

ASPIRATIONS, ABILITIES AND PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOL AND FAMILY VISION

Oleg BUGA, university professor, habilitated doctor

Alecu Russo Balti State University, Moldova

Sabina-Elena PĂVĂLUC, novice teacher

Liceul Tehnologic „I. V. Liteanu”, Liteni, Suceava, România

Abstract: Students' attitudes toward assessing and notes are very different. Some show a fair attitude, more objective, others, on the contrary, prove a large dose of subjectivism; for a part of the students the professor's assessing constitutes stimulants which guide and energize their conduct, while for others same appreciation becomes a source of frustration. Aspiration level is bracketed from the level of performance on which the subject you want to see and believe that he will reach. It should be noted that the level of suction gets expression of the student's notes in the language school. Then he speaks through a extension-critical mark defining aspiration as a threshold-note above which the school is happy. Data on the level of aspiration should be linked with the values that characterise effective performance of school students, performance is usually expressed in notes. Important problems also rose in connection with the fear of failure in relation to the level of aspiration. This fear has an inhibitor effect and for defense purposes, the student would prefer to expect less than to take a chance. An important role in avoiding failure has the degree of realism in aspiration level of parents and pupils and its correlation with the students' real skills and aptitudes. Otherwise, the student feels frustrated, dissatisfied by the way he is appreciated, he feels misunderstood by teachers, parents and colleagues, he becomes anxious and also isolated from the collective.

Students' attitudes toward assessment and notes are quite different. Some exhibit a fair attitude, more objective, while others, on the contrary, prove a large dose of subjectivism; for a part of the students the teacher's assessing constitutes stimulants that guide and energize their behaviour, whereas for others same appreciation becomes a source of frustration and anxiety.

Obviously, we appointed here the extremes. Despite this diversity of reactions and amid the mentioned dispersion, however, some convergence, tendencies and regularities with statistical character are emerging, that stand out in the mass phenomenon. In each case, behavioural mechanisms are acting that were formed over a longer period of time. In order to modify (change) the attitude of these students toward teacher's assessment, it is necessary to know the causes, the factors determining it.

These factors and causes must be sought in the psychic structure of the student himself, in the social environment from which he comes and where he lives and also in the class or collective of which he is part. Pupil's attitude regarding assessing and grades involves an ensemble, a *node of relationships*, as we already said, some of them depending on the narrow social context (family) or on the large one



(class, school), and others depending on student's personality. Putting them in evidence allows to evolve factors and conditions that generate or support some relations.

The acquaintance of the factors on which depends the student's attitude towards the teacher's assessment has a great relevance for the teacher's task. Being acquainted with these factors, the teacher can choose the most effective resources for training, or if it is necessary, changing pupil's attitude regarding assessing and marks.

Trying to analyze the complex causality of student's attitude toward teacher's appreciation, the factors of psychogenesis and sociogenesis, we determine the following elements based on the factual material and information that we have: *the aspiration level of the family and of the student, the educational and vocational option, the balance of strengthening forms, (teacher-student relationship), the educational group influence and the student's academic status.*

In this study we will analyze only one of these factors, namely the aspiration level as a factor of student's attitude regarding teacher's assessing.

The complex issue of the aspiration level increasingly spread in contemporary psychology research. Thus, there are many opinions that emerged regarding the nature of phenomena related to the aspiration level, related to the structure and the implications of being acquainted with this level for the study of personality.

The aspiration level is determined by the level of performance that the subject desires and believes that he will achieve. F. Hoppe states that aspiration level regards „the person's purpose, expectation and claims to his achievements in a further activity” [Apud 8, p. 119].

This vast definition was abandoned by researchers in favour of the one given by J. Frank who defines the suction level as being „the future performance, in a familiar activity, that the individual considers will explicitly achieve, knowing his former performance in the same activity.”

The complexity of this concept has led various researchers to define the aspiration level in various ways [4, p. 185; 7, p. 410]. What is common and essential in most definitions is that *the aspiration level is linked to setting a specific aim that the individual wants to achieve, compared with what he has achieved before.* For instance: knowing that he is very well prepared and also the teacher's requirements, the student craves to receive a ten and he expects this outcome.

This aspiration level is not settled accidentally, *but is based on previous results, on past performance,* performance that measure in one sense own capacities. From summing up these successes – sometimes actualized by failures – he made a value judgment, obviously unexpressed but explicit in the result that the student expects related to the aspiration level exhibited in relation with a task or test. An outside observer can comprehend the suction level through a student's emotional reaction to the mark obtained in the exam. Someone who desires to receive a ten will be deeply dissatisfied if he obtains a seven, while other student, who barely places his aspiration at the limit, will be highly content achieving the same mark. , we have not to neglect *the essential relative character of student's reaction to the same assessing according to each aspiration level* [3, p. 57-59].

The aspiration level is linked to setting a specific goal that the individual wants to achieve, compared with what he has achieved before. Most often *the aspiration level adapts to the student's past performance* being „an echo” of its.

During the school years, the grades and the assessments given by the teacher are accompanied or built in self-image, in the student's suction level., the more so since up to a certain age grades and assessments are acknowledged as „a intelligence measure”.

In his research, professor B. Zorgo confirms this fact and he finds a strong positive correlation (about 0,80-0,90) between marks that student expects, towards he strives to.

It is noteworthy that the student's aspiration level gets expression in the language of school notes. By extension, it can be talked about *a critical-mark* defining suction or *a threshold-mark* over which the student is satisfied. First, this critical-mark is suggested by parents who priori establish their expected landmark on the grading scale. Regarding aspiration level in relation with marks and teacher's assessing, in order to analyze the parents-student relationship, we inserted in our survey questionnaire the following questions:

5. Which is generally:
 - a) the limit grade of which parents are satisfied
 - b) the grade of which parents are dissatisfied



c) the limit grade below parents appeal to sanctions

Indication: You should indicate one grade or two close grades, e.g. 7-8.

6. Which is:

a) the limit grade above which you think you received a goodmark

b) the limit grade under which you appreciate you obtained a bad mark

These questions sought to transform the aspiration level of parents and student in the school notes language. The information processed and systematized on classes and categories of students (very good students, good students, middling students, bad students) was presented in tables. As a difference between critical notes, it is numerically estimated the distances between parents and student. More precisely, it has been determined the distance between the critical grade proposed by parents and accepted by student and thus being registered the differences of -1, 0 +1 and +2 points.

When the parents' aspiration regarding grades is lower than the student's aspiration level the gap is of -1 point; whenever the two suction levels coincide the difference is null, and when the family's suction level is higher than the one confessed by the students the differences are positive (+1, +2 points). Assuming that there are clear differences in this respect between town and village we presented a comparative report.

Our data shows that in the 8th grade (urban) in 31,1 % of cases, parents' aspiration level is higher than the one of the student by 1 point and in 9% of cases by 2 points (in the grading scale). It results that in the 8th grade (urban), in proportion of 40%, parents' aspiration level is superior that the level confessed and accepted by the student. Only in 12% of cases parents' suction level is lower by 1 point than of the pupil. It is noteworthy that these latter students, although they have the suction level higher than their parents, in their majority, they are mediocre and poor students. Of course, their aspiration level is superior compared with the parents' level, but towards the aspiration point of the good and very good students, it is a low level.

With some minor variations, the tendencies and regularities of the 8th grade are also present in other urban classes and this entitles us to state that there is an accurate pressure of parents on the student's level of aspiration: *remember that this pressure is intensified on the final grades (8th, 12th), as well on the special class* in contrast with the other classes. It is natural that pressure is more pronounced in mediocre and weak students. Approaching the terminal class, parents desiring to see their children accomplished in profession and life, demand more from offsprings, sometimes without taking into account pupils' possibilities and also the ensuing consequences of these deeds reflecting in the of students' behaviour: mark exploitation, plagiarism or cheating, truancy when they are unprepared, etc.

Null differences (0), when parents' aspiration level coincide with student's level, are registered between 40% and 50%, that represents reasonable proportions. What surprises us are the negative differences, when family's aspirations are situated lower than of the pupil. They are more frequent in mediocre and weak students, probably as a hint of parents' resignation in the front of repeated failure of the child. părinților repeated failure of the child. It is clear that parents' aspiration level is a determinant of the student's aspiration level.

For comparison purposes, we will refer to several ascertainment regarding the parents' aspiration in rural areas, where the number of parents who has the level of aspiration lower than the student's aspiration level is higher, fluctuating from 26% in the 8th grade and 37,6% in the 12th grade, by comparison with only 12% and 15,8% in urban areas. In rural areas, for many parents the aspiration level coincides with the critical mark (pass mark). In talks with parents we have asked the question: „How does your child learn?“, this question most parents from rural areas give answers to the following type: *good enough, he does not have to go for a second examination, he passed on all the school subjects*, while the parents from urban areas state: *good, very good, he has only three marks of 8, he has only 9 and 10*. Therefore, family's claims and pressure from rural areas are lower than in the urban areas. In rural areas only 29% of students' parents of 8th grade have an aspiration level higher than of the pupils (compared with 40% in urban areas). Their percentage drops in the 12th grade from 13.3% to 11.2% in the same classes from town.

The explanation for these differences exceeds our study, it belongs to the sociological analysis. We consider it just as a fact falling under "the parallelogram of forces" involved in determining students' attitude towards assessment and notes.



The data regarding the aspiration level must be correlated with the values that characterize student's effective school performance and this performance usually expresses through marks. Besides, our survey among schoolchildren began with the following two questions:

1. What was the overall grade you finished the last school year? If you received any reward add this mention beneath the overall grade.

2. In the chart below shade the box corresponding to most of the grades obtained in the first and second quarter of this school year.

Quarter I								Class master's box
Grades	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Quarter II								

Indication: if the marks are too different shade two neighbouring houses (for example: 5 and 6, if the grades are equally divided between these two values).

Based on the marks given by student and certified by teacher were determined benchmarks values, namely school results. We are dealing again with negative differences, null differences and positive differences that underline the gap between aspiration and achievement. Comparing the obtained data, it indirectly results the distinction between parents' aspiration and student's school performance and suction. By contacting the school realities and the teachers' requirements, the pupil sets its level of aspiration more realistic than parents, who often establish their aims arbitrarily, outside the school facts and student's possibilities.

Major problems arise in connection with the fear of failure relating to the level of aspiration. This fear has an inhibitory effect and for defense, *the student prefers to wait less than to risk a disappointment*. It's an attitude able to act on the ensemble of psychological balance: *less hope in order not to be disappointed*. Failure will be more painful when student's aspirations are greater, as the distance between exception and academic success is higher. An important role in avoiding failure has the degree of realism in aspiration level of parents and pupils and its correlation with the students' real skills and aptitudes.

Otherwise, the student feels frustrated, dissatisfied by the way he is appreciated, he feels misunderstood by teachers, parents and colleagues, he becomes anxious and also isolated from the collective, a situation that may ultimately take him to maladjustment. We must add that the sources of school accomplishment or, on the contrary, the sources of school failure, besides the aspiration level - involve other factors such as work style, emotional balance, favorable or unfavorable environmental conditions, etc. Summarizing these considerations we notice that the aspiration level has a main role in understanding student's performance by the teacher, but also for student's acceptance regarding the assessments that are made on his work.

Bibliographic references:

1. Onofrei A. Particularități ale manifestărilor anxioase la preadolescenți și condițiile care intervin în declanșarea lor. In: Psihologie, 1971, nr. 2.
2. Potorac E. Unele probleme privind conceptul de nivel de aspirație. In: Culegere de lucrări științifice a Institutului Pedagogic din Galați, 1970, vol. 4.
3. Radu I. Psihologia învățării. București: Enciclopedică Română, 1969.
4. Roșca M. Relația dintre cunoașterea capacităților proprii și nivelul de aspirație la elevii întârziți mental. In: Studia Universitatis Babeș – Bolyai, 1969, p. 27-36.
5. Vrabie D. Psihologia școlară. Braila: Evrika, 2000.
6. Vrabie D. Psihologia atitudinii elevului față de aprecierea școlară. Galați: Porto Franco, 1994.
7. Boyd R., McCandless Mc. Children and Adolescents Behavior and Development. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967. 292 p.
8. Frank J.D. Individual Differences in Certain Aspects of the Level of Aspiration. In: American Journal of Psychology, 1935, nr. 47, p. 285-293.