

Social Support and Career Maturity of Kosovar Adolescents

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### **Abstract**

In many areas of adolescent development, family, school and peers play a vital role. Social support is also important for career maturity. According to Super (1963), career maturity means components such as: career planning, career exploration, knowledge about the world of work, career decision-making skills and knowledge about the preferred profession. The overall goal of this study is to understand the level of career maturity at kosovar adolescent and level of social support. The study also aims to understand the relationship between social support and career maturity. Main research questions are: What is the level of parental support? What is the level of teachers support? What is the level of peer support? What is the level of career maturity? What is the correlation between social support and career maturity? In what level may career maturity be predicted, based on the predictive variables? To conduct this study, 600 high school students from seven regions of Kosovo are invited. They are selected through the random sampling group. The data were collected through questionnaire and analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Based on descriptive statistical analysis, the findings answer the research questions and inferential analysis, correlation and regression show a positive relationship between the study variables. The results of this study and other studies that would be made can be used as a basic reference in career counseling for families and schools to enhance the success of adolescent for career maturity and career decision making.

***Keywords:** parental support, adolescents, career maturity*

## **Social Support and Career Maturity of Kosovar Adolescents**

Career decision making in the phase of adolescence and early adult life, it's one of the complex processes, but a very important one. Any wrong decision of choosing the profession, due to the influence of various factors and lack of determination, can block the growth and development in the future. A very important factor, even predictive one for a successful career, seems to be the career maturity (Super, 1955).

Construct of career maturity consists in an attitude, willingness and competence to deal effectively with career development tasks. Career mature individuals, are more able to make the right and realistic choice of their career. They have the ability to identify specific professional preferences and apply activities in order to achieve their goals. According to Donald Super (1955), career maturity represents the degree of achievement of cognitive, emotional and other psychological factors to gain the capacity to make realistic and mature choices of the career. Career maturity implies readiness to cope with the tasks of developing a certain stage. Career maturity, a key concept in the theory of Super, is manifested with the successful accomplishment of the tasks of the age and stages of development throughout life. According to Super (1958), professional development stages are: growth (4-13 years old), exploration (14-24), creation (25-44), maintenance (45-65) and decrease (65).

Until the age of 13 is the time when the individual becomes aware of the future. They begin to find ways to develop their competencies in ways that increases the control over their lives. During the exploration phase, people begin to crystallize, to define and implement their professional choice. So far, they have explored the different professional roles and options. During the mid-twenties to mid-forties, adults are on their ongoing efforts to consolidate and get stabilized in their chosen career. During the maintenance phase, which contain the period from the age of 45 until the age of 65, people look at the current situation and determine if their career is ensuring proper satisfaction and fulfillment as well as seeking ways to increase labor mobility. By the mid-sixties, the individuals begin to step back from formal employment and begin to find new roles for the purpose of retirement (Super, 1958).

Donald Super (1957) and other career development theorists, consider the changes that people go through during their maturation. So, Super extended his theory by elaborating the professional maturity. According to him, (Super 1963) professional maturity means components such as career planning, career exploration, knowledge about the system of work, career decision-making skills and knowledge about preferred profession. Maturity model of professional development during adolescence and early adult age, Super and his colleagues have defined operationally by creating the Career Development Inventory.

Numerous studies have examined and analyzed the career maturity in relation to other factors. Social support has a key role in many dimensions of adolescent development. Parents, schools and peers can be helpful and psychological deterrent to child development. In a study done by Ferry (2000), was highlighted the importance of

family, school and peers in the context of adolescent decision-making process for the future career. According to Ferry (2006), young people who had no support from the school, peers and family in particular, had difficulty getting professional choice decision. Interconnection of the family, school, peers and other contextual factors with career development and decision-making, is emphasized by many other studies and quality of the relation between these stakeholders is seen to affect positively or negatively the professional choice (Fisher & Padmawidjaja, 1999).

An important task of adolescence development is growth and exploration of aspirations and goals of the career. (Erikson, 1968; Ryan & Decin, 2001, Super, 1957). In all this task of the teenagers, the family is seen to be more influential factor. Literature review on the issue of parental influence on career development emphasizes the role of the family in the development of several life stages (Whiston & Keller, 2004). According to Super's theory, family affects the creation of child's self-concept which then forms the skills, interests, values and professional choices. Literature also emphasizes the role of peer relatedness in late adolescent career development (Felsman, & Blustein, 1999).

According to the theories as well as from empirical findings, career maturity is a very important factor for professional development, and it's closely associated with social support. Parental support, support from peers and teachers are seen to be powerful factors in conjunction with the maturity of the adolescents for the professional career. This study is conducted with the aim to understand the linking of these factors with the maturity of kosovar youth.

The study aims the examining of interconnection between social support and career maturity of the kosovar adolescent. The study also aims to achieve the specific objectives: 1) to understand if the young kosovar in the last semester of high school have decided for their future profession, 2) to understand the level of influence of parental support, school and peers, 3) to analyze parental support perceived by kosovar adolescents and the link and the preaching with career maturity, 4) analyze the relation of education / occupation of parents with youth chosen profession; 5) analyze the support from school / teachers perceived by kosovar adolescents as well as linking and preaching with the career maturity; 6) analyze peer support perceived by kosovar adolescents as well as linking and preaching with the career maturity.

Research questions of this study are: 1. How many kosovar adolescents have decided about their future profession and are confident for their decision? 2. What is the relationship between family support, school, peers, and career maturity? 3. Which is the most preacher / predictive factor of career maturity for kosovar adolescents?

However, the study hypotheses are: H1: There is a positive correlation between family support, school, peers and career maturity. H2: parental support will be the most predictive factor for the carrier maturity of kosovar adolescents.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

Participants in this study were 600 high school graduate twelve classes of high school "Gymnasium". By age, 78.6% of graduates were 18 years old, 20.9% of age 19 and 0.5% were aged 20 years. Regarding gender, 66.3% were female and 33.7% were male. Participants have been from different geographical regions. 21.9% were from Pristina, 21.5% from Peja, Gjakova 16.6%, 15.0% from Prizren, 5.7% from Mitrovica, from Ferizaj were 12.6% and 2.7% of high school students have been from region of Gjilan. All graduates have been from Kosovo.

### **Measuring instruments**

- Questionnaire on demographic data. This part contains questions on demographic data, relating to age, gender, residence, family history, number of children in the family as well as data on the profession of parents and other family members.
- Questionnaire on social support (family, school and peers). Instrument is specially designed for this study in order to measure the level of parental support, school / teachers and peers support. In the pilot phase, the Cronbach coefficient Alpha was .923.
- Questionnaire for career maturity. This questionnaire is designed specifically for this study, but that is based on Donald Super Inventory on career development (Career Development Inventory). There are five dimensions: career planning, career exploration, knowledge about the world of work, career decision-making skills and knowledge about the preferred profession. In the pilot phase, the Cronbach coefficient Alpha was .779.

### **The design of the study**

The study is quantitative, initially with an explorative and descriptive design, while in later stages, the study goes on predictive correlation design. There will be no manipulation but will analyze the relationship between variables. Variables are determined and defined their position. The study has predictive variables (independent) and criterion variables / outcome (dependent). Independent variables should be referred to as predictive variables and the dependent variables as criterion or outcome variables. Besides relations between variables, it will be analyzed the level of variance in a criterion variable / result can be explained by multiple predictive variables. In other words, it will be understood which of the independent variables will be more predictive for maturity of Kosovar adolescents for a career. The study is an ex post facto. Data were collected at a certain time; it is a single cross-sectional study.

### **Procedure**

On the first instance, the study permit was issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. With written permission of MEST, municipal departments of education were contacted and upon written approval of the request for the study were contacted

respective principals of schools and the schedule for the administration of the questionnaire was set to. There were selected parallel classes of the twelve grade based on random group method. Students have been informed that on the due date they will have the opportunity to complete a questionnaire about career decision-making for their profession. Upon meeting with the students, initially were made descriptions of the study and its purpose. Students were made aware that their participation is voluntary and the questionnaires are anonymous. Besides oral instructions, were given also written instructions through the document "consent to participate in the study" and at the end of the document, students were also asked to sign for their participation. Once signed, the consents were collected and immediately after the questionnaires were distributed, the process lasted about 20 minutes.

## **Results**

### Analyses / Descriptive statistics

Based on the statistical analysis it was found that most of the Kosovar adolescents have decided for their future profession (occupation). 79% of graduates had picked their professional profile and 21% had not yet decided. Participants who had decided for their future occupation, 50.9% stated that they have made their choice, 20.7% stated that their intended profession is not their choice, while others are declared as neutral on this issue.

Regarding the level of influence of social support, concerning parental support, 2.3% of participants reported low levels of support from their parents, 16.2% medium level and 81.8 reported high levels of parental support. Support by teachers is seen to have a similar stretch between levels. 34.8% of participants reported low levels of support, 31.2% of middle level and high level of 34.0%. The high level of support from peers was reported by 73.9% of the study participants, while 21% reported medium level, and low level was reported by 5.1% of adolescents.

Chosen professions by the adolescents were the most varied, but the Faculty of Economics was the dominant which was picked out with 18.8% by the participants. Other professions chosen by the youth were medicine, architecture, psychology, pedagogy, computer sciences, etc.. To understand whether the chosen profession has any relation to the profession of parents, an analysis of their association was done and based on it, we have the following findings: Cramer's V for the occupation of the participants of this study and the profession of their mothers was .385 and sig. of .000, and with the father's profession was .326 with sig. of .002. Based on these findings, we can say that adolescents chosen profession are related in low level with parent profession, but these results are significant.

### Analysis / inferential statistics

Ksovar youth also reported on the level of career maturity. Low level of maturity was showed by 19.6% of participants, 35.5% reported medium level, while 44.9% of youth reported high levels of career maturity.

Career maturity in most part of the youth seems to be displayed at medium and high level but, it would be important to understand the correlation of this construct with social support. Also, it would be important to understand, which of these factors is more predictive for the career maturity, is it a family, school or peers. Pearson's correlation coefficients for career maturity with all other factors are presented in Table 1.

*Table 1*  
Correlation coefficient

	Career maturity	
	r	sig.
Parents support	.697	.000
Teacher support	.321	.001
Peers support	.486	.000

*Note.* The correlation coefficients for the independent variables with the dependent variable. Dependent variable: Career maturity.

Results from the correlation analysis show that career maturity is positively correlated with social support. Young people with high levels of parental support, teachers and peers, have shown higher level of maturity for a career. Parental support has emerged to be the most correlated with the maturity of young Kosovars for a career.

Based on the analysis of multiple linear regression, parental support has emerged to be the most predictive for the career maturity where  $r = .397$ ,  $t = 2.964$ ,  $sig = .003$ . While the data from this same analysis to support teachers has emerged to be  $r = .083$ ,  $t = 1.551$ ,  $sig = .121$ , as well as support from peers,  $r = .127$ ,  $t = 3521$ ,  $sig = .000$ . On the basis of these findings, career maturity seems to be related, even the prediction of adequate social support, namely, the support of the school, peers and in particular, the parental support.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

Results of this study show that a high percentage of Kosovars youth have decided for their future profession, however, the findings also made us aware that 18.9% of participants had not even decided, although they were in the last month of their secondary school.

Career maturity is seen to have a positive correlation with parental support, support from teachers, and peer support. The importance and relation of career maturity with social support is highlighted by other studies as well. Parental support and later support from peers are factors indicating a higher level of correlation with career maturity, but although at slightly lower level, the schools / teachers are seen to be important factors for decision-making. These findings consisting of a straight line with the results of studies conducted for analysis of such factors (Ferry, 2006).

Results of this study also support the second hypothesis, according to which, parental support will be predictive factor for adolescent's career maturity. These findings are consistent with the findings of many other studies that emphasize the great importance that parents have in the professional development of their children. These findings are also supported by the theories of career, which emphasize the role of the family in the formation of self-concept, aspirations, values and goals for the professional choice (Whiston & Keller, 2004; Super, 1957).

Based on the results of this study, we can say that the decision for the future profession is a complex process for young Kosovars. Results show that most of the graduates have already decided for the profession, but it is quite worrisome that the percentage of participants who had not yet made their professional choice was not small, even though they were at the end of secondary school. One of the important factors in this process is the career maturity. This study provides an overview of the data on career maturity that this construct has links with social support.

On the basis of this study, comes out the recommendation for the realization of other studies of this nature. It would be necessary to make even deeper studies with a greater number of participants. The results of this study and other studies that would be necessary to be carried out, can be used as a basic reference in career counseling for families and schools, in order to increase the success and maturity of youth in professional choice.



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