58$ ). In contrast to the other two clusters, cluster 3 reported extremely high scores on emotional exhaustion ( $z = 0.28$ ). I called this cluster *Lack of Calling*.

The ANOVA tests showed that differences between clusters in the analyzed dimensions are statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) for all comparisons. (coefficient F has values between 20.19 and 530.01).

### ***Discussions and conclusions***

The conclusions of our study have shown that based on the components of calling, our sample can be divided into three subgroups. Two of these illustrate the characteristics of the teachers who reported the presence of calling above average, and one group illustrated those associated with the lack of calling.

Despite the similarities to the previous studies in this paper that investigated calling using a typological approach (presented in the theoretical section), we can also identify notable differences made by culture, but also by the particularity of the sample, namely teachers.

The existence of these three groups that our clusters delimited support the idea that some characteristics can be judged as defining components of the calling.

Core self evaluations, as consistent personality dispositions, constitute the first important component of calling. Our study has shown that intrinsic religiosity is associated with a deeper understanding of calling and identification with it (Cahalan & Schuurman, 2016). At the same time, calling components determined in the present study are partly consistent with those obtained by Hirschi (2011), which suggests that those who engage in self-exploration are those with an increased calling, which means that the presence of calling implies a drive to action. In our study, the construct of career adaptability that includes concern, curiosity, control, trust, is similar to the constructs that refer to self-exploration present in Hirschi's study (2011). Also, the results support the fact that calling emphasizes the activation of the self-directed career management resources, thereby, career adaptability (the concern for career, career responsibility, the exploration of career opportunities, self-efficacy beliefs in achieving career goals) (Savickas, 2005).

Therefore, regarding the external validity of calling (presence) for career success and organizational behavior, the results suggest several mechanisms by which calling can lead to positive personal and organizational results: people with a calling (a) self-evaluate positively, (b) they are more involved in career development and have effective career adaptation strategies (c) have a secure relationship with God (intrinsic religiosity), (d) relate to prosocial values (relationships with others, altruism)

### ***General conclusions and recommendations - study 4.1 and 4.2***

The conclusions of the two typological studies carried out on a sample of students, emerging adults, and a sample of teachers, highlighted common, central characteristics and components of calling.

A comparative analysis of the results of study 1 and 2 emphasizes the following conclusions: a. About 2/3 of the teachers and one-third of the students reported positive calling (perception of the presence of calling), b. Both in the sample of teachers and in the sample of students, emerging adults, positive core self evaluations, career commitment and religiosity were central dimensions of the presence of calling, c. career identity is a central component of calling for emerging adults, d. values that transcend self (altruism) and orientation towards relationships with others) are a central component of calling in the case of teachers, e. emotional burnout among teachers is present in teachers who live in the absence of calling, f. meta-competencies



(career adaptability in the case of teachers, and personal growth initiative among students), are essential components of calling

Corroborating the results obtained for both samples we can extract some characteristics from participants who have a calling. In general, they are people with a clear career identity, reflecting self-knowledge, stability of interests, motivations and career goals. From the cognitive point of view, the individuals with calling value their self, their potential and they have the cognitive ability to effectively manage the career challenges. They also have confidence in their own decisions, skills and competencies, have the feeling that they can control their own vocational path, are mentally flexible, open and curious about new opportunities, have a constructive concern about their own development, which allows them to notify and adjust their experiences to their own calling. From a behavioral point of view, calling is reflected in proactive career behaviors, planning, efficient use of personal resources, frequently engaging in personal and professional development behaviors. As essential values, the vocational profile implies altruism, orientation towards others, a strong emotional and spiritual anchor given by the secure relationship with the divinity, self-knowledge and highlighting the values as a motivational component of the personality in the professional field.

#### **4.5 STUDY V: STUDENT'S PERCEPTION ON MENTORING IN DEVELOPING A CALLING: A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

The contemporary career is characterized by an emphasis on the individual experience of the person, on self-reflection, global connection, relationship, but also unpredictability, the need for immediacy, emotion, creativity and innovation.

An important area of study is the influence of mentoring on vocational development. The existing literature suggests that it may have a positive influence on the discovery of meaning in work (Rosso, Dekas, and Wrzesniewski, 2010) and could support the development of spirituality in relation to one's profession (Buzzanell, 2009; Reave, 2005; Weinberg and Locander, 2014). Career mentoring fulfils multiple functions, including the development of self-efficacy, self-esteem and career identity (Eby et al., 2010). Other authors describe among the impact areas of mentoring: emotional and psychological support, support in setting goals and career decisions, academic support, shaping, identifying and offering networking opportunities, activating internal resources to meet career challenges (Crisp, 2009; Haggard and Turban, 2012). Among the desirable characteristics of the mentor are: the ability to offer and receive constructive feedback, openness, availability, proactivity, compassion, ability to inspire, passion for one's profession (mentoring as a central part of one's personal calling), trust, mutual respect, ability to share knowledge. Regarding the mechanisms that explain the mentor's influence, it seems that the mentor's confidence, emotional security and unconditional acceptance are aspects that significantly contribute to greater career and profession satisfaction, career commitment and involvement, positive attitude and motivation (Ragins et al., 2000; Payne, Huffmann 2005; Chao 1997; Eby et al., 2008). It also appears that mentoring relationships with a strong informal component are more effective in influencing a student's attitude towards work and career, compared to an exclusively formal mentor (Ragins et al., 2000; Kram 1985). In addition, the extent to which an individual views his or her mentor as a role model or, the level of psychological or vocational support provided by a mentor, may explain the association between mentor and protégé's calling and job orientation. Also, as in the case of the mentoring relationship, having a role model can be seen as a form of relational identification, which entails identifying with the mentor and internalizing the aspects valorized by it (Mitchell, Eby and Ragins, 2015). Basically, these elements of the mentoring relationship are responsible for much of the effect mentoring has on vocational development.

In this research, we will address the issue of vocational development in the mentoring process from a social-constructivist perspective, with an emphasis on the discourse of career construction theory (Savickas, 2005, 2014).

### **The objective and the research questions**

In this research, we chose a qualitative deductive approach - trying to capture the role of mentoring in the development of calling among emerging adults, from their personal perspective.

Starting from previous research done on calling, we generated a series of questions to explore the experience of participants in the mentoring process. More specifically, the research questions concerned the way in which the mentoring process and relationship influenced the development of calling and its components. The research questions are:

1. What is the role of mentoring in developing calling for emerging adults in Romania?
2. What are the characteristics of a mentor that facilitate calling and career development from the perspective of the emerging adults in Romania?
3. To what extent does the perception of career as a calling contribute to career development?

### ***Method***

In order to achieve the proposed objective, we conducted in-depth interviews in an individual way, with emerging adults. Interviews were conducted by a single person, following an interview guide constructed based on the objective of this research and implicitly, of the research questions. To protect the privacy of the participants, pseudonyms were used instead of their real name.

### ***Participants***

The participants were 7 emerging adults, second-year students at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences (Psychology specialization), within the "Babes-Bolyai" University, Cluj-Napoca. From them, 3 were female and 4 were male. Participants were included in the study due to their participation in a career mentoring program for one year. The 7 participants were chosen from those who attended at least 25 hours of mentoring meetings during a university year and who have shown interest from the beginning regarding self-knowledge and the construction of their career in conformity to their own values, interests, significant goals and to reach the right choices that give them personal meaning. During the meetings, the mentor used career facilitation techniques derived from career construction theory (Savickas, 2011), and supplemented with vocational discovery techniques. The purpose was to increase students' engagement in the career-building process and to facilitate change by incorporating their calling. Data was collected individually, and participation was voluntary, no form of reward was offered for involvement in research. The demographics of the participants are presented below:

### ***Instruments*** - Interview guide

The interview guide was elaborated based on the central objective and research questions, including the following dimensions: a) the significance of calling for each participant; b) the role of mentoring in developing calling for participants; c) the participant's perspective on the impact of the mentor in the career development (see Annex 4) for the set of questions addressed to the participants).

The interview was a semi-structured one, which aimed to encourage an open discussion, the interviewer's questions or interventions having the role of creating support points for the conversation. The purpose was to investigate the opinions, experiences and personal emotions of the participants. Each person included in this study was interviewed individually.

### ***Design***

In order to carry out this research, the methodology of the thematic analysis was used according to the model elaborated by Braun and Clarke (2006).

### ***Results***

In the following, we will present, define and exemplify the themes and sub-themes mentioned, by representative excerpts from the dataset:

#### **1. Major theme - *Calling- the congruence of the self with the experience***

This theme represents the persuasion of the participants that calling represents a balance between aspects of career identity and the characteristics of professional experiences. In other words, calling involves knowing one's own values, interests, motivations, goals, etc. and identifying those areas that allow them to manifest themselves in the context of work, in a way that offers meaning and personal significance, but also social contribution. This topic also captures the different conceptualizations of calling present in the literature (Burdenson and Thomson, 2018). Within the major theme, we identified three major sub-themes: *Meaning and intrinsic significance*, *Contribution*, *Self-experience fit*, in order to differentiate the nuances of calling observed by the participants.

#### **2. Theme 2 - *Mentoring - catalyst in vocation development***

This theme reflects the fact that the mentoring process is a factor that contributes to the discovery of calling by stimulating and facilitating self-knowledge, reflection, self-exploration and external opportunities, but also by identifying personally relevant motivations. All these mechanisms are closely related to calling that leads to a high level of concern for significant professional experiences.

#### **3. Theme 3- *The mentoring relationship - the basis of vocational development***

This theme represents an essential dimension of mentoring, with high relevance for vocational development, as evidenced by the analysis of the participants' interviews. In all the interviews, the importance of the mentoring relationship was mentioned, but especially its characteristics, which facilitate the development of calling. Responses can be grouped into three major sub-themes: empathic communication and openness; mutual respect; shaping.

### ***Discussions and conclusions***

The thematic analysis was used in this study to identify participants' narratives regarding calling development and the role of mentoring in this process. According to the subjects obtained, the presence of calling implies self-knowledge and discovery of personal interests, values, motivations, which is a dynamic and powerful process influenced by the presence of a mentor, coach or counselor. Moreover, preparation for career choices is a skill that requires a process of self-reflection directed to relevant goals, which usually occurs in a career intervention. (Leontiev, Rasskazova, Fam and Ovchinnikova, 2016).

The main objective of this research was to understand the part mentoring plays in the development of calling among emerging adults, from their personal perspective. Thus, we set out to identify the particular nuances of the manner in which the mentoring process and

relationship influenced the development of calling and its components. Following the thematic analysis process, three major themes resulted: I. *Vocation - self-congruence with experience* (sub-themes: Meaning and intrinsic significance, Contribution, Self-experience fit); II. *Mentoring - a catalyst in the development of calling* (Self-reflection, Exploration, Self-efficacy and motivation, Concern and curiosity for opportunities for manifestation of calling) and III. *The mentoring relationship - the basis of calling development* (Empathic communication and openness, Mutual respect, Shaping).

## CHAPTER 5 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1. General conclusions. Summary

The present paper comprises two theoretical chapters and five empirical studies that focus on six distinct aspects of vocational construction investigation:

- a. the theoretical review of this construct in order to provide conceptual clarity to the research approach.
- b. preliminary exploration of the relevance of studying the presence of calling in the Romanian context and investigating the socio-demographic factors associated with it
- c. adaptation and validation of two instruments for measuring calling on Romanian samples
- d. development of theoretical explanatory models of calling on three Romanian samples (2 samples of emerging adult students and 1 sample of employees in the educational field)
- e. outlining some typological profiles of calling (1 sample of emerging adult students and 1 sample of employees in the educational field)
- f. qualitative investigation of the impact of mentoring in vocational development (theoretical transfer at the level of mentoring and counseling practices).

**Chapter 2** (theoretically) investigated the manner in which calling is conceptualized and investigated in the psychological literature, as well as the constructs associated with it over time. Being a relatively new construct studied in psychology (about 25 years), there are still a number of shortcomings and limitations regarding the definition of the construct and its applicability among populations other than those belonging to Western culture. These limits and theoretical, methodological and practical challenges have been analyzed extensively in the theoretical review of the specialized literature.

**Study I** was an exploratory study that investigated the extent to which calling as a construct has relevance for the Romanian population, using a sample of students from different faculties within Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca (Letters, Theology, Psychology, History, Political, Communication and Administrative Sciences). The results showed that 46% of the students report the presence of the calling, and a significant proportion of them explore different opportunities in the search for calling (53%).

Also, we investigated the differences in the expression/living of calling, respectively in reporting the presence of calling according to some demographic variables: age, residence, gender. There were no significant differences in age and residence. Gender differences were significant, girls reporting more the presence of perceived calling, but also the search for calling, prioritizing the search for meaningful work. The results also showed that students who were involved in volunteering relevant to their career field, reported experiencing calling significantly more than the others. Another important result of this study refers to identifying significant differences in the presence of calling and dynamic living of calling depending on the field of study, insignificant differences in case of calling search. Thus, students from theology reported significantly higher scores on the presence and experience of calling, which

is in agreement with previous research that suggests that religiosity is related to calling. Therefore, a relevant conclusion would be that, although the calling is not necessarily dependent on the field of study, certain vocational paths are rather associated with the presence of calling, some being traditionally vocational domains (eg theology), and others requiring a further and deeper exploration to identify intrinsic vocational factors.

**Study II** aimed to adapt and validate on two Romanian samples (students and employees in the educational field) two scales that measure vocation according to a neoclassical conceptualization Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (Dik, Eldridge, Steger and Duffy, 2012) and Multidimensional Calling Measure (Hagmaier and Ab. , 2012). The results confirmed the factorial structure for the two tools, with the highest matching indexes for Multidimensional Calling Measure (Hagmaier and Abele, 2012). The conclusions of both validation studies confirm, once again, the multidimensional nature of calling, which means that its conceptualization is reflected in the measurement characteristics of the investigated instrument.

**Study 2.1** aimed to investigate the Romanian version of the Multidimensional Calling Measure tool (Hagmaier and Abele, 2012) by analyzing the psychometric properties and the factorial structure of the scale on a sample of educational and student employees. The original three-factor multidimensional model (*Factor 1- Person-environment fit and matching, Factor 2- Meaning, significance and behavior derived from values, Factor 3- Transcendent orientation*), showed a good match after eliminating item number 9, problematic item given that it loaded on two factors. The elimination of item number 9 improved the fit of the measurement model in both samples. Also, the convergent validity was good, being tested in relation to life satisfaction and subjective success in the career. The results indicate that the three-factor factorial structure of the instrument is appropriate to measure calling in our samples, thus supporting the multidimensional model of vocation already validated by previous studies (Dik et al., 2012; Hagmaier & Abele, 2012).

**Study 2.2** has proposed to adapt and validate the Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ) (Dik et al., 2012) on two different samples of students and employees (teachers) in Romania. Thus, we analyzed the psychometric properties and the factorial structure of the instrument of measurement of the mentioned. The results obtained validated the matching in our samples of the six-factor model (*Presence - transcendental vocation, Search - transcendental vocation, Presence - meaningful work, CVQ - Search - meaningful work, CVQ - Presence - prosocial orientation, CVQ - Search - prosocial orientation* ). Regarding the final formula, two of the items in this scale were excluded (item number 8 and item number 11 belonging to the *transcendental-presence calling factor*) in order to increase the explanatory power of the measurement model. Thus, we identified a significant positive relation of the presence of calling with career self-efficacy, hope (regarding work) and life satisfaction.

**Study III** tested 3 explanatory models of CALLING using three different samples: two samples of emerging adult students and one sample of teachers.

**Study 3.1** aimed to investigate the relationship between vocation, adaptability in career and three career competencies (networking, personal branding, work exploration). The results supported the hypothesis that career adaptability is a significant mediator of the relationship between calling and career skills. At the same time, that part of the reason for which students who report experiencing calling have higher career competencies, is due to the resources of adaptability in career. Specifically, students and their career as a calling are more efficient in the development of a professional social network, communicate optimally regarding career-relevant skills, actively explore career opportunities, in part thanks to the fact that they use their psychosocial resources for career adaptability (trust, curiosity, control and concern).

**Study 3.2** made an essential contribution in understanding the relationships between career identity, calling, vocational self-efficacy, career commitment and life satisfaction. An

important conclusion of our study is that a well-defined career identity leads to the identification and perception of calling. Secondly, a feeling of clarity regarding the vocational self, in conjunction with the significant career sentiment and the values reflected in the vocational path, is an important indicator for increasing personal confidence in the ability to handle situations related to career management. This also increases engagement in behaviours that aim at professional development and overall satisfaction. Third, students who have a stable, strong self, high vocational clarity, develop a perception of the presence of their own calling that gives them meaning, which allows them to develop their self-efficacy in their careers. In addition, students who are perceived as capable and confident about career tasks are more involved in career development and more satisfied with their own lives. Therefore, supporting students to develop a clear and coherent career identity, but also to represent their career as a calling, can have effective results both on cognitive (high self-efficacy), emotional (well-being) and behavioral levels (career-orientated behaviours).

**Study 3.3** aimed to investigate the relationships between calling, career skills, vocational self-efficacy, life satisfaction and subjective success in a sample of teachers in Romania. The results emphasized that the relationship between calling and vocational self-efficacy was partially explained by career skills and, at the same time, revealed two positive effects of calling: career skills and self-efficacy. Based on the results, we can say that the presence of calling is a goal that contributes to the well-being of the teachers and to the feeling of success in the career, but also a process that involves a series of cognitions (self-efficacy), motivations and actions (the practice of career skills) that increase the chances that calling will be professionally experienced.

**Study IV** aimed to develop some types of vocation within a sample of emerging adult students and a sample of teachers from pre-university education in Romania. The research started from the typological model proposed by Hirschi in 2011, which was supplemented with new variables resulting from the recent analysis of the specialized literature. Study 4 provided an understanding of the structure of calling, differentiating several groups based on the components of calling.

**Study 4.1** had an essential contribution in extracting some typologies of calling within a sample of emerging adults, students from Romania. The conclusions of the study showed that from the point of view of the calling components, a typological solution with three groups would be the most appropriate for this purpose. Analysing the obtained results, we can affirm that the students with high scores for calling a. Have a clear career identity, b. They are proactively involved in their career development, c. They positively evaluate themselves as individuals, d. They are oriented towards their own personal development, e. They have a secure relationship with God. An important difference between clusters seems to be that participants with a strong sense of vocation are more motivated to develop personally than others, while also having a strong career identity and intrinsic religiosity.

**Study 4.2** aimed to achieve typological profiles of calling on a sample of teachers from Romania. The findings of the study showed that, regarding the components of calling, the sample could be divided into three subgroups. The delimitation claims that some personal characteristics can be considered as defining components of calling. Therefore, vocational teachers (a) they self-evaluate positively, (b) are more involved in career development and have effective career adaptation strategies (c) have a secure relationship with God (intrinsic religiosity), (d) report to prosocial values (relationships with others, altruism). In other words, the profile of a teacher with vocation is that of a person with high self-efficacy, which means that he/she internalizes his/her role as a teacher, is perceived competent in the specific field, but also in class management.

Corroborating the results obtained for both samples we can extract some characteristics of people that experience calling. In general, they are people with a clear career identity, reflecting self-knowledge, stability of interests, motivations and career goals. From the cognitive point of view, the individuals with calling value themselves, their potential and they have the cognitive capacity to manage career challenges effectively. They also have confidence in their own decisions, skills and competencies, have the feeling that they can control their own vocational path, are mentally flexible, open and curious about new opportunities, have a constructive concern about their own development, which allows them to notify and adjust their experiences to their own vocation. From a behavioral point of view, calling is reflected in proactive career behaviors, planning, efficient use of personal resources, frequently engaging in personal and professional development behaviors. As essential values, the vocational profile implies altruism; orientation towards others; a strong emotional and spiritual anchor given by the securing relationship with the divinity; self-knowledge and highlighting values as a motivational component of personality in the professional field.

**Study V** aimed to synchronize the results of studies 2-5 with contemporary approaches to counseling and mentoring and to offer working recommendations for incorporating calling into career development approaches. The main purpose of this study was to capture the role of mentoring in the development of calling among emerging adults, from their personal perspective. Thus, we set out to identify the nuances of the manner in which the mentoring process and relationship influenced the development of calling and its components. As a result of the thematic analysis process, 3 major themes resulted: *I. Calling- congruence of the self with the experience* (sub-themes: Meaning and intrinsic significance, Contribution, Self-experience matching). *II. Mentoring - catalyst in calling development* (Self-reflection, Exploration, Self-efficacy and motivation, Concern and curiosity for opportunities to manifest calling). *III. The mentoring relationship - the basis of calling development* (empathic communication and openness, mutual respect, shaping). Participants' responses revealed that the presence of calling implies great self-knowledge and discovery of personal interests, values, motivations, which is a dynamic and strongly influenced process by the presence of a mentor, coach or counselor. Moreover, the support from a mentor facilitates the activation of personal resources and enhances the self-directed career oriented towards individualized results in the context of an uncertain and dynamic work environment.

## **5.2 Theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions**

The present paper makes important contributions to the understanding of the psychological conceptualization of calling as a construct and its practical implications, using an approach derived mainly from the theory of career construction. More specifically, the present paper is the first research paper that investigates the construction of calling on the Romanian population, being a reference point for the specialized literature from the East-European space that aims to offer coherence and applicability to the psychological factors relevant for identifying meaning and significance of personal and professional experiences.

From a theoretical point of view, our studies offer clarifications regarding the conceptualization of calling, being the first study investigating this among the Romanian population. Theoretically, our studies align with those who support the neoclassical perspective on calling, which emphasizes the connection and balance between personal meaning and significance, derived from personal identity, with prosocial orientation and responsibility, in a broad sense. Practically, regardless of the source of a calling, its discovery implies the derivation of a personal sense oriented both to oneself and to others, prosocial.

The second important theoretical contribution of our studies is the reinforcement of the results that claim calling is not fundamentally dependent on a particular field of work, although those who have chosen careers in professions which are essentially vocational (e.g. medicine,

defence and national security, research, education, theology), have an advantage in discovering calling.

The third important contribution involves the validation of the structural models that investigate the relation of calling with different antecedents and results, as well as the realization of the vocational profiles that allowed the description of calling by its components. **From a methodological point of view**, an important contribution of the present paper is that it combines the quantitative and the qualitative type. The *top-down* quantitative methodology expressed through transversal studies, which allows the standardized investigation of constructs, is complemented by a person-centred approach (typological approach) and the quantitative investigation of mentoring in vocational development. This combined methodological approach allowed us to formulate a series of solid conclusions regarding the way of conceptualization, characterization and categorization of calling, but also about the mechanisms by which it is expressed at the cognitive, emotional, behavioral and social level and can have an impact on multiple life roles of a person (Hunter et al., 2010; Zhang, Dik, et al., 2015).

Secondly, another important contribution of the study, concerns the validation and adaptation on Romanian samples of two instruments for measuring calling, the most cited in the literature, namely Multidimensional Calling Measure (Hagmaier and Abele, 2012) and CallingandVocationQuestionnaire (Dik et al., 2012).

**Considering the practical implications**, the results of the presented studies provide important information for the efficiency of counseling, mentoring, and coaching activities, or for the development of educational policies and human resources of impact.

First, exploring in the process of counseling, *coaching* or mentoring of the idea calling together with clients can provide important insight about the sources of positive emotions in the career, skills, values system, the importance of contributing to the lives of others. Subsequently, identifying opportunities to explore calling in the context of work, volunteering, leisure, can increase the chance of expressing calling, as emphasized by our studies that support the positive results of calling.

Second, identifying calling can be facilitated by the presence and guidance of a mentor, counselor or coach, as we have shown in our study. Moreover, mentor support facilitates the activation of personal resources and enhances the self-directed career oriented towards individualized results in the context of an uncertain and dynamic work environment (Briscoe, Henagan, Burton and Murphy, 2012).

Third, regarding the practical implications in the organizational environment, we consider the conclusions concerning the effects of calling on career and life satisfaction, career commitment, self-efficacy, and adaptability as highly relevant. More specifically, in the human resources departments, research on calling could be useful to identify possible career paths for employees considering their perception of their own calling. This would contribute to more efficient talents management in organizations, thus increasing the chance of work engagement, job satisfaction and employee retention. Also, given that calling is a subjective, personal belief, human resources specialists could devise strategies that facilitate the discovery of meaning in work through activities with this specific purpose (e.g. activities with personal relevance, activities with prosocial purposes, or spiritual).

Last but not least, universities can contribute to the development of calling by including optional activities or courses that develop the skills of integration in the socio-economic activity of the students, their ability to explore themselves in relation to the realities of the labour market, thus increasing the chances of experiencing calling in work. Such measures



could contribute to lowering the academic dropout rate, increasing motivation for career development and educational commitment. Also, such activities can be included in teacher training programs to provide increased consistency and motivation in the direction of teaching career development.

### **5.3 Recommendations and practical implications**

Our findings and the implications of studying calling highlighted previously provide a framework for making recommendations to increase people's ability to give meaning to their careers, their vocational transitions, and to connect their own self with the world of work. This takes the form of an important indicator of subjective success in career. This is one of the reasons why promoting calling in counseling, mentoring or coaching is essential. Thus, we make some recommendations for practice, derived from the studies included in this paper:

1. *Carrying out the assessment of the perceived calling level*
2. *Connecting calling and meaning in career with the meaning in life*
3. *Guiding clients towards behaviors that promote identifying meaning and significance in career*
4. *Promoting the social and community component of the career*
5. *Connecting the personal potential with the needs of the external organization/environment*
6. *Restructuring beliefs about self and career*
7. *Incorporation of religion and spirituality*

### **5.4 Limitations**

Despite the positive results obtained in the presented studies, these have some limitations that we assume in interpreting the results.

First, the transversal and self-reporting nature of the research entails some limitations in relation to the interpretation of the data. The most important limitation of this type of design is the inability to make causal inferences, a limit that we tried to reduce by the fact that we used multiple samples to investigate the relationships between constructs.

Secondly, we used a non-probability sampling method, namely convenience sampling, which is why the generalization of the results could suffer.

Thirdly, we focused only on the positive outcomes of calling, provided that for a correct understanding of the phenomenon it is necessary to also investigate the contexts in which calling leads to less beneficial results.

Fourth, we did not consider the organizational variables and characteristics of the socio-cultural environment, elements that, typically, influence the perception of one's own calling and its expression of calling.

### **5.5 Future research directions**

The contributions of the present paper to the advancement of empirical psychological knowledge regarding calling as a construct open new research directions that can be explored to stabilize the conclusions and offer their applicability.

First, it is necessary to extend the studies regarding the conceptualization of calling by carrying out intercultural comparisons. This would bring greater stability of the existing results, while also offering a contextualization of certain dimensions of the culturally specific calling.

Second, future research is needed to investigate processes that explain the development of calling.

Third, a topic that needs the attention of researchers is the one that deals with the mechanisms that explain the differences in experiencing calling and its effects on different groups of individuals.

Fourth, another important research direction with powerful practical implications concerns the investigation of organizational and social factors that facilitate vocational development.

Fifth, the importance of social support and social influence on calling, requires an in-depth investigation in studies that deepen new elements such as social influence on the ability to express calling in challenging situations or with limited resources.

Lastly, it is necessary to develop sustainable counseling, mentoring, coaching, educational programs that include elements of calling identification, exploration and expression, starting from empirical data that provides conclusive results on the dimensions of calling, its backgrounds and its effects.

## **5.6. Closing remarks**

The exploration and discovery of calling can offer a crucial competitive advantage in the contexts of undeniable dynamics of contemporary careers. They are increasingly asking individuals to interact with new structures and to constantly adapt, yet maintaining the consistency of goals and the feeling of fulfilment. Thus, the orientation of work as a calling offers continuity to the vocational trajectories, a kind of secure anchor in a context of increasingly fragmented work. Moreover, the representation of work as a calling, can answer a challenging question, that of how we define our identity, meaning, and the way in which we integrate them into our lives, in a society in which the dynamics are continuous and inconsistent, especially in the field of work. Practically, the conceptualization of one's personal career as a calling brings with it a consistent set of professional goals and clarity, regardless of the job or field, etc. Finally, the presence of calling or at least the orientation and exploration in the direction of identifying calling, can bring the person closer to himself, motivating him to explore career opportunities that reflect his authentic values and contribute to the good of others, alike.

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