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**RELIGIOSITY AND CAREER OPTIONS OF YOUTH FROM THE
ROMANIAN-HUNGARIAN CROSS-BORDER REGION**

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Abstract: Our paper examines the relationship between religiosity and the career options of the students from the Romanian-Hungarian cross-border region, respectively the choice of their study domain. We have assumed that a high level of religiosity would predict options for careers that operate with values similar to the religious ones (in education, justice, art, social work, medicine – careers chosen from the humanities); while a low level of religiosity would turn students toward technical and business/ economic careers. To test the hypotheses we have used the survey data from BA students selected using a quota sampling procedure (quotas were proportional with cycle, year, faculty and type of financing) from 2 large public higher education institutions located in the Romanian-Hungarian cross-border: the University of Oradea (Romania) - 545 cases - and the University of Debrecen (Hungary) - 886 cases. The results of testing the hypotheses using multinomial logistic regressions have partially confirmed this hypothesis, between religiosity and the career options have appeared a series of extra factors such as the students' residential background, the economic context, their family's situation and the potential income of that particular job. We have discussed the theoretical outcomes of the study and we have formulated future research directions.

Key words: students, religion, religiosity, study domains, career, Romania, Hungary.

1. Introduction

According to the theories of secularization, the economic development is associated with science, rationalism and modernity, while the underdevelopment of a society is associated with traditionalism and religiosity (Dogan 1998; Halman and Pettersson 2003; Norris and Inglehart 2011; Stark 1999). Nonetheless, the studies have not underlined a radical, powerful and linear decline of religiosity in the context of secularization; on the contrary, one has noticed a trend in the transformation of religious beliefs and behaviours (Lambert 1999), or an individualization of these (Pollack and Pickel 2007). More than that, one can observe an ever-increasing resistance of religion, like the survival during the communism's years, respectively a comeback of religion (there are dilemmas connected to the return of religion or religiosity) (Vukomanović 2008) in a crisis situation on an individual or collective level (Smith 2009) or even the de-secularization of the world and the revival of religion (Berger 1999). The religious indifference, understood as an expression of the decline of religiosity as a terminus for the secularization process, as an element of moral apathy or as a new form of tolerance and solidarity, is likewise, an interesting research topic (Quack and Schuh 2017).

New perspectives regarding religion and religiosity come from psychology (Beit-Hallahmi 2014), but also from ethnography, sociology, anthropology, theology or education. Frequently researchers focus on ideas like multiple religious identities, faith without affiliation or spirituality without religion.

An important point is represented by the changes regarding the roles religion and the contemporary church assume nowadays with respect to the traditional church; based predominantly on spiritual problems and humanitarian actions, charities; roles that evolve side by side with the changes in society. Religion and religiosity can and must suppress or at least downplay the excesses of civilization (elements of bioethics, genetics or environmental ones), of course, assuming that they can keep up with the modern civilization. Alongside its sacred mission, the church gets more and more involved socially (in politics, in education, even in economy) and individually (counselling, inter-human relations, marriage, family, identity, alienation, personal problems).

Within this context, we can appreciate that even the problems connected to choosing and developing a career, finding a job, can represent an interest area for the church. Many people consider that their religious beliefs are a good stimulus for being a better person under all aspects, including the professional one.

2. Choosing a career

The career can be defined as an individual's professional evolution, the totality of a person's roles or professional activities, or as a "continuum of exploration, choice and commitment" (our translation) of a person in the process of choosing a job (Duffy and Blustein 2005), as "attitude toward the profession or vocation" or as "vocational motivation" (Blau, 1985; Carson and Bedeian 1994). The process of choosing a career is a multidisciplinary theme. One could benefit here from psychological, sociological and economic pieces of research and theory. Choosing a career can be a stage of deep, personal searches, unrest, fluctuations that prepare the decision making. It is a stage influenced by a series of factors: personal ones (connected to the individual's personality, interests, values, aptitudes) (Holland 1966), contextual ones (the individual's family, education, community) (Super 1957), intrinsic or extrinsic, individual or situational (London 1983).

According to psychologists, the concern for the career is within contemporary society, a priority for most people, sometimes even detrimental to the personal life, (Schrenk 2010). Most psychological approaches to the theme suggest the importance of personality factors, combined with the background ones (Ginzberg 1972; Holland 1966; Super 1957). The concern for the career can be seen as a several stages process: *self-knowledge* (interests, values, abilities, personality), *options' analysis*, *career choice*, *initial professional formation*, *career development* (continuous training) or according to Gysbers & Henderson: self-knowledge and interpersonal relations skills training; education and the initial professional training; assuming life roles; the manner of integrating, living and planning different life events (Gysbers and Henderson 1988). However, there are theories that bring forward models (e.g. Life-career model, Miller-Tiedeman 1988), which move the stress from the career stages to the personal decision of developing a career. This fact involves flexibility, finding new professional directions and taking into consideration the role of spirituality, religiosity in choosing a career. There are also studies that highlight differences in educational achievement between religious groups (Isaic-Maniu and Herteliu 2005).

3. Factors in choosing a career

An important moment in planning a career is that of decision making regarding the higher education specialization. Investigating the correlates of these options can be a good opportunity for exploring the way in which religious variables influence the young peoples' career options.

The preoccupations for the social correlates of field choice is everything but new. Social reproduction through the choice of *Grande*

Ecoles and subject fields was discussed at length by Bourdieu in *La Noblesse D'Etat* (1989). He has established clearly that sections of bourgeoisie assured the reproduction of their respective status positions and avoided downward mobility by enrolling in the elite programs most suited to their social abilities. Concerning the same issue, the empirical researches done more recently in this field have reached several results which are by no means definitive but good starting points in investigating the social aspects of horizontal differentiation of higher education institutions in the cross-border area of Hungary and Romania.

3.1 Gender

In numerous countries, gender plays an important role in career choice, all springing from gender stereotypes: career woman vs. housewife status, a female-specific career versus a gender-free career. Gesinde (1976) shows that in Nigeria the students choose a career based on this factor, men choosing mostly careers in technical and economic/ business domains by comparison with women.

Previous research results show convincingly that males are more likely than women to choose the more lucrative fields (Ayalon and Yogev 2005; Davies and Guppy 1996; Goyette and Mullen 2006). Among the vocational fields, engineering is the one of the best rewarded and also the most masculine (Goyette and Mullen 2006). There are also some subject fields of study which are apparently feminized (like social sciences and education). Based on the above results, we expect gender to be one of the important predictors of enrolment in specific fields of study in the two cross-border universities of the region, especially in the area of Social Sciences, Education and the Humanities, where significantly more women are to be expected, and in Engineering, where we expect significantly more male students.

3.2 Ability

For Owie, the most important factor in choosing a career is *the interest for a certain domain*, which brings efficiency, satisfaction and excellence in a career (Owie 2003). This interest is reflected mostly in the *skills and abilities* the individual develops along the years.

Prospective students choose the university and the field of study according to rational pondering which considers the chances of admission and of successful graduation (Ayalon and Yogev 2005; Davies and Guppy 1996; Van de Werfhorst et al. 2003; Lucas 2001; Tolsma et al. 2010). These probabilities correlate with previous indicators of ability. We expect the measure of previous achievements to be correlated with fields of study as they differ in terms of selectivity.

3.3 Socio-economic status

Many young people are influenced in their decisions regarding the career by their *parents*, especially in the countries where children are considered to be the property of their parents (Gesinde 1986). Thus, the young choose the career decided upon by their parents, their parents' profession, or the profession the parents wanted for themselves but failed to achieve. Often the young make such decisions only to satisfy their parents' demands (Taylor et al. 2004).

The correlation of students' SES (socio-economic status) indicators with fields of study is one of the main assumptions of the social reproduction models and has been confirmed systematically in the empirical analyses of enrolment and/or of graduation from differentiated higher education institutions.

One of the most accepted hypotheses is that the pay-offs of subject field correlate with the SES of the students. Candidates from the upper classes (with high background SES) are more likely to enrol in the professional fields of law and medicine (Van de Werfhorst et al. 2003) on the one hand; and in Arts and Sciences (Goyette and Mullen 2006, Ayalon and Yogev 2005) on the other. Moreover, students from the working classes are more likely to enrol in the more lucrative field of Engineering (Davis and Guppy 1996, Van de Werfhorst 2002). The expansion and differentiation of higher education has increased the likelihood for those coming from underprivileged categories to graduate Social Sciences programs and Education Studies.

The various results connecting the SES of family background with field of study are explained via the so-called 'differential advantage hypothesis' (Goyette and Mullen 2006) which assumes that students are aiming at social destinations which at least preserve their original position. Thus, for similar levels of academic ability, students from the upper classes are better endowed with the social skills (public speaking, writing and argumentation) and cultural capital, thus granting them better performance areas like arts, sciences, law and medicine. This way, students from the higher society strata will push out underprivileged colleagues from these majors. Lacking social and cultural skills, working class students will tend to enrol in the more meritocratic domains of sciences, like mathematics or engineering. Labaree (1997) has proposed an extension of this theory proposing the distinction between fields of study with exchange use and fields with use-value. He stresses that higher status youth chooses domains with high exchange value, while those from the working class prefer fields with immediate use value. The dependency on cultural and social background tends to impose an intergenerational preservation of professional orientation as Van de Werfhorst (2002) highlights: children of peasants choose agricultural specializations, children of skilled manual workers opt for technical fields and so on.

In conclusion, it is very likely to have more students from the upper strata of the society in areas like Medicine and Law (where affluent and educated backgrounds will prevail) and Arts and Humanities (where a high educational capital is required) and less in the domains of Engineering and Science, which are more meritocratic and provide better prospects for youth from the working classes. Moreover, for the same reasons, we expect that being raised up in rural settlements correlates positively with being enrolled in the more culturally close domains of Engineering, Agriculture and Environmental Studies. Because the type of residence is highly correlated both in Hungary and Romania with socio-economic status (occupational status, education), it is reasonable to expect also that students from urban settlements have different career choices compared to their colleagues from rural backgrounds.

4. Religiosity and choice of educational field

The religious dimension of the personal and social life is usually described within social sciences by reference to two variables: religious affiliation on the one hand and religiosity on the other. Even if the ideological and axiological characteristics of various denominations influence an individual's actions – as underlined by Max Weber himself – we believe that in the context of secularization, the fundamental religious dimension is that of the intensity of religious participation – i.e. religiosity. Thus, this one would be the religious variable that the present study will focus on. (Pusztai 2008).

A series of studies underline the relation between religiosity and self-confidence in making career choices, respectively of exploring multiple career possibilities (Duffy and Blustein 2005) or the relationship between religiosity and vocation (Colozzi and Colozzi 2000; Davidson and Caddell 1994; Wrzesniewski et al. 1997). Consequently, one can argue that a higher degree of religiosity can confer more confidence regarding career choice, adaptability, self-efficiency or career dedication. (Duffy and Blustein 2005).

There are also situations when the religious belief or ideology is the one that determines young people to choose a certain career (Duffy and Dik 2009). In the case of Seventh-day Adventists, because the Sabbath is a very important matter (as is true for the Orthodox Jews), many people tend to choose professional careers in which Sabbath free time is easier to obtain. Moreover, since medical activities are the only non-theological accepted to be tolerated and performed during the Sabbath, one should expect a bias towards this option, while military occupations or alcohol production will be avoided. Unfortunately, countrywide surveys cannot help testing such hypotheses given that members of such religious movements are usually in small numbers.

A close factor in career choice is *the desire to help others*. For example, young people who personally know patients with disabling conditions or have lost somebody close, will choose a career in medicine or research to dedicate themselves to finding a cure for a disease or illness. Coming into contact with deprived or special-need persons determines some young people's option for social work or a career in politics. A study carried out in by Kimball et al. (2009) concludes that there are low levels of religiosity in study areas such as Economic and Social Sciences, and much higher levels in Humanities and Education.

The existence of a connection between religiosity and the study area is predictable considering the content and the instruction's goals that differ from one specialization to another. Thus, it is expected that religiosity be greater for Legal Sciences, Education, Humanities and Art. The Legal Sciences operate with the same values as religion: justice, rightness, truth, etc., deriving respectively from divine and secular laws. Moreover, legal systems are sometimes built on divine precepts, and religion has "a considerable impact on the formation and evolution of the legal and institutional corpus of a society" (Hergueux 2007, 78) (Our translation).

A similar situation is to be found within the Education "which is clearly a safe haven for the religious" (Kimball et al. 2009, 78). The students following this specialism are trained to "teach" others, in a parallelism with the divine teachings. Arts and Humanities draw in students keen on meditating about the world, about life seen from different perspectives, including religious ones.

Opposing these domains, under the religiosity aspect, one can identify the economic and technical domains. A piece of research from 2008 notices that public or private lucrative organizations like governmental agencies register a lower degree of religiosity, "little or no influence of religion on organization culture", while in non-profit organizations "prayer has a place in the organization's culture" and even "religion and spirituality [are] included as a component of employee training" (Society for Human Resource Management 2008, 5-15).

A special situation is encountered with the students in Social Sciences and Medicine. The first are trained to analyse, understand and change the social milieu and tackle society from a predominantly positivist point of view. In other words, a mixture between religion and unfaithfulness, between religion and science. The medicine students in their turn, are taught to fight death, and from this perspective are non-religious, but on the other hand, it is precisely this confrontation with death that triggers in them fears that justify a certain level of religiosity.

The study of the relation between religious variables and career options must take into account the fact that religious variables correlate strongly with other structural predictors such as the characteristics of the socio-economic background. The goal of a study like the current one is to

extract the precise effect of religious variables and not to establish mere correlations.

5. Hypothesis

The students who are more religious are to be found in non-economic faculties and specializations (Humanities, Education Sciences, Arts, Legal Studies), being more inclined toward reflexivity, these domains having more in common with religion; while students who identify themselves as not being religious will be more present in economic and technical domains which imply using mostly practical skills.

5.1. Data

The hypotheses that were drawn in the previous pages will be tested using data from the survey done within the HERD research project. The data of the study was collected within the HU-Ro project HERD: Higher Education for Social Cohesion Cooperative Research and Development in a Cross-border Area (HURO/0901/ 253/2.2.2.) research project and supported by the European Union European Regional Development Fund. We have used the data on a subset of 1451 BA students selected using a quota sampling procedure (quotas were proportional with cycle, year, faculty and type of financing) from 2 large public higher education institutions located in the Romanian-Hungarian cross-border: the University of Oradea (Romania) - 545 cases - and the University of Debrecen (Hungary) - 886 cases. Finally, because of the missing values, the sample were 504 and respectively 307. All the hypotheses concerning institutions will be tested at university-level which will eliminate the necessity of considering weighting by university of the sample. Thus, the hypotheses will be tested using logistic regressions applied at the university level. Weighing was not necessary to correct for sampling errors.

5.2. Dependent variable

Subject fields

In order to assure a workable number of cases in each domain, fields of study have been recorded in 10 broad categories following various international classifications of fields of study in the higher education:

Table 1. Distribution of BA students by subject fields in the two large public universities in the HERD survey

	University of Debrecen	University of Oradea
Arts and Humanities (History, Philosophy, Theology)	53	89

Health Sciences (Medicine, Pharmacy)	208	67
Social Sciences (Sociology, Political Sciences, Social Work, Psychology etc.)	33	25
Economics and Business Administration	151	49
Law and Public Administration	114	41
Natural Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Computer Sciences, Physics, Geography)	120	41
Architecture and Construction	76	43
Education and Physical Education	62	33
Agriculture and Environmental Sciences	17	102
Engineering	52	75
Total	886	565

Multinomial logistic regression will model the odds of enrolling in each of the two categories, compared with the odds of being enrolled in the other category controlling for the independent variables.

5.3. Independent variables

Academic ability was measured through the proxy of count of academic prizes acquired during pre-tertiary education: prizes for scholar achievement, prizes in academic competitions and prizes for achievements in Arts or Sports, for grades 1-8 (primary and lower secondary) and 9-12 (upper secondary) separately. The consistency of the indicators is good ($\alpha > 0.7$).

Background SES

Because of errors in measuring father's occupation this variable had to be dropped. Instead of occupation I used two other measures of background SES: parents' affluence and father's education measured in years. To measure **parents' affluence**, we took a count of 6 valuable items likely to be found in the parents' household: own house, weekend house, plasma or LCD TV, PC or laptop with internet access, dishwashing machine, air conditioning, car, smartphone. Father's education was measured in years of schooling established by assigning a typical number of years of education to the highest reported certificate using the equivalence scale displayed below:

Rural residence was also introduced in the models as an indicator of additional costs for pursuing higher education and of lower cultural and social abilities necessary to perform in specific institutions and fields of study. In Romania, and in the counties included in the analysis as well, a large share of the population (around 50% in Bihor and Satu Mare) is living in an urban settlement, a situation overlapping with social and material deprivation, which we expect to influence college and subject field choice.

Religiosity

Three items employed customarily in the well-established international surveys have been used to measure religiosity: one's self-ascertained religiosity, the importance of religion in one's life and the frequency of prayers. These three indicators, properly recoded, make a summative scale of very good reliability (overall alpha Cronbach=0.770) in the case of students from the University of Oradea (alpha Cronbach=0.625) and especially with the students from the University of Debrecen (alpha Cronbach=0.793).

5.4. Results

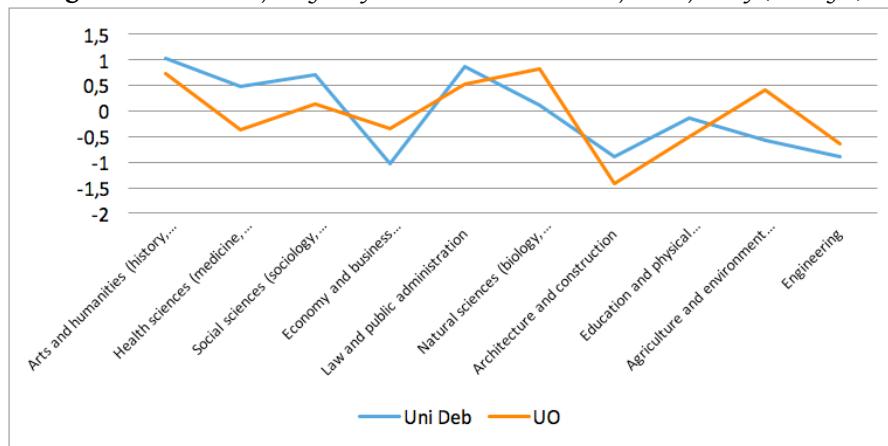
Description of variables

The comparison with other country averages shows that the students from Hungary come from families which are more affluent than the students from Romania; while the difference in fathers' years of schooling is negligible. The difference in level of religiosity is significant and concurs with differences recorded in previous cross-country measurements of religiosity which show consistently that in all measures of religiosity Romania has stronger records compared to Hungary.

Bivariate results

Comparing the average of religiosity across university and field of study reveals two clear patterns: on the one hand consistent across all fields of study, the average religiosity is between 2.5 and 4.4 scale points larger for students of University of Oradea (UO) than for University of Debrecen (Uni Deb). In order to make the university-level data comparable we have rescaled religiosity around the university means.

Figure 1. Variation of religiosity across universities and fields of study (averages)



The line graph in Figure 1 shows similarities and differences in patterns of variation of religiosity by fields of study across the two universities: 1) Engineering, Architecture and Construction are consistently below the university-level average in both countries; similarly Arts and Humanities (which contain religion too) and Law and Public Administration are above the university level average in both cases; 2) Health Sciences and Agriculture and Environmental Sciences have contradictory averages in the two universities; 3) averages for Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Economics, Education and Physical Education, although on the same size of the null value display large differences across the two countries. Based on the above averages displayed in Figure 1 we can sort the fields of study as such:

As mentioned in the literature review, the correlation of religiosity and field of study can be fallacious, as both variables can be in causal relationship with other important social structural, and probably attitudinal, dimensions of one's life. Our data show that religiosity correlates with gender and type of settlement in which one resides, with women and rural inhabitants being much more religious in both cross-border universities.

The correlations of religiosity scores with the scale and interval variables show a less consistent pattern though: in the case of Hungarian students there are two weak positive correlations, around the 0.05 significance test threshold – with academic ability and fathers' years of schooling while in Romania there is only one significant correlation, a very strong one this time, with academic ability. We considered very interesting the finding that academic achievement in the pre-tertiary education – which is a measure of ability and engagement in the same time – has a positive relation with religiosity in both countries.

Table 2. Pearson correlation of religiosity scores with ability, affluence and father's years of schooling

		Ability	Affluence	Father's years of schooling
University of Debrecen	Pearson Correlation	0.065	-0.027	0.073*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.068	0.452	0.046
	N	789	789	755
University of Oradea	Pearson Correlation	0.124**	-0.018	-0.03
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004	0.673	0.491
	N	545	545	531

The impact of the independent structural variables on the choice of field of study is also well documented as already described in the literature review. In any case these bivariate relationships suggest that there is a

serious likelihood that the covariance of religiosity and field of study is a fallacious one, as both religiosity and field of study might be dependent upon the same structural predictors.

Multinomial logistic regressions of field of study with enrolment in Arts and Humanities as reference category show that the 5 independent variables explain between 20% (in the case of the University of Debrecen) and 36% (for the University of Oradea) of the variation of study field for the students included in the research.

In order to check if our assumptions linking choice of study field to religiosity are correct when structural predictors are kept under control we have run separate multinomial regressions of field of study, with religiosity included as predictor and enrolment in Arts and Humanities as reference category.

Table 3. Odds-ratios of multinomial logistic regression of field of study for the University of Debrecen

	Health Sciences (Medicine, Pharmacy)	Social Sciences (Sociology, Political Sciences, Social Work, Psychology etc.)	Economics and Business Administration	Law and Public Administration	Natural Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Computer Sciences, Physics, Geography)	Architecture and Construction	Education and Physical Education	Agriculture and Environmental Sciences	Engineering
Academic achievements	0.909	0.673	0.974	0.952	0.965	0.87	0.79	1.04	0.744
Parents' affluence	1.571	1.219	1.428	1.576	1.415	1.425	1.448	1.429	1.239
Father's years of schooling	0.929	0.839	0.856	0.887	0.853	0.854	0.765	0.674	0.778
Gender (1=female)	1.887	2.195	0.584	1.19	0.681	0.446	2.775	0.697	0.247
Settlement (1=rural)	3.762	5.014	3.282	4.927	6.901	4.609	2.637	2.525	6.339
Religiosity	0.995	0.995	0.894**	1.025	0.986	0.892*	0.933	0.933	0.908

Nagelkerke Pseudo-R²=0.229

Table 4. Odds-ratios of multinomial logistic regression of field of study for the University of Oradea

	Health Sciences (Medicine, Pharmacy)	Social Sciences (Sociology, Political Sciences, Social Work, Psychology etc.)	Economics and Business Administration	Law and Public Administration	Natural Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Computer Sciences, Physics, Geography)	Architecture and Construction	Education and Physical Education	Agriculture and Environmental Sciences	Engineering
Academic achievements	0.846	0.847	1.024	1.248	1.084	1.092	0.726	0.805	1.018
Parents' affluence	1.019	1.355	0.873	1.089	0.930	1.160	1.073	0.965	0.996
Father's years of schooling	0.979	0.716	0.954	1.064	1.018	1.020	0.714	0.984	0.967
Gender (1=female)	1.280	9.479	2.176	1.234	1.550	0.788	29.866	0.946	0.097
Settlement (1=rural)	1.166	1.567	1.181	1.638	3.923	0.291	2.239	4.573	0.597
Religiosity	0.930	0.884	0.847**	0.940	1.006	0.831* **	0.848 *	0.958	0.937

Nagelkerke Pseudo-R²=0.378

The tables of odds-ratios – the transformation of regression parameters into linear effects – show that religiosity interacts with enrolment in specific fields of study regardless of the impact of the other structural variables included in the model supporting our hypothesis linking religiosity with career choice.

Compared to the effect of religiosity upon enrolment into Arts and Humanities, religiosity has a significant negative relationship with being enrolled in the academic field of Economics and Business Administration, on the one hand, and with being enrolled in Architecture and Construction on the other hand in both universities. The interaction with Education and Physical Education which is recorded at the University of Oradea is less convincing according to the significance tests.

6. Conclusions

Our paper brings arguments favouring the idea that the religion/religiosity have lost a good deal of their influence regarding the economic behaviour, especially in the case of university graduates.

The main conclusion of the study resides in the relationship that was identified between religiosity and the academic field, respectively in underlining the influence that religiosity has in influencing the academic and professional orientation of the young people. The results lead toward classifying the study domains in three categories regarding religiosity:

- Academic fields with a high level of religiosity: Arts, Humanities, Law and Education.
- Academic fields with a low level of religiosity: Economics and Technical Colleges.
- Academic fields with an average level of religiosity: Medicine and Social Sciences.

We claim that young people's religiosity level could influence, to a certain degree, their academic orientation; but we believe that the religiosity level is determined by the specificity of the academic curricula offered to the students belonging to the three categories mentioned above. We have noticed a predominantly ideational curricula in the first case, which is favourable to reflection and faith; a predominantly pragmatic curricula for the second category, which is less favourable to meditation; respectively a mixed one for the third category (Medicine and Social Sciences are related by the fact that both require an effort for rationalisation and interpretation, for diagnosing a fact, a phenomenon, followed by decisions and solutions meant to fix or improve that particular state).

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