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# *Familia, estilos vocacionales y calificadores profesionales*

## *Family, vocational styles and professional qualifiers*

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**Resumen:** Cuando de elegir profesiones se trata, los adolescentes a menudo tienen en su familia el referente más cercano. El presente trabajo pretende describir cómo se comporta el proceso de formación vocacional y de orientación profesional por parte de las familias de adolescentes de octavo de la escuela secundaria básica “Orlando Fernández Badell”, enclavada en la comunidad de Rajayoga del municipio Santiago de Cuba. El diagnóstico realizado permitió elaborar una caracterización de las diferentes maneras en que la familia cumple con su función de formación vocacional y orientación profesional reflejada en los estilos vocacionales y calificadores profesionales.

**Palabras clave:** Formación vocacional; Orientación profesional; Estilos vocacionales; Calificadores vocacionales

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**Abstract:** When it comes of choosing a profession, teenagers often count on their families support and referents. This paper aims at describing the behavior of the process of vocational orientation and professional orientation carried out by the family of a group of teenagers of the eight grade of the Basic Highschool “Orlando Fernández Badell”, of the community of Rajayoga in the Santiago de Cuba municipality. The diagnostic carried out allowed us to design a characterization of the different ways in which a family accomplishes its role of vocational and professional guidance, expressed according to the vocational styles and professional qualifiers.

**Keywords:** Vocational training; Professional orientation; Vocational styles; Professional qualifiers

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## **Introduction**

The family, throughout history, has fulfilled its educational function, first having the exclusivity as agent of socialization, and then as an important influence that conforms to the socio-historical conditions of life that dominate in each epoch. In Cuba, the family has been in charge of vocational training and the vocational guidance of the young, as it has guided them to the trades and professions that are traditionally carried out, since only the minority of the population had open access to the schools, the main responsible for this process.

With the revolutionary triumph education was prioritized, and it became massive and free, and the Palaces of Pioneers emerged, institutions which main purpose is the vocational training and vocational guidance of the youngsters.

Today it can be perceived that vocational training and vocational guidance over the years remained, to a large extent, under the responsibility of pedagogues; so the family, in general, entrusts the school, even without intending it, a function that it must fulfill in a responsible, conscious and participative way.

Vocational training and vocational guidance is an issue addressed by different sciences, and generally analyzed from the work of the school institution, attributing to the family a secondary role.

The present research emphasizes in the study of families, motivated by the work of the Provincial Palace of Pioneers "A flower for Camilo", from Santiago de Cuba, at the basic secondary school "Orlando Fernández Badell", center of provincial reference for the results achieved in the organizational fulfillment of their functions, and in the teaching. The study was carried out in the community of Rajayoga in the municipality of Santiago de Cuba, which has a heterogeneous population comprising people from the Revolutionary Armed Forces, Ministry of the Interior, health professionals, self-employed workers, and low-level unemployed.

In this school, most adolescents are insecure when choosing their continuity of study, many lack knowledge about the object of study of occupations and professions, 41.7% long to study careers for which they are not prepared and have not skills, and 5% want careers that fall well below their potential. Generally, they have not shown concern about what they are going to study at the end of this educational level, in addition, when the moment of the decision arrives, the majority wants a major that does not match the desires of the parents. 64.7% found in the family the people who most affected the selection process of their career.

The bibliographic study, together with the application of methodological triangulation, and the analysis of the results obtained with the application of different instruments,

allowed to describe how the process of vocational training and professional orientation by the families of eighth adolescents of the secondary school "Orlando Fernández Badell", located in the community of Rajayoga of the municipality Santiago de Cuba works.

## **Development**

### **Definition of the fundamental categories for the study of the process of vocational training and vocational guidance in the family**

The educational function of the family has been studied by a number of social researchers such as Álvarez (2001), Reyes (2004), Peláez (2004), Fleitas (2005), Llerena (2007), Arés and Cruz (2005).

At present it is necessary to point out that when talking about such an important function, reference is made to the set of actions or influences exerted by the family through and during the process of socialization with its members, in order to prepare them for life.

As for the terms vocational training and professional orientation, other researchers such as Sánchez (2008), Mosqueda (2008), suggest that there is a rupture between them, whereas for Grinder (1990) and the Cuban Ministry of Education in its Ministerial Resolution No. 306/09 there is a link between them.

They are considered as two processes that theoretically could be separated but in practice are closely linked, referring to those attitudes of the parents and children's abilities, the knowledge of the occupations and the professions that the adolescents possess, and what they are going to choose to do, along with the other elements of the educational function of the family which allow the preference for one or another career being thus more accurate their choice of major. Therefore, the above are considered as part of the educational function of the family. Both terms are used in this paper to refer to the same process, which is ultimately the education of preferences or rejection by some professions or trades.

### **Tools and methodology applied in research**

The interview was applied to seven high school professors of the "Orlando Fernández Badell (director, 8th grade leader, and five instructors of 8th grade) to know their specialized opinion that allowed to select the sample and obtain other bibliographic materials that could contribute to the investigation.

The in-depth (face-to-face and semi-standardized) interview, which allows the interviewee to express himself more freely (Rodríguez and García, 2008) was applied to 17 students from a group of 8<sup>th</sup> grade since, according to the teachers, in these groups (the 8<sup>th</sup> graders) the topic of research is better manifested and discussed. The interview process was complemented with relatives. Its application had as objective to verify the knowledge that the adolescents possess on the professions and the trades, as well as to verify the results obtained in the qualitative questionnaire. This group is evaluated by its basic guide as average in terms of academic performance, it is composed of students of high, medium and low level, has no problems of absences and punctuality, and they are descendants of working parents or intellectuals.

The scientific observation, which allowed to verify the systematicity and depth with which the subjects of vocational training and professional orientation are treated in the meetings with parents, as well as the assistance and punctuality to the activities, was carried out in five groups of 8th grade on two occasions, for a total of ten visits.

The questionnaire recommended by Hernández (2004) was applied to 60 adolescents of 8th grade in order to know their vocational intentions, and their relatives' opinions (father, grandfather, uncle) to analyze the influence they exerted in this process, and to compare the results with the ones of the questionnaires applied to adolescents and tutors.

In order to validate the statistical data, the SPSS computerized statistical package and the Microsoft Office Excel program were used to process the information, and work with percentages, frequencies, statistical tests, graphs and tables using the data obtained with the questionnaires.

As a result of the questionnaires applied to adolescents, it was obtained that only 17.6% talk with the family about subjects related to the school in general, and 23.5% about the careers to be studied. Most of the relatives surveyed refer to the preponderant topics of conversation with adolescents regarding formal education and stimulation to study.

### **Behavior of the interaction of families with adolescents**

| <b>Features:</b>  | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---|-------------------|
| Null participation in adolescent decisions                  | 33.3              |
| Indifference regarding the education of adolescents         | 26.7              |
| Parents too busily engaged in adolescent education          | 20                |
| They listen to the opinion of the adolescent and advise him | 8.3               |
| Attitude and very unstable modes of expression              | 6.7               |
| They impose their criterion                                 | 5                 |

Chart 1 - Behavior of the interaction of families with adolescents

Source: The author

The adolescents interviewed stated that the information about the professions and the occupations they receive from their relatives is incomplete, vague, corresponds to what was experienced by each of them and is not, in a general sense, the product of research on the subject.

### **Characteristics of the information that the family offers to the adolescents on the different jobs and occupations.**

| <b>Characteristics:</b>   | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---|-------------------|
| A positive opinion about the career choice of the adolescent      | 75                |
| Talk about the aim and scope of trades without forcing a decision | 73.3              |

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|   |      |
|---|------|
| Expresses the advantages and disadvantages of each trade        | 71.6 |
| Is systematic   | 58.3 |
| Clarifies all doubts regarding the issue.                       | 55   |
| Express with body movements their opinion                       | 48.3 |
| Is insufficient   | 38.3 |
| Is variable   | 36.7 |
| Is negative about the trade that the adolescent wants to study. | 26.7 |

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Chart 2 –Characteristic of the information provided by the family to adolescents

Source: The author

Although working mothers and fathers with a pre-university cultural level predominate, the tendency of teenagers to be intellectuals is perceived, which shows that family influences in this sense, and are aimed at orienting their offspring towards the professions that the adult members wanted to study, but for some reason could not, or towards the ones which, in their regard provide better social and material development.

The scientific observations showed that only 50% of the family members attended seven meetings, and the majority arrived late, and it was predominant the participation of mothers and other female relatives. The subject of the choice of the profession is treated very little and is not deepened: it is an issue always briefly addressed as a result of the academic performance of the students. On the other hand, according to the teachers this subject is analyzed with the students in classes.

The professors interviewed stated that the knowledge about the occupations and professions of family members is insufficient, and that in most cases the pioneers know more about what they intend to study than their parents. This is evidenced in the results of the questionnaires applied to the relatives, where only 30% knows the object of study of the professions and the trades which their children could choose. On the

other hand, most parents are not aware of the true potential of their children, they want a career and their sons want other.

Analyzing the binomial statistical test, it was found that the family members are more likely to influence the decision, and do not know how to achieve an adequate vocational training and professional orientation, since the results are statistically significant, we are rejecting the hypothesis of nullity ( $H_0$ ) and accepting the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) raised in the present study.

### **Towards a description of the process of vocational training and vocational guidance in the family of adolescents**

By analyzing the empirical results obtained through the application of investigative techniques, and taking into account theories such as the social system of Talcott Parsons, the symbolic interactionism of Hebert Blumer, and Pierre Bourdieu's Habitus-Field (Ritzer, 2006), selected for the sociological analysis of the phenomenon under study, different ways of influencing the career selection process for these families, named vocational qualifiers and qualifiers, were found.

Several authors have described the communicative-educational process that takes place in families of adolescents with aggressive manifestations and their incidence in the behavior of their members (Rodríguez and Batista, 2012), making classifications that have denominated communicative styles, communicative capacity (Arés, 1990), educational styles (Aroca and Cánovas, 2012), etc. In these scientific productions vocational training and professional guidance is not the center of the analysis, therefore this edge of family education remains implicit, however, their contributions are considered a reference for this research.

Arés (1990) groups the different educational methods by means of which the family exercises authority over the subject in the formative process, defining them in educational styles, which have been the closest reference for the design of an analogy that specifies the work of the family directed to the choice of professions that resulted in the Vocational Styles that are presented and could be verified empirically. Also of

vital importance were the contributions of the sociologist Alfred Schutz (Ritzer, 2006) who, under the name of typifications, defined the constructs of first order or daily constructs as types constituted in previous experiences, theory that supports the obtaining of the vocational qualifiers here exposed.

At present, the vocational styles of the family are defined as the way in which the process of vocational training and vocational guidance by the family is carried out, to the procedure in which this social institution manages to have its descendants fall in love with one or another profession or trade, or otherwise, how they manage to disillusion them towards some occupations. They are conceived within the educational function of the family.

Vocational styles include:

1-Dominant: refers to those families where the student is imposed in various ways, the selection of a career or another, or lead to the non-selection of professions and trades that are the displeasure of its members appealing to physical damage, psychological damage, or both.

This method has negative consequences, since, by undervaluing adolescents, their autonomy is limited, and they create the basis for a conflict between parents and adolescents, or dominant and dominated.

2-Tolerant: The members of the family permit their children to choose the major that they wish without coercion. There are cases in which relatives have knowledge of the profession that the adolescent wishes to study and consider that he is not capacitated physic or mentally to assume it, or although they suppose that the preparation their child has is suitable for performing other type of professions, they do not express their opinion with regard to this matter, neither intervene in the subject.

This vocational style is not characterized by caring for the school subjects that the adolescent receives, but for his academic performance, and discipline: in case of difficulties, parents are not able to eradicate them.

**3. Unstable:** Systematic scarcity of activities of vocational formation and vocational guidance. It refers to the variability in the uses of the different vocational styles. This instability can take place of various forms:

Type A: Lack of frequency in the utilization of the vocational styles.

Type B: Members of the family, in the process of vocational orientation, do not use the same methods, and influence the adolescent in different ways, which causes variable opinions about the relevance of one career or the other.

This causes in the adolescent doubts, a state of contradiction that incites the insecurity in his decision, and leads to disappointment.

**4 Indifferent:** it refers to the lack of occupation of the tutors to work in the vocational education and guidance of the students. They do not know about the career that the adolescent wishes to study, and they do not care about the matter. Abandonment of the educational paternal responsibilities affects negatively since the adolescent does not receive support and information on the subject of the continuity of study. These adolescents lack knowledge about the object of study of the various professions, therefore, they do not find themselves in conditions to know which career to choose.

In this style, discovering the real potentialities of the adolescent is not achieved. In general, parents do not worry about these students, neither they take care of this aspect, what their children want, hence, their children feel insecure when selecting a profession or occupation.

**5 Super-Alert:** parents are excessively caring for vocational orientation and vocational guidance. That does not allow the adolescent to discover the characteristics of the diverse professions, as well as their qualifications to exercise them, by themselves. These parents use to be obstinate at the point of besieging the student with the theme, that can cause rejection to those conversations that turn out boring and uncomfortable. This action limits the adolescent's development, as well as the apprehension of the knowledge that he needs, to decide.

**6 Rational:** The tutors contribute information about the careers and the occupations, chat about the real possibilities that the professionals of a certain career have, and the qualifications necessary to exercise it. Parents are very observant of the conduct of their children, at the point of knowing which profession is obviously suitable for their children. They offer accurate information with which they can choose from a variety of professions and occupations, taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of each and the most necessary at their territory. They get informed by the media, books, other professionals, the school, official documents, and visiting workplaces.

When the adolescent has not made a decision they help him choose by thinking on the attitudes and qualifications that they possess, always in a democratic way and respecting opinions. These parents use rational arguments that motivate the study, and they offer their child the opportunity to participate and be the main protagonist of his future.

In general, the students that get an education under this vocational style, combine firmness, affection, respect and are example, since they can choose a definite vocation and know how to justify their choice emitting founded arguments.

This type is the ideal type we recommend in the process of vocational orientation and vocational guidance.

The family's vocational styles imply various vocational examiners or subsystems, which execute that way when one influences on the vocational orientation and vocational guidance.

### **Ecuation**

Vocational Styles of the Family =  $\Sigma$  Vocational Qualifiers.

$\Sigma$  Vocational Qualifiers = adult members of the family who most affect vocational training and vocational guidance.

The use of vocational styles according to the investigative techniques applied to this unit of analysis behaved as follows: tolerant 33.30%; Indifferent 26.70%; Supervigilant 20%; Rational 8.30%; Unstable 6.70%; Dominant 5%.

Each time family members talk about professions or trades, they perform a qualification, although sometimes it is very subtle and unconscious. Even when expressing the object of study of a profession, they also transmit, sometimes unintentionally, signals or words that demonstrate how much it pleases themselves or not, and all this is perceived by adolescents.

Vocational qualifiers are members of the family who, in one way or another, give their opinion about the professions and trades in front of adolescents. The above definition derives from the literature review developed on the basis of the empirical results of the research.

The analysis of the results of this research on the fulfillment of vocational training and vocational guidance in the families studied allowed the identification of vocational qualifiers according to several criteria:

**1-According to the qualification they give about the profession that the adolescent wants to study**

- a) Positive: they maintain a favorable criterion on the career that the adolescent wants, emphasizing, at times, the advantages that it possesses.
- b) Negative: they maintain an unfavorable criterion about the career that the adolescent wishes to exercise, emphasizing, at times, the disadvantages that it has.
- c) Mixed: they think about the advantages and disadvantages of a profession or trade without emphasizing one or the other.
- d) Apparently null: they express information about the object of study of a major, without intending to qualify it.

This apparently does not qualify it, however, with the word emphasis, the intonation, the characterological elements provided, parents make up a subjective qualification in the adolescent.

## **2-According to the quantity and quality of information about trades and professions**

a) Sufficient: they provide an argument about the trades and the professions, which allows the adolescent to evacuate all their doubts on the matter.

b) Insufficient: they provide incomplete information about trades and professions, which does not allow them to meet their cognitive needs.

## **3-According to the systematicity of the information**

a) Temporal: they do not have a systematized opinion about a particular profession or trade, and do not often discuss this topic with adolescents.

b) Systematic: have an unchanging opinion about a profession or trade, and talk more systematically about the choice of career.

In the historical analysis developed by Engels (1972) the transformations occurring in the family are related to the economic and productive conditions of each epoch, as well as analyzing marriage strategies -especially in monogamy and its link with capitalism- followed by families throughout history aimed at ensuring the inherited transmission of wealth accumulated by the male sex and conceived by the older generation, suggesting that in earlier times it was more common for adolescents to acquire the profession by family inheritance, which few escaped. It was of family interest that the new work force developed the trade or profession they traditionally exercised, thus helping to maintain its position and prosperity.

Today the vocational style that is less used is the dominant, the family is being more flexible or at least does not have a radical position regarding this process, since only 1.74% of the families under study use this form to influence vocational training and the professional orientation of adolescents. This manifestation has dissimilar causes

that go beyond the familiar field and are connected directly with the changes occurred in the social context.

The various ways of influencing the process of vocational training and vocational guidance of adolescents are conceived as social systems, are the result of the interaction of the different vocational qualifiers that play their roles in the different situations for which they will be the subsystems. If the subsystems or vocational qualifiers work improperly so will the vocational style they form.

In addition, these incidents are exercised in symbolic interactions as part of the habit created in this field, and is that each vocational qualifier is based on an evaluation of the career or trade, in such a way that it acquires the same meaning for the adolescent and that he uses it when selecting a job.

## **Conclusions**

The educational function of the family, and with it vocational training and vocational guidance directly, and in various ways affects the selection by adolescents of professions and trades, since, by its nature, it has potential to take advantage to make that process accurate.

The process of vocational training and vocational guidance carried out in the family is done from their likes and interests in an empirical way, without taking into account professional elements such as the school institution or the Provincial Palace of Pioneers, which have specialists in the subject who carry out the work thorough systematic evaluations.

It is necessary that the family becomes an active agent, collaborator with the school and other institutions in this process that defines the professional future of adolescents.

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