



UNIVERSITATEA
BABEŞ-BOLYAI



DEPARTAMENTUL DE PSIHOLOGIE
UNIVERSITATEA "BABEŞ-BOLYAI" CLUJ-NAPOCA

**YOUTH IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AS
INTENTIONAL PURSUIT:
MULTI-DIMENSIONAL AND MULTI-METHOD
APPROACHES**

Habilitation Thesis

Dr. Oana Negru-Subțirică

Department of Psychology, Babeş-Bolyai University

Cluj-Napoca

August 2017

Abstract

This thesis presents the research conducted by the candidate on identity development as intentional pursuit, through an investigation of personal, parental, and social factors that contribute to identity formation in adolescence and emerging adulthood in different life domains (e.g., education, career, religion/spirituality). These studies employ quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies in order to best capture the complexity of adolescents' and emerging adults' intentional pursuits. As an important innovative component, most of the candidate's research in the past years is based on the longitudinal studies on adolescent identity formation that she coordinates. These studies were the first on this topic in Romania and they investigated for the first time at global level important longitudinal relations between core developmental constructs in adolescence (e.g., longitudinal associations between vocational identity and career adaptability, longitudinal links between identity and meaning in life). Most importantly, their results critically questioned the universal validity of identity development sequences across adolescence.

The thesis is organized in two parts. The first part focuses on the candidate's main scientific, professional, and teaching achievements, while the second part summarizes the career evolution and development plan.

The first part details the **main scientific achievements** through 16 published research studies and 2 book chapters, organized on four lines of research. Also, **professional achievements** are presented through the research projects that the candidate conducted as project coordinator (i.e., 6 projects) and as team member. As core scientific outcomes, the candidate authored 18 Web of Science (WOS/ISI) research articles; for 8 articles, she is main and corresponding author. Of these 18 articles, 8 are in top 25% ISI/Q1 journals (2 in Developmental Psychology; 2 in Journal of Vocational Behavior; 1 in Journal of Personality; 1 in Journal of Youth and Adolescence; 1 in Assessment; 1 in Social Indicators

Research) and 4 articles are in Q2 ISI journals (Anxiety, Stress & Coping; British Journal of Developmental Psychology; Personality and Individual Differences). Additionally, 3 other articles are in WOS/ISI journals with an impact factor higher than 1 (Journal of Adolescence; European Journal of Developmental Psychology; Journal of Adolescent Research).

The first line of research integrates *methodological aspects* pertaining to instrument validation and clarification of conceptual assumptions in the Romanian context. Two studies depict the cross-cultural validation of the Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments Scale (U-MICS) in student and employed emerging adults. A third study focuses on emerging adulthood characteristics. A fourth synthetic analysis of identity development in post-communist Romania closes this line of research.

The second line of research investigates adolescent *identity development in core life domains* (i.e., education, career), mostly through longitudinal panel-study designs. Two studies analyze the longitudinal dynamics of educational identity, through cross-lagged associations with academic achievement and respectively identity styles. A third study depicts an intra-individual examination of educational identity and its relation with vocational identity. The fourth and fifth study focus on the vocational domain, depicting longitudinal relations between vocational identity and career adaptability and between career adaptability and academic achievement.

The third line of research focuses on *the relation between identity and goal pursuits*, from achievement goal, self-determination, and existential concerns (i.e., meaning in life) perspectives. The first study investigates the relation between aspirations and identity processes in pre-service teachers, considering their reinforcement of behavioral versus constructivist teaching strategies. The second study analyzes how identity processes are linked to achievement goals. The third study explores cross-lagged associations between intrinsic and extrinsic goals and identity processes, across two longitudinal studies. The fourth study analyzes how

identity processes are linked to meaning in life dimensions across time in adolescence.

The fourth line of research focuses on *spirituality and religiosity as identity-relevant intentional pursuits*, employing mixed methodologies to investigate how youth construct their spirituality/religiosity and to debate current assumptions on spirituality/religiosity in emerging adulthood. The first two studies focus on theoretical and methodological issues in defining and operationalizing religiosity and spirituality in more traditional cultures. The third study covers an understudied theoretical and methodological area in developmental research and in the psychology of religion: the role of parents in the religious socialization of emerging adults. To best depict how religiosity is negotiated across generations and inside families, parent-child dyads participated in the study. The fourth research is a two-study approach on the links between identity and meaning in life in highly religious emerging adults (i.e., theology students).

The **career evolution and development plan** is organized around the short- and medium-term projects, in research, methodological, and teaching areas. The two core research projects focus on: (1) *The multi-dimensionality of identity development: identity domains and correlates of identity processes* (i.e., The development of identity processes in different life domains: longitudinal links between educational and vocational identity; Identity development and perfectionism: a longitudinal analysis of moderators and mediators; and A mixed-methods approach on the longitudinal relations between identity development and personal goals); and (2) *Identity formation in special populations* (Identity development in adult migrants; Identity in youth attending vocational and professional schools; and Ethnic identity in migrant and ethnic minority youth in Europe).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

REZUMAT	4
ABSTRACT	7
PART 1	10
Overview	10
CHAPTER A. SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS	19
Overview of scientific output: Research articles	19
1. Methodological dimensions in approaching identity processes in youth	20
1.1. Cross-cultural investigation of the psychometric properties of the Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments Scale (Crocetti et al., 2015)	20
1.2. The relation between identity processes and well-being in emerging adults: A cross-cultural perspective (Karaś, Ciecuch, Negru, & Crocetti, 2015)	23
1.3. Emerging adulthood characteristics in Romanian youth (Negru, 2012; Negru, Subțirică, & Opre 2011)	27
1.4. Identity development in the context of post-communist Romania (Negru-Subțirică & Damian, 2017)	30
2. Domain-specific investigation of identity development	36
2.1. Educational identity and academic achievement (Pop, Negru-Subțirică, Crocetti, Opre, & Meeus, 2016)	37
2.2. The relation between educational identity and vocational identity in adolescence (Negru-Subțirică, Pop, & Crocetti, 2017a)	42
2.3. Identity styles and educational identity processes (Negru-Subțirică, Pop, & Crocetti, 2017b)	47
2.4. Longitudinal relations between vocational identity and career adaptability (Negru-Subțirică, Pop, & Crocetti, 2015)	51
2.5. Career adaptability and academic achievement (Negru-Subțirică & Pop, 2016)	57
2.6. Academic achievement in the Romanian context: Perils and promises for identity development (Damian, Negru-Subțirică, Pop, & Baban, 2016)	62

3. Motivation and identity processes	67
3.1. Identity processes and goal orientations (Negru, Pop, Damian, & Moraru, 2011; Negru, Pop, & Opre, 2013)	68
3.2. Identity processes and goal contents (Luyckx, Duriez, Green, & Negru-Subțirică, 2017)	72
3.3. Identity processes and meaning in life (Negru-Subțirică, Pop, Luyckx, Dezutter, & Steger, 2016)	76
4. A peculiar quest for identity: Youth religiosity and spirituality as intentional pursuits	82
4.1. Young adults' personal conceptualizations of spirituality and religiosity (Negru & Mustea, 2009)	83
4.2. Morality and religiosity: A focus on intentionality (Mustea, Negru, & Opre, 2010)	87
4.3. Emerging adults' religious socialization: The role of parents (Negru, Haragâș, & Mustea, 2014)	90
4.4. Religiosity, meaning in life, and identity processes (Negru-Subțirică, Tiganasu, Dezutter, & Luyckx, 2017)	95
CHAPTER B. PROFESSIONAL & ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS...100	
1. RESEARCH PROJECTS AS PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	100
Project 1. Innovative Curriculum for Strong Identities in Diverse Europe	100
Project 2: Becoming a positively adjusted adolescent: The longitudinal role of personal and parental dimensions of identity and perfectionism	101
Project 3. Identity development and positive adaptation in diasporas	102
Project 4. Financial socialization of emerging adults: The roles of parents, work, and personal values	103
Project 5. Identity in emerging adulthood: A ten-nation cross-cultural study	104
Project 6. Intentionality, goals, and self-regulation in the development of youth in Romania: Elaboration of complex methodologies	105
2. PROJECTS AS TEAM MEMBER	106
3. OVERVIEW OF SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATIONS AND INTEGRATION IN RESEARCH NETWORKS	107

4. ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS	109
4.1. Courses taught: Innovative elements	109
4.2. New courses	110
PART 2: PROFESSIONAL CAREER EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN	112
Overview	112
GOAL 1: THE MULTI-DIMENSIONALITY OF IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT: IDENTITY DOMAINS AND CORRELATES OF IDENTITY PROCESSES	114
Project 1. The development of identity processes in different life domains: Longitudinal links between educational and vocational identity	114
Project 2. Identity development and perfectionism: A longitudinal analysis of moderators and mediators	115
Project 3. A mixed-methods approach on the longitudinal relations between identity development and personal goals	116
GOAL 2: IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN SPECIAL POPULATIONS	119
Project 1. Identity development in adult migrants	119
Project 2. Identity development in youth attending vocational and professional schools	121
Project 3. Ethnic identity in migrant and ethnic minority youth in Europe: A systematic review	123
GOAL 3: RESEARCH FUNDING AND NETWORKING	125
GOAL 4: FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES AND DATA ANALYTIC STRATEGIES	126
GOAL 5: TEACHING ABOUT IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND INTENTIONALITY	128
REFERENCES	129