



IDENTIFICATION WITH THE INTELLECTUAL MODELS OF SUCCESS: A SYNERGY TO THE OPTIMIZATION OF THE SUCCESS PATH OF SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS IN CAMEROON

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ABSTRACT

The probability of academic success is high when educational models in the family are identical to those institutionalized by the educational system (Gayet, 1997). This article presents the process of identification with success models as a fundamental element in optimizing learners' success path. The sample is made up of 550 secondary school students who filled the questionnaire. Data analyses through the analysis of variation and the student t test, permitted to affirm that knowing and implementing the methods, strategies and schemas used by their models permits the optimization of student's track; and that learners adopt environmental models imposed on them.

KEYWORDS

Identification, Success Role Model, Track Optimization, Students, Secondary Education.

INTRODUCTION

Optimising the path to success for learners means exposing them to the various environmental stimuli that should increase not only the motivation to succeed of the many, but also the completion of the study cycle by the majority. Intellectual models of success are a significant source of motivation for learners to succeed. Famous people, i.e. people with dazzling success, can serve as role models for others by motivating them to do their best (Martinot, Toczek, and Brunot, 2003). Most people respect those who have mastered a particular skill. Learners have a great deal of respect for those with experience. It is from this perspective that socio-cognitive theory, which focuses on the social and cultural interactions that shape the student's development in a given society, envisages the existence of a significant influence between the identification of learners with intellectual models of success and the optimisation of their pathways to success.



Context of the study

The internal efficiency of the Cameroonian education system is experiencing many difficulties, including drop-outs and repetition of grades. Dropouts are perceived as a lack of success or simply failure (Boissonneault, Michaud, Côté, Tremblay and Allaire, (2007)). The challenge is to get them to complete their schooling. This challenge is particularly difficult to meet in subSaharan Africa where, in 2007, out of 10 children entering primary school, 7 completed the last year of primary school (Education and Training Sector Strategy Paper (2013-2020)). Learners who drop out of school most often go to look for work. It is clear that the level of education attained by an individual in a society is a major determinant of its future success (Huot and Castonguay, 2014; Joanis, 2002). This means that dropping out of the education system before the end of secondary school can be a serious handicap for any job candidate (Blackarby and Wagner, 1996). In secondary education, dropping out rather than repeating a year is more likely to explain the low efficiency observed, especially in upper secondary education, where there is a selective, non-terminal examination. The education system continues to perform very poorly, with success rates in official examinations regularly below 50% (Noumba 2002 and 2006). Repetition is significantly higher in the first and last years of primary education and in the final year of lower secondary education. In upper secondary education, repetition is particularly high in the first grade, which is sanctioned by a probationary examination giving access to the final grade of the cycle. It is rather repetition that reduces overall efficiency in this cycle. As far as secondary education in Cameroon is concerned, it has been observed that while the frequency of repetition concerns all classes, the last classes of the cycles are especially affected: 25% in 3rd compared to an average of 15.3% in lower secondary, and 30.3% in Première compared to 14.3% in Seconde. Repetition in the Terminale class, which amounts to almost 40%, is explained by the low success rates in the baccalaureate (Education and Training Sector Strategy Paper (2013-2020)).

The socio-cognitive approach and the question of optimising the learners' educational pathway

Optimising learners' pathways to success has always been a major concern for those in charge of education. CST defines behaviour as a 'dynamic triad' in a reciprocal interaction of personal, behavioural and environmental factors. The influence of factors is relative depending on activities and circumstances. The learner, who is in constant contact with his or her environment, is subject to the influence of his or her different factors. These environmental stimuli, if they are well exploited and well oriented towards his school education, will contribute to his school engagement. Since CST is a theory of learning based on the ideas that people learn by looking at what others do, and that human thought processes are at the heart of personality, CST wants to place particular emphasis on the importance of the imitation process, which is very determining in the acquisition of knowledge. Thinking is perceived by CST as an active force that constructs the reality of each of us, selecting information and choosing behaviour on the basis of expectations and values. It must therefore be understood that the learner's environment is loaded with stimuli whose purpose is to direct the learner's actions towards the values advocated by the said environment. The learner's behaviour in educational environments is strongly correlated with the expectations and values advocated by his or her social environment. Through feedback and reciprocity, an individual's reality is formed through the interaction of environment and cognition. Bandura (2002), believes that the human being is not simply the host and spectator of internal mechanisms orchestrated by events in the external world. He is the agent rather than the mere performer of the experience. Sensory, motor and brain systems are the tools that people use to carry out the tasks and achieve the goals that give meaning, direction and satisfaction to their lives. With respect to personal goals, Bandura (1986) presents them as an individual's intention to engage in a specific activity to achieve a particular goal. Beyond socially prescribed values, the learner, based on the personal goals to be achieved, chooses the actions that will help achieve these goals. Therefore, if the learner wishes to become his intellectual model of success, these actions will be oriented towards his academic commitment. Valuing

intellectual models of success in an environment means presenting them as stimuli that can give learners real motivation to succeed. In other words, social values and expectations are the basis of all school engagement.

Identification with an intellectual model of success: a guarantee of solar success

For Postic (1979), the model refers to ways of thinking, types of behaviour common to a social group, transmitted and confirmed through education. Its function is to act on the social subject and to impose itself on it by objective, social and economic conditions. A model of success can have a beneficial effect on an individual's performance, attitudes or motivation by enabling him or her to project him or herself into the future and envisage the model's success as possible for him or herself (Lockwood and Kunda, 1997). By considering that the model exerts a coercive force on the learner, we confirm the hypothesis that the success of a model person is perceived as more accessible to learners (Lockwood and Kunda, 1997).

Identification with the intellectual model of success is a learning process initiated by the learner who would like to acquire the skills of his or her model. Tap (1998), defines identification as an imaginary process experienced as an ambivalent passion, set up by the self to defend itself against the anguish established in the ambivalent relationship with others. Imitative identification is the most common form of identification used by learners. It is linked to the process by which the individual tends to appropriate the active omnipotence of the other and to take responsibility for the means of access to autonomy (instrumental skills: motor, intellectual). The action of the intellectual model in the learner's social environment is perceived by the latter as a source of motivation. It encourages learners to put in more effort and at the same time increases their commitment to their learning. This is more poignant if the model is the learner's teacher. The motivation of a pupil may come through a teacher, inasmuch as a teacher who is considered warm-hearted will motivate his or her pupils if he or she knows how to create an atmosphere conducive to learning by involving them in management decisions while making them respect the rules of work and conduct that result from them (Viau, 2000).

The observed lack of engagement of some learners can therefore be explained by the fact that they are not sufficiently exposed to the environmental stimuli that should motivate them. For this reason, in some environments, girls lack role models and find it difficult to imagine that they could make a personal contribution to an area of social, political, cultural, scientific or artistic practice (Mosconi, 2004). The absence of the role model in a locality could justify the inaction of young learners in the development of certain skills. The presence of the model in a given environment is seen as an assurance for the young person who wants to engage in his or her learning. In this respect, Belin-Michinov (2001), says that it is preferable for pupils from the majority ethnic group to preferentially choose models from their ethnic group. Hence the importance of valuing intellectual models of success present in the learner's social environment. The aim is to bring intellectual models of success closer to the learners and to align the possibility of achieving the competences of the said model. In fact, it is giving a major boost to the stimuli that will in turn create greater motivation for the learner to succeed in his or her learning. Motivation in a school context is a dynamic state which has its origins in the perceptions that a pupil has of himself and his environment and which encourages him to choose an activity, to engage in it and to persevere in its accomplishment in order to achieve a goal, (Viau 1997). Learners can make progress by drawing inspiration from certain celebrities if they feel they can achieve success (Lockwood &Kunda, 1997; Martinot, Toczek&Brunot, 2003). On the other hand, individuals may regress if the success of the celebrities they refer to seems unattainable to them.

Methodology

This study is part of a quantitative estimate. Data collection by means of the questionnaire was carried out in secondary schools and colleges in Cameroon. A sample of 550 learners was collected using the simple random sampling technique.

Participants

This study is part of a quantitative estimate. Data collection by means of the questionnaire was carried out in secondary schools and colleges in Cameroon. A sample of 550 learners was collected using the simple random sampling technique. A sample of 550 learners was selected, 48% boys and 52% girls between the ages of 13 and 19. As regards repetition of learners, 383 learners stated that they had taken at least one class and the other 167 stated that they had not yet had to take a class again. With regard to the socio-economic status of learners' families, 334 report having an average economic income, 31 report being from wealthy families and 155 report being from poor families. The modality that measures the sector of activity of parents allowed 298 learners who claim to have at least one parent working in the informal sector, and 252 who claim to have at least one parent in paid employment. In terms of the type of model preferred by learners, 151 learners claim to have singing and acting artists as their success model, 210 have business people as their model, 98 have intellectuals as their model, and 91 have film and football stars as their model.

Internal consistency of the questionnaire

The questionnaire is composed of two main parts: a first part which contains the items on identifying the success model, and a second part on the success path. The identification of the success model has been operationalized in three modalities. These are: 1) behaviour (items 1-7); 2) the person (items 8-14); 3) the environment (items 15-22). With regard to the optimisation of the success path, we applied the scale for measuring motivation to succeed, which consists of 28 items. The calculation of the inter-judge coefficient (CVI) enabled us to validate the questionnaire. $CVI = 22/28$; $CVI = 0,78$. The Kuder-Richardson calculation (KR21) allowed us to measure the reliability of the questionnaire. Thus $KR21 = 0,23$ so our instrument is reliable.

Presentation of the results of the data analysis

The raw data collected was analysed using the student t-test, where we had two response modalities for one item, and the analysis of variance (ANOVA) where we had more than two response modalities.

The analysis of the first hypothesis which measures the influence of behaviour on the optimisation of the success path is tested using the t-statistic. The modalities used for testing this hypothesis are: behavioural patterns and action patterns. It emerges from the analysis that the average of behavioural patterns (122, 7064) is higher than that of action patterns (115, 8384). The significant value (0.009) is lower than the critical value (0.05). $t(2.976)$ is higher than critical $t(1.962)$. This confirms the hypothesis that the behaviour of the model significantly influences the optimisation of the learner's success path.

The test of the second hypothesis, which measures the influence of the individual on the optimisation of the learner's success path, was done using the analysis of variance. The calculations reveal that the average of the cognitive component is greater (123, 7061), followed by the biological component (117, 1115) and finally the affective component (111, 1277). The analysis of variance indicates that there is a significant difference between these averages. Because the significant value of 0.004 is smaller than the critical value of 0.05. The calculated F is 5.118, the critical F is 4.66.

Hypothesis three, which measures whether the student's environment influences the optimisation of the pathway to success for secondary school learners, is tested using analysis of variance. Thus the calculation of the different averages reveals that the average of the imposed environment (119.4168) is greater, then comes the average of the constructed environment (117.9286) and finally the average of the chosen environment (113.2302). the analysis of variance shows that the difference between the average of the imposed environment is significant at 0.006; it is smaller than the critical value at 0.05. the analysis of variance shows that the difference between the average of the imposed environment and the average of the chosen environment is

significant at 0.006; it is smaller than the critical value at 0.05. The analysis of variance shows that the difference between the average of the imposed environment and the average of the chosen environment is significant at 0.006. The calculated F is 3.841, the critical F is 3.36. The calculated F is greater than the read F; therefore, the imposed environment has a significant influence on the optimisation of the learners' success path.

Discussion of the results

We have linked the valorization of intellectual models and the optimization of the path to success for secondary school learners in Cameroon. The cognitive model constitutes the representations of an existing system with the aim of highlighting its structural or functional properties judged to be the most important and interesting. Bandura's (1986) cognitive social theory was used in this study. It allowed the elaboration of our three research hypotheses. The analysis of these hypotheses allows us to say that the environment in which the learner lives greatly influences his or her choice of models. This simply confirms the power of environmental stimuli on learners' choice of engagement in their studies. It should be noted that, speaking of the environment close to the learner, Belin-Michinov (2001) says that because of the attraction to people perceived as similar to oneself, one would expect that students, regardless of their group of origin, would preferentially choose their role models from their ethnic group.

We must not lose sight of the fact that learners in large urban metropolises are as exposed to stimuli in their immediate environment as they are to those in other skies. For exposure to the media and the use of the internet allows them to be as well exposed to the influence of successful models from elsewhere. But the real problem is not at this level because whether it is national or international, the intellectual model produces the same motivational effects on learners who wish to stand out through dazzling academic adaptation. It is simply a matter of exposing these different intellectual models of success to young learners in each situation.

In order to become like his model, one must follow a path that is similar to the one adopted by the latter. The learner must copy the behavioural and action patterns used by the role models in order to become more engaged in his or her schooling. The learner must therefore follow the same framework used by the model in order to achieve his or her level of success. The path traced by the models facilitates learners' access to success, as they only need to follow it. This technique is very effective when the success model and the learner live in the same environment.

In doing so, they face the same realities and the application of behavioural patterns seems to be relatively easy to achieve.

However, it should be noted that the evolution of societies means that the application of the path developed by the models to achieve success is not exactly the same to be followed by the learner. Certain factors have had to disappear over time, new factors have emerged, hence the need to adapt to the new context. Moreover, automatically following in the footsteps of a model amounts to developing certain automatisms in the young learner, which in one way or another cancels out his reflective, creative power and the personal development of skills that should help him to adapt to his schooling.

In the end, situations experienced on an affective, cognitive and biological level affect the learner's person and certainly influence his or her choice of models. The learner thus perceives his personal effectiveness (his competence) in adapting to the school environment according to the events experienced on the cognitive, affective and biological levels. It is on this threefold point that a learner will be able to assess his ability to identify with his model of success. The cognitive level is the one that is the most emphasised insofar as his desire to become like his model of success is strongly correlated to the personal evaluation he makes of his own abilities to reach the level of the model. Carré (2003) believes that, according to Bandura (1986), the belief

system that forms the sense of self-efficacy is the foundation of motivation and action and thus of human achievement and well-being. It is therefore a rare clarity and strength of conviction, because if the learner does not believe that he or she can achieve the results he or she desires through action, there is little reason to act or persevere in the face of difficulties. Even if they act weakly, the emotional aspect is also an element of personal evaluation of the individual that can lead the learner to seek to become like the role model. A learner may want to attain the skills of his or her role model to meet the demands of the environment in which he or she is strongly bound. Therefore, while this is a strong element of motivation to succeed for the learner, it should also be noted that reaching or even exceeding the level of the model can be done for personal enjoyment. The events experienced on the cognitive, affective and biological levels contribute, each in their own way, to developing strategies that will allow the learner to succeed as well as his intellectual model of success.

Conclusion

Failure and dropout are global phenomena that affect all education systems. The aim of our study was to present the identification with the intellectual model of success as one of the stimuli capable of motivating some learners to succeed and even to complete their learning cycle. One of the challenges of the education system is to get them to complete their schooling. This challenge is particularly difficult in sub-Saharan Africa (Education and Training Sector Strategy Paper (2013-2020)). It is therefore necessary to highlight the intellectual model of success in the Cameroonian context, which is marked by a high dropout rate. Bandura, (1986), believes that seeing individuals similar to oneself succeed would increase the self-perception of efficiency among observers who also have the capacity to perform comparable activities. We analysed the data collected through each of our hypotheses, namely that for hypothesis one, we measured the influence of behaviour on the optimisation of learners' pathways to success. The results show that if learners are aware of the different methods, strategies and even patterns used by the models and the conditions are in place to apply them, they will do better at school. For hypothesis two, which measured the influence of the individual on the optimisation of learners' pathways to success, it emerges that if learners have some knowledge of their models, the probability of increasing school performance is high. With regard to hypothesis three, which measures the influence of the environment on the optimisation of the success path, it appears that if the environment imposes a model on learners, they will tend to adopt it as such and want to become like it. There is also a greater likelihood of increasing success at school. The need to value the intellectual models present in the learner's environment must be taken into account because, as MurhiMihigo and BucekuderhwaBashige (2017) state, individual, family and school characteristics have a strong influence on the probability of a pupil dropping out of school before the end of the course.

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