



PREPARATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL BACHELOR'S THESIS IN PORT TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT: ANTHROPOLOGICAL WAY TO SUCCESS

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Abstract

The object of the research is a preparation of the thesis in port technology and management. The purpose is to conduct a theoretically heuristic investigation of combined possibilities regarding personalistic and business relationships between undergraduates and their scientific supervisors from the anthropological point of view in order to achieve a better motivation of the students to prepare the thesis. The type of the research is theoretically descriptive. The main method of the research is heuristic analysis of the preparation of the thesis in accordance with the entirety of the personality and his/her basic natural ontological values. The basic methodological principles are such as existentialism, humanism and constructivism. The guidance, based on subsidiary andragogical didactics, can help overcome cognitive dissonance, hermeneutics of suspicion, academic schizophrenia and learned helplessness of an undergraduate, and reveal his/her natural creative potential.

KEYWORDS: port, technology, management, thesis, anthropology.

Introduction

The relevance of the research. The problems, we focus on, from the anthropological and partially - psychoanalytic and gestalt-psychological point of view, are noticed as a psychoeducational casuistry during the preparation of the professional bachelor's thesis in the area of port technology and management, i.e. in study programmes of higher education, such as Marine transport logistics technology, Port and shipping finance, and Port and shipping management.

The preparation of the thesis in higher education is a traditional way of academic self-presentation and representation of a higher school, in this case - of the maritime academy. The result of this process must be a strictly methodological science and should not become only a massive academic ideology.

Andragogical didactics in higher education has to do with adult people who were influenced by a lot of positive and negative factors of their personal, educational and/or professional life, often characterized by reckless socio-technological activities and so-called *hermeneutics of suspicion*. The dependence of students on telephones and their pictures, as well as higher education based on a technology, screen and standard promote less creativity, which requires personal independence, originality and the ability to act differently than it was before.

The author of this article has noticed that the majority of students do not like creative tasks and would like to perform only those tasks that can be done quickly, superficially and without creative relationships with them and themselves. Such a situation does not allow to implement academic self-creation of the personality of a student with regard to the development of his/her creative

and critical thinking that is required by the Bologna Process and that is necessary for the preparation of a thesis.

Thus, andragogical didactics becomes a corrective one by organizing the internalization of students' academic self-concept and their scientific identification regarding its psychological - cognitive (including ontological essence and meaning), emotional, aspirational and behavioral - mechanisms from the hodegetical point of view. The corrective andragogical didactics is characterized by numerous conflicts, but it remains as an epistemological level of higher education because of the desired results of acquiring the necessary competencies.

In accordance with psychoeducational casuistry during the preparation of a thesis, this article includes consideration of two main factors as follows:

- An internal factor that is academic motivation of undergraduates (sometimes unusual one) and their demotivation to take part in scientific processes when they should prepare a thesis;

- An external factor is the ability of constructive communication and cooperation between undergraduates and their scientific supervisors according to the current supportive and enabling academic leadership in student-centered EU higher education regarding free natural expression of the personality, characterized by his/her ontological integrity in a postmodern way of life, which is increasingly defined by so-called *economy of exclusion*.

On the one hand, autocratic relationships based on the restriction and frequent control of students and of their teachers do not allow to reveal the creative potential of the personality by preparing a thesis.

On the other hand, the Finnish model of education, which is not based on control but on trust, is famously

emphasized. Instead of control, competition, stress, standardized testing, screen-based schools and loosened teacher qualifications, it is offered to try warmth, collaboration and highly professionalized, teacher-led encouragement and assessment (Doyle 2016).

Personalistic communication between undergraduates and their supervisors is especially important because it is a very practical tool for solving the problem of cognitive dissonance, which is experienced through the preparation of a thesis. Undergraduates are in the situation between both - "how it is" and "how it should be".

Their thesis must meet the requirements, i.e. their individual approach, methodological and methodical requirements according to port technology and/or its management, the approach of supervisors, a possible approach of reviewers and members of the commission for the defense of theses at the department or faculty. There are things that need to be discussed, understood and implemented. This requires a proper psychological climate of communication, sensitivity and subtlety in order to carefully consider all possible nuances, possible questions, as well as to learn to cope with personal fears.

Researchers often analyze the problems of communication between teachers and students in terms of their academic motivation (Wilson, Stadler, Schwartz et al. 2009; Tijūnėlienė 2012; Rekis 2013; Šumskaitė 2014; Jatkuskienė, Andriekienė, Trakšėlys 2015; Norvilienė 2015; Urhahne 2015; Doyle 2016; Hu, Rijst, Veen et al. 2016; Ruzek, Hafen, Allen et al. 2016; Kairys, Liniauskaitė, Brazdeikienė et al. 2017; Pelayo, Mallari, Capili 2017; Henry, Thorsen 2018 etc.).

Various perspectives of a teacher as a scientist, lecturer and psychologist for his/her students, of empowering students to take part in activities of the higher school, of the evaluation of studies quality, of global changes in higher education, of academic motivation structure, of didactics in higher education, of didactic competencies in teachers activity, of behavior of a teacher as a mediator, of teacher's emotional support, of the impact of a handshake, and of holistic education are considered by mentioned scientists.

For innovative consideration of scientific and practical problems of the preparation of a thesis in port technology and management, from the anthropological point of view, as an epistemological measure we have chosen the entirety of the personality and the basic ontological values, on which human communication is naturally based.

The preparation of a thesis is scientific but first of all - human activity, the nature of which is oriented toward the desire to find a scientific and practically applicable truth, to act well and enjoy the thesis prepared correctly from the methodical point of view. This joy is also relevant at the psychotherapeutic level.

Now it is appropriate to discuss the common features emphasizing the basic approach to the personality in accordance with the anthropological attitude towards the natural humane valuable aspirations. An empirical study of correlations between scientific supervisors and academic motivation of their undergraduates could be in the perspective of future research.

The object of the research is a preparation of the thesis in port technology and management.

The subject is an entirety of the personality, and the basic natural ontological values regarding the preparation of a thesis, considered anthropologically.

The purpose of the research is to conduct a theoretically heuristic investigation of combined possibilities regarding personalistic and business relationships between undergraduates and their scientific supervisors from the anthropological point of view in order to achieve a better motivation of the students to prepare the thesis in port technology and management.

The type of the research is theoretically descriptive.

The main method is heuristic analysis of the preparation of a thesis in accordance with the entirety of the personality and his/her basic natural ontological values.

The basic methodological principles of the research are as follows:

- Existentialism, which emphasizes an undergraduate's hidden fear or too much defensive desire to write the thesis and to become enriched by his/her scientific supervisor. Existentialism offers the opportunity to insight freedom of the personality and his/her existential independence, possible natural nobility and rich hidden inner culture, at least at the motivational level. Undergraduates and their supervisors are not only people but also experienced and somehow enriched individuals with their life stories, existential aspirations and with not only physical feelings but also noble ones.

- Humanism first of all declares the personality as a highest value in the world. This epistemological principle emphasizes the undergraduates and their scientific supervisors not as human animals but as subjective and free personalities with respect for them and their respect to each other. Undergraduates should be encouraged by their scientific supervisors through supportive leadership, so that human nature as a creative potential could be revealed to create products, such as the thesis in port technology and management when sincere support for undergraduates is provided by their supervisors.

- Constructivism emphasizes subjective academic relationships between undergraduates and their scientific supervisors as a complex of intellectual constructs and their complements to each other. Free personalities at the humanistic level share their port technological and managerial ideas and insights in discussions, so that they could achieve the result of their high-quality scientific research in the preparation of the thesis. Constructivism, as a methodological principle of individual communication and andragogical cooperation, is a result of the mentioned existentialistic and humanistic concepts of a free, creative and respectful personality.

Results of the study

The educational meeting of undergraduates and their scientific supervisors is characterized by the gift of entering another person's world, who has a different experience of his/her life. This difference is more important when we would distinguish between Y, X and Z generations, which in part differ in motivation, why and how to prepare the thesis.

However, it is not appropriate to emphasize the difference between these generations too much because

the young age of undergraduates can play the most important role here. Human nature has not changed since the emergence of the infantile Z generation. We noticed the problem, that some undergraduates value their independence too much, do not trust their scientific supervisors and write their thesis without methodical system of the maritime academy. Undergraduates, who do not believe in scientific sense, do not trust the academic methodical system and especially the words of their supervisors, cannot achieve the high quality of their graduate work.

Mistrust in higher education is also related to various psycho-economic, educational and institutional problems, met by students and teachers. These problems of hermeneutics of suspicion and academic schizophrenia are associated with so-called *learned helplessness*. A person is naturally active, lively, energetic and completely devoted.

However, some undergraduates are distrusted, defensively aggressive in psychoanalytic sense, and have too much self-confidence.

Their learned helplessness in life does not allow them to accept another person and to believe him/her. Such an undergraduate is afraid to be enriched and he/she defends himself/herself from valuable information but at the same time he/she half-consciously waits for the appropriate attention and communication from his/her scientific supervisor.

The appropriate attention, based on anthropology, psychoanalysis and especially encouraging gestalt-psychology because it basically allows a person to adequately recognize the entirety of the personality and to develop the necessary his/her self-esteem, can help an undergraduate reveal his/her creative powers for the motivated and productive preparation of the thesis.

On the one hand, natural personalistic communication between undergraduates and their scientific supervisors is required because of the scientific need to look at the preparation of the thesis as if from the side, considering the fundamental questions - "why do this?", and only then - "how to do this?", i.e. what kind of methods and tools should be used in the research.

However, on the other hand, undergraduates need human, natural and fairly open conversations in order to systemize their thoughts about the scientific field, in which they are interesting, but they also experience creative tension because the field is new for them.

Therefore, communication between undergraduates and their scientific supervisors is relevant at the psychotherapeutic level mentioned in the introduction of this article.

Moreover, there is a serious problem of perception of the nature of student's motivation and the anthropologically andragogical basis for its development. As a rule, education politicians and bureaucrats of education institutions do not correspond to education science and anachronistically emphasize the manipulative development of student's motivation (this is similar to "birching pedagogy" of the Middle Ages).

However, since the 20th century the science of education has been oriented towards constructivism because of personalism and democracy declared in the education system.

Not a teacher tells the student what kind of scientific truth to look for (according to the behavioristic methodology) but they both share the constructs of their ideas and insights (mentioned sharing of constructs gave the name *constructivism* to this type of educational methodology), and seek the truth together in accordance with their roles.

The biblical principle proclaimed by rabbis (this Hebrew word etymologically means *teacher*) and later - by Christian missionaries, is this: "So take care how you listen; anyone who has, will be given more; anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he thinks he has" (Lk 8, 18).

The main principle of the ancient Greek philosophers (especially the Socrates tradition and the Plato Academy) and of Jewish pedagogy and monastic colleges in the Middle Ages is to allow and encourage students to ask questions. This allows a student to develop his/her natural cognitive activity, which determines his/her motivation.

There are not incompetent students but they are distracted and angry because they are confused. They experience inner conflicts and stress because they cannot integrate their personal life, based on intellectual and practical activities.

As a rule, the organizers of higher education do not emphasize that the professional bachelor's thesis does not end in itself. The purpose of preparing a thesis is a new quality of the student's personality, arising from his/her natural interests in some areas (in port technology and management in this case), from the scientific search for answers to the questions, and from creative tension, which is ultimately crowned by the joy of his/her own accomplished scientific work that stimulates his/her self-esteem.

Here, the minimum required motivation of an undergraduate to prepare the thesis is most important. Students who are physically and mentally healthy, of course, are always characterized at least by the minimum of necessary motivation.

Furthermore, actors and participants in higher education are under pressure of international and local political, business economic and legislative regulations (as well as the rules of modern academic ethics, which is unfortunately more characterized by punitive intervention than by educative prevention), so, it seems we forget the basic anthropological things, such as:

- Human nature and its free expression;
- Natural human (especially - social) needs and natural cognitive interests;
- Efforts of constructive communication and harmonious cooperation in terms of a noble result.

Consideration of such anthropological things can help find a way to improve communication and constructive collaboration between different undergraduates and their scientific supervisors in different areas of scientific research.

There is a very big problem, how to convince the national and international experts of higher education and the workers of the Ministry of education and science of Lithuania Republic, that The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (Article 42) attracts teachers with the words "teaching shall be free". It means unrestricted. Freedom

is a basic value and a natural need of the personality, especially who participates in creation processes.

Thus, the restrictions made by these experts also violate the smooth interaction between the various groups in higher education, including undergraduates and their scientific supervisors.

Such problems exist much more. Students often narrowly perceive the usefulness of preparing a thesis and of participating in higher education at all. Concepts of a valuable enrichment of the personality are almost excluded from the political system of the EU higher education (Duoblienė 2010; Aleksandravičius 2015). The ability to conduct research in the field of port technology and management, preparing the thesis, is an academic value but the word “value” or “a personality” became rare in (post)modern higher maritime schools, especially in northwestern Europe.

However, the so-called *student-centered learning* is emphasized by the documents of the Bologna Process. So, the experience, needs and values of a student are the most important here. It is appropriate to reasonably meet the academic needs of undergraduates, as well as specific issues regarding the personality and his/her mentality and culture (Hu, Rijst, Veen et al. 2016).

Moreover, studies, oriented to practice in colleges and academies and even in universities, are more characterized by teachers who have practical experience, e.g., in the marine business, but do not have a scientific basis.

On the one hand, these invaluable professionals form a targeted core of business people in each higher school focused on practice, but on the other hand, they, as a rule, do not have the basic sociocultural knowledge required by the didactic practice of higher education.

Nevertheless, perhaps these business professionals are sometimes better by:

- Helping their undergraduates apply the tools of port technological research necessary for the thesis;
- Looking at scientific theories from a narrow practical point of view;
- Being able to see the possibilities for a particular practical application of the thesis in the marine business process.

Scientists are usually better, helping their undergraduates:

- To combine the theoretical part of the thesis with the empirical one;
- To choose various scientific methods, as well as the fundamental ones, such as thesis-antithesis-synthesis for analysis of theories;
- To apply socially responsible principles to the research;
- To prepare the thesis in accordance with formal methodical requirements of the scientific work, such as the correct quotation or description of scientific sources.

It is purposeful to seek opportunities of symbiosis between business professionals and scientists from the point of view of constructivism, combining scientific and practical skills, so that their students could acquire research abilities.

Thus, in any case it is appropriate to perceive that higher education in human society is primarily a sociocultural phenomenon, and to recall the principle of

quasi-Enlightenment - “back to nature”, namely - to return to human nature, characterized by:

- The entirety of the personality;
- The whole system of his/her needs.

A person, from the anthropological point of view, is an entire human being, characterized by his/her natural physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions, and it is not enough to recognize and emphasize only one or two of them. The internalization of academic self-concept requires the activity of all personal dimensions, i.e. cognitive, emotional, aspirational and practical ones.

There are two main types of thinking we need in relationships:

- Superficial thinking that is useful in relation to physical things, such as marine and port technology and its management techniques. However, we are talking about these things with students who are people but not things. It is appropriate to use elegant methodologies, methods and techniques for the research that are worthy and consistent with the student’s personality.

- Deep thinking that we use in dealing with people as human beings in order to reveal the natural creative potential of students in the process of preparing a thesis on the management of marine and port technology, as well as personnel management. The main condition to reveal the natural creative potential is a free and subjective self-expression of an undergraduate.

The experience of life shows that human nature is more oriented to art, including sport and game, than to science based on strictly analytical and synthetic thinking concerning an insight into tendencies and laws of investigating phenomena. In order to develop scientific motivation of an undergraduate, his/her personality cannot feel that his/her scientific supervisor communicates with him/her as a thing, i.e. superficially, insincerely or manipulatively.

However, all students are entire human beings with the same human nature when they are healthy, and they need not only business relationships but also personalistic ones for their first serious scientific work in life. Personalistic communication can also highlight and help ensure the integrity between personal life of an undergraduate (before and during the preparation of a thesis) and his/her participation in scientific processes.

The essence of scientific work expresses the spirit of the author who and whose life was enriched. The preparation of a thesis is unusual for an undergraduate but it can become not strange for his/her human nature and self-concept. A valuable didactic combination of the superficial business dimension with a deeply personalistic one in communication is necessary in scientific discussions for the human creation of scientific work.

Anthropologically based natural ontological values and main valuable aspirations of the personality are truth, goodness and beauty. They are most important values for higher education:

- Truth helps understand and develop the reality of life. Scientific truth in the field of port technology and management helps discover and appropriately develop technological and managerial solutions.
- Goodness manifests, e.g., an implementation of social values. Goodness in science is expressed through

the proper application of purposeful methods and tools of research.

- Beauty, first of all, refers to the order in accordance with the meaning of the Greek word *cosmos* in aesthetics. Beauty in science, regarding preparation of a thesis, refers to the formal methodical requirements of the maritime academy and their implementation. All this helps create the personality of an undergraduate enriched by research skills.

The sequence of basic natural ontological values is not random:

- Beauty cannot be empty and must be based on truth and goodness;

- Goodness is not necessarily beautiful but it must be true. So, the truth is at the beginning.

The preparation of a thesis, in accordance with the basic natural ontological values, should be supported by scientific supervisors who are characterized by good anthropological self-awareness and successful personal academic experience.

Their subsidiary guidance (Hoffner 1997) for the entire personality of an undergraduate mostly corresponds to the anthropological requirements in higher education, in this case - the maritime one. Anthropological truth about the personality brings the preparation of a thesis to the subsidiary relationships between undergraduates and their supervisors:

- Personalism helps ensure the appropriate attitude towards the respectful subjectivity of another human being;

- Solidarity helps apply supportive leadership from the side of scientific supervisors;

- Subsidiarity, as didactics "help for self-help", keeps the appropriate distance, allow the undergraduate to be independent by learning and choosing personal paths by creating the thesis and revealing his/her natural creative potential.

The mentioned problems of preparing a thesis and the direction of their solution are shown (Fig. 1).

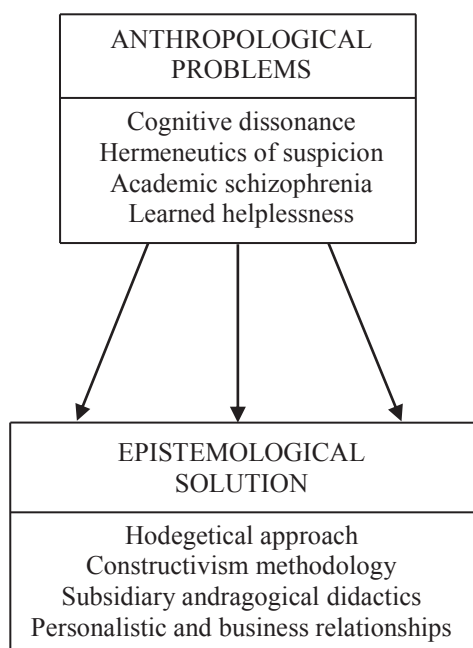


Fig. 1. Anthropological problems of preparing a thesis and their epistemological solution

The guidance, based on the hodegetical approach regarding its psychological cognitive (concerning the ontological essence and meaning), emotional, aspirational and behavioral mechanisms, and constructivism methodology and subsidiary andragogical didactics, applying a combination of personalistic and business relationships, can help overcome cognitive dissonance, hermeneutics of suspicion, academic schizophrenia and learned helplessness of an undergraduate and reveal his/her natural creative potential.

The personal experience of the author of this article is related to the successful guidance of the undergraduates when they prepare a thesis. Because they are adults, it is very convenient to apply the *locus nascendi* epistemology, which is based anthropologically:

- Who is an undergraduate?

- What kind of life does he/she live?

- What special values make him/her happy?

- What is his/her life story?

- How does he/she create his/her professionalism?

These are some questions that were discussed indirectly at the very beginning. They help know more about the real treasure of Lithuania, i.e. the remarkable personality of an undergraduate, and start a very hard work - the preparation of a thesis.

The author of this article, as a scientific supervisor, noticed that undergraduates love their personal experience and share it:

- Some students like to photograph the sea and the seaport from an early age;

- One student came to the maritime academy because she, being a painter, desired to see how the waves break down;

- Another student shared her professional experience working on an oil platform, seeing a storm or watching on the monitor the sharks that came to the platform;

- Some students share their family traditions for work in the port and on board;

- Sometimes at least the conversation in the native dialect allows an undergraduate to feel good, as in a home environment, etc.

All this helps create a positive psychological climate for business communication preparing a thesis:

- On the one hand, it encourages an undergraduate to take part in scientific activities;

- On the other hand, it can also motivate a scientific supervisor to do his/her job, as well as to perceive the personality of his/her undergraduate and to help him/her in a subsidiary manner to choose the suitable path for creating a thesis.

Educational technologies based on anthropological sustainability can help to express the social nature of the personality in order to achieve the scientific and practical goal of academic cooperation between the students and their supervisors in changing society.

Conclusions

The combination of business relationships between scientific supervisors and their undergraduates, with the personalistic one in student-centered learning, is necessary from the anthropological point of view of *locus nascendi* epistemology, in order to increase the student's

motivation by preparing the professional bachelor's thesis.

If the behavioristic superficial business relationship, which is usual by managing marine and port technology, is applied without constructivist personalistic communication with students, it relates to cognitive dissonance, hermeneutics of suspicion, academic schizophrenia and learned helplessness, and does not allow to reveal the natural potential of the personality, which is necessary in order to prepare a thesis in good quality, right on a scientific level and methodically beautiful.

The appropriate hodegetical attention, energy and time given by scientific supervisors to their undergraduates, creating personalistic relationships, regarding very useful maritime experience and marine symbolism, can help reveal the entire personality of a student, freely develop natural - but defensively blocked - his/her powers, sincere aspirations and required activities, properly preparing the thesis in port technology and management.

The results of this study can be applied in training future skilled seaport workers at the anthropologically constructivist level, from the didactic point of view of the subsidiary andragogical guidance for young people who tend to become more and more standardized, entertaining and pragmatic but also less and less scientifically conscious, less naturally self-creative, especially in accordance with the rejection of moral authorities in their life, and less inventive in respect of social responsibility and of reliable solidity in the long-term personal and professional perspective of the academic youth.

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