

THESES OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION (PH.D.)

SOCIALIZATIONAL CONTEXT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL  
STUDENTS IN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

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## 1. Introduction

As an effect of social changes, in the pedagogical and educational processes, changes in the living conditions of “the student-youth” and their habits have come into the centre of interest. Our accession to the European Union has caused significant changes, which alter the situation of our education and that of our youngsters. We have little information on how well-prepared we are for the changes; this is why the significance of scientific researches connected to youth topics has increased.

We can understand youngsters’ behaviour, everyday life and thinking if we get to know their motivation, abilities, surroundings and notions. We listen to their wishes, on the basis of which we are able to give them proper guidance, help and good advice, aiding them to adapt to their socializational environment. Through technical achievements youngsters’ way of thinking has considerably changed and is continuously changing, because their behaviour and thought are largely determined by environmental influences.

For the society it cannot be an unimportant question what educational considerations can be influenced to form the generation of the future so that our existing culture and values can remain. Their socialization, knowledge and way of life will be a quality determinant of the future society.

We can prepare for the challenges of the twenty-first century properly and realize new teaching and educational reforms if we

thoroughly get to know the socializational context of students by smaller area units (counties, regions, cross-border areas), so that our developments will happen in agreement with values of the European Union. (Bábosik 2004)

## 2. Antecedents of the Research, Objectives

One of the main objectives of the research was to get to know educational environments and also to reveal the effectiveness and deficiency of the education, in some cases the harmful effect of socializational environments through the activities of schools.

Due to the increase in the number of violent crimes committed at a young age, the effect-investigation of youngsters' education is important. The results of the research titled "The Imprisoned 2000" have drawn attention to the process of the formations of youngsters' deviant behaviour, which made it necessary to examine the socializational environment of adolescents thoroughly.

Students are overburdened; it is often accompanied by anxiety and depression, which affects their personality and their environment. They try to ease the accumulated tension mainly in the company of friends where they can drink heavily or in some cases take drugs.

The aim of the research was to reveal how socializational stages influence (in negative or positive measure) the formation of habits harmful for health, as in the formation of students' health promotion and way of life their immediate socializational context has the biggest

role. At adolescence habits endangering health (smoking, excessive use of alcohol, drugs) may develop, which may cause deviant behaviours later. This is why it was among the main objectives to examine the family thoroughly to get to know what cultural capital families, whose children smoke, drink alcohol and take drugs, have.

A further objective was to expand the “student-youth” research to cross-border regions, which examined the way of life and socializational environment of the students attending Hungarian secondary schools in Slovenia and Croatia neighbouring Zala County.

In secondary schools it is essential to get to know and follow the students’ way of life and opinions with continuous attention to elaborate new methods of education policy, and also for the good professional supervision and the successful reform of the education system. Educational conceptions can be planned and worked out only with full knowledge of that.

Pedagogy of the twenty-first century has come closer to the formulation of Ivan Illich (1971), according to whom “the present system with a compulsory curriculum and exams has to be followed by learning based on own motivation.” (Andorka 2003)

### 3. Novelty of the Dissertation, Volume of the Sample

National researches on the youth, secondary school students, adolescents have been and are done, but proper representativity is difficult to ensure. The empirical research was carried out in Zala

County in 2003 on a 10% representative sample. Volume of the formed sample provides the representation of students taking part in different courses.

Many try to look into the everyday life of the youth, make different statements, but researches carried out till now do not investigate students' living conditions with their different socializational stages, habits and opinions overallly. Through the thorough research done we can better get to know the deficiencies, which should be improved.

In the conceptual definitions considerations of social statistics were applied, so the data can be compared with the data of the Central Statistical Office and the international data.

#### 4. Theme of the Dissertation and its Structure

The dissertation presents the new results of the researches, which were carried out in the secondary schools of Zala County, as well as in Slovenia and Croatia among students in the 9th-12th years (15-19-year-old students).

The dissertation is divided into nine chapters. After the overview of the research in the second chapter the theoretical definitions point out the importance of teaching and education and their continuous change. As an effect of globalization, within the European Union we have to face new challenges, through which the formation of moral samples needs to be helped in the educational institutions.

Based on the theoretical frame the chapter further analyses the tight connections of teaching, education and educational institutions. On the basis of the research results it draws attention to differences between theory and practice. A detailed analysis was made on the objectives of the pedagogical programmes in the observed schools and their realization, and it also shows the weak points, which should be improved. It deals with methods aimed at the formation of the healthier way of life, because more effective measures would be necessary for the health promotion of the youth. Research results also point out that students move little and they do not have a proper diet. Their eating habits, tastes are formed by McDonald's restaurants. (Szijártó 2000)

The chapter outlines the students' cultural habits in detail, in the social competence the group specific values, as well as the norm system of youngsters in the world of culture.

Most of them read books only under pressure; they watch TV programmes or video films indiscriminately instead. "Media pollution means the real danger in case of children and youngsters." (Koncz and his partner 2004) The third chapter focuses on the measuring result of the students' satisfaction, which is formed by emotions and style of thinking. To be well-balanced and successful in their studies it is important that they should feel good at school, respect and like their teachers and schoolmates. They have to learn how they can give their sincere opinions and how they have to take

responsibility for their decisions.

During the education both the pedagogue and the student set themselves aims, for the successful realization of which the harmonic common dialogue and cooperative relationship are essential. The family and the school primarily influence the formation of individual factors; this is why the pedagogues' work could be made more effective if they formed tighter relationships with the parents. Thus, the students' opinion and satisfaction with their teachers and the school environment could change into a positive direction.

The students' positive and negative feedbacks on their socializational context can help to work out educational conceptions.

The fourth chapter deals with the students' family background in detail and points out the loosening of family ties. It discusses to what extent socializational factors affect the adolescents' personality and emotional development.

From the point of view of the social adaptation of the generation growing up, the role of the family is essential, which has the biggest influence in children's life. Unfortunately in most families due to lack of time there are no intimate conversations between parents and children, which are very important at this age. (Kelemen 2000) This is why it may happen that with adolescents "in the arrangement of the diffuse self-image, peers become more important than parents and peer groups than family" (Horti 2000 42) which is proved by this present research.

In the past decades family types have been transformed and changed considerably, which has an effect on the structure of the whole society, as the family has an effect and affects the society through its social functions. (Kozma 1999) Majority of the adolescents find it essential to have strong family ties, this is why they find marriage more important than cohabitation. The research revealed the living conditions of families thoroughly, on the basis of which we can get to know the extent of the formation of family relationships in Zala County. Do the children discuss their troubles and problems with their parents sincerely? The chapter deals with the way of life, mood and living standard of the families, the parents' occupations and qualifications in detail. Most parents think that the stage of education is the school, so while they do their whole-day work, the school should provide their children's teaching and education. They try to replace with money what they cannot give to their children due to lack of time. Love, care and help are essential both for their development and continuing their studies. It happens that at home parents do not recognize that their secondary school child arrives home from a "party" at dawn; so many parents face the fact that their child has drunk alcohol or become a drug addict late.

The fifth chapter shows how burdened students are, their timetable on weekdays on the basis of the most important activities.

The sixth chapter discusses deviant behavioural forms and their formation. After theoretical approaches it analyses habits harmful for



health formed among students in detail.

The smoking parent pays no regard to his or her child. Youngsters who get addicted to cigarettes in these families can become very heavy smokers.

Where parents smoke, boys regard the father and girls regard the mother as a model. Where both parents smoke it can be noticed that their child can become a very heavy smoker. Results point out to the extensive smoking habits of secondary school girls, "mothers of the future", they show the students' drug and alcohol use and those socio-cultural factors, which affect the formation of deviant behavioural forms. It demonstrates the boys' and girls' smoking habits, alcohol and drug use by age groups. If in families socializational factors do not work well, deviant behavioural forms might form more often. (Bagdy 1977)

The research covered the examination of the religious beliefs of families, their church affiliation, which is shown by the seventh chapter. It reveals differences in the outlook upon life and norm system of religious and irreligious students. Multidimensional examination of religiosity gives an answer to what outlooks upon life and behavioural norms accompany those students who profess to be religious. The eighth chapter deals with the sameness and distinctness of the socializational context and habits of Hungarian students living in minority in the regions neighbouring the county. The research was carried out in three areas, in Zala County and the neighbouring

Slovenia and Croatia, so it presents the results in regional comparison as well. Lendva and Eszék cover local societies of different structure. The comparison of data shows the differences of socializational environments.

Most former Eastern and Central European countries form a community with the European Union. During the integration processes the aim is the support the extent of which is suitable for its cultural and linguistic variegation. (Kron 2003) As a consequence of that, increase in the population, language use and education of the Hungarians over the border is undergoing a change.

Hungarian students living in minority have partly assimilated within the given community. On the basis of the results it can be felt that the educational activity is the primary condition of the survival of a given minority. Organization determines the real value of Hungarian traditions and culture.

In the field of teaching-education, it is necessary to build further relationships, which enrich not only the students' but also the pedagogues' experience in all three regions. On the basis of the results we can also see the devotion of the people living in minority to the mother nation.

## 5. Results and Conclusions of the Dissertation

The thorough examination helped school organizations to take measures and form new educational con ceptions. The student-youth

research thoroughly examined the socializational environment of the 15-19-year-old students, revealing the adolescents' way of thinking, opinion, conception, emotions and habits. The results were published in an official publication titled "Lifestyle Features of the Student-Youth in Zala County" by the Zala County Directorate of the Central Statistical Office in 2004. The statistical data were used not only in the county but also in the national researches.

After publishing the data a research summary was made, in which it was stated that in schools informative lectures could be more effective if illustrative effects were applied. As a result of that, hospital visits could take place, where doctors demonstrated the harmful habits of smoking to the students in X-ray pictures. Methods were planned by taking the research results into consideration and with the cooperation of health education groups so that the health education and development programme of the school can be realized effectively. Elaboration of the "anti-smoking programme" of schools was made by involving parents, which was supplemented by methods planned and implemented by the students, applying peer teachings. Experts of the health development TEAM (the headmaster, the pedagogue, school doctors, the health visitor, school psychologist, people responsible for child and youth protection, PE teachers, drug policy coordinators) took part in planning the health education programme. To achieve the aim, a short, a medium and a long-term programme were made. A short-term programme, which requires immediate

intervention and includes tasks, which need to be solved within one year. That contained improving proper diet and keeping back drugs. In the medium-term objectives planned for three-four years the main emphasis was put on body culture and the decrease of deviant behavioural forms, while in the long-term ones planned for eight-twelve years aimed at “life without health problems” above all.

Health education and information-giving are continuously planned in every secondary school. The task of schools is to form the students' conceptions, way of thinking and behaviour.

The research verified that a relationship network, where in the continuous communication, strengthening each other, a stable, closed, local norm system would develop, is not formed between parents and pedagogues. The school expects the parents while the parents expect the school to educate their children.

The action plan made it clear for schools that guests (doctors, policemen) invited in the frame of parent meetings should hold lectures on the harmful effects of smoking, alcohol and drug use and the parental responsibility.

It was proved that most students regard themselves religious. This is how it could happen that in the preparation of the action plan the representatives of churches were involved too so that “coordination helping the youth” could be made more effective.

It was also proved that within the county, in schools with higher prestige, factors made on the basis of result indexes do not indicate the

definitely positive role of the school in terms of continuing studies. Students take part in private classes in a high number of lessons, and those who drop behind are forced to leave the school. Further tasks of the action plan include caring about and widening students' motivational activity, thus improving community life. The good atmosphere of the school and the vocation of the pedagogue are reflected in the students' satisfaction.

Development of the science has brought along the extension of knowledge. There is a need for the preparation for practical life; this is why the schools where fields of science can be clearly shown and theoretical knowledge is made more interesting with practice are more successful.

During teaching we should strive to give way to such career choice aspirations that later youngsters can find their account in the world of labour here at home. "E. Denison (1967) demonstrated that the increase of school qualifications substantially contributed to the economic development of developed countries, growth of their national income." (Andorka 2003, 387)

Secondary schools have to join education with more resolution so that students' norm system will change into a positive direction.

After the revealed results, the significance and the necessity of experience exchange between schools got emphasis. The dialogue between teachers and students can start widely, which has been supplemented by schools over the border too. Based on the common

experience exchange the relation of schools with Hungarian schools in Slovenia and Croatia has continued to strengthen.

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