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OCCUPATIONAL THEMES AND AMBIGUITY TOLERANCE LEVEL IN CAREER DECISION-MAKING

Abstract: The process of adaptation to professional career remains an important issue, especially in the domain of professional consultancy. This article aims at the analysis of the relationships between the occupational themes, the ambiguity tolerance level in career decisions and the style of coping with career decision-making difficulties. The study covered 227 students. The participants were assigned occupational themes according to the results obtained from a Multifaceted Occupational Preferences Assessment questionnaire. They have been analysed for the diversity in terms of ambiguity tolerance in career decision-making (Career Decisions Ambiguity Tolerance questionnaire) and the styles of coping with difficulties in career

decisions (Coping with Career Decision-making Difficulties questionnaire). It has been established that sex is not related to the aforesaid personality dispositions. Persons with the social occupational theme seek social support more often than persons categorised as other types; the artistic theme is most closely connected with the unproductive coping style, while persons categorised as enterprising exhibit the opposite tendency. Furthermore, a correlation between the ambiguity tolerance and the productive coping style in career decisions has been noted.

Keywords: occupational themes, ambiguity tolerance, strategies of coping with career decision-making difficulties

INTRODUCTION

The topic of taking career-related decisions is always important and up to date, in particular in relation to persons starting their professional life. The typology of occupational themes developed by John Lewis Holland is well known in the academic community, just like such terms as 'ambiguity tolerance' or 'styles of coping with career decision-making difficulties'. The investigation of the topic of adaptation to professional career taking into consideration personal dispositions, the construct of ambiguity tolerance as well as styles of coping with career decision-making difficulties was inspired by the idea to analyse the relationships between these variables, as so far they have been studied separately, which further encouraged taking up the study.

HOLLAND'S OCCUPATIONAL THEMES TYPOLOGY

The occupational themes concept represents the impact of persistent personality traits on the development of the professional career (Srebalus, Marinelli, Messing, 1982, after: Weinrach, 1996). In Holland's occupational themes concept, the following types are distinguished: realistic (down-to-earth and persevering persons with competencies in a well-defined field, preferring working with machines and instruments), conventional (persons preferring well-structured activities; they are said to be reliable, diligent, down-to-earth and practice-oriented), enterprising (persons paying attention to material gains with social, leadership and persuasive competencies), social (persons with high social competencies, empathy, emotional maturity, working to establish contact with other people, to help them, to teach and to share information), artistic (persons exhibiting non-standard behaviour with a need to express themselves, their emotions or views and to share them with the society) and investigative (persons who like working with abstract terms, applying theoretical reasoning to investigate and learn about the surrounding world). Each of these themes is characterised by a constellation of interests, preferred activities, abilities as well as views held and values cherished (Nauta, 2010). Typically, the themes are presented graphically as a hexagon (Figure 1).

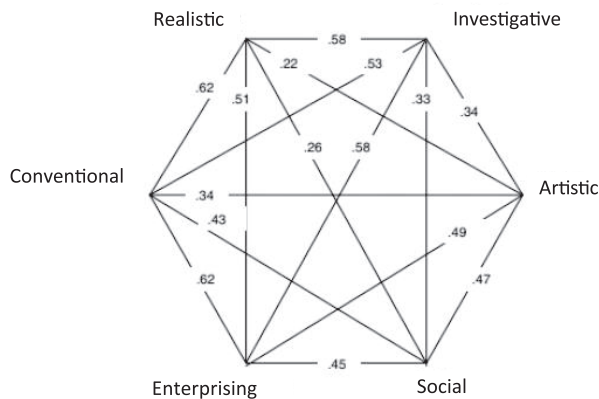


FIGURE 1. Relationships between the occupational themes.

Source: Cevika, Perkmenb, Alkanc, Shelleyd, 2013.

Among other things, the hexagonal occupational themes model allows one to present similarities and differences between the occupational themes. According to Holland's theory, each person possesses traits of every theme, but they occur in a hierarchical order and with decreasing intensity. This typology takes into consideration the preferred behaviour, competencies, weaknesses, image of self, traits, professional interests as well as most suitable occupations of an individual. The diversity of these traits and preferences is a product of both individual and social factors. This concept involves also types of working environments in which the individual categorised as a given occupational theme will function best and indicates that every individual seeks a working environment in which he or she will be able to thrive in accordance with his or her preferences. According to Holland's theory, the behaviour of an individual is a product of interac-

tions between his or her personality and the working environment (Paszowska-Rogacz, Goleniowska, Grosjer, Hauk, Jarmakowski-Kostrzanowski, 2013).

The juxtaposition of Holland's occupational themes with the Five-Factor Model by Paul Costa and Robert McCrae has demonstrated positive correlation between the investigative and artistic themes on the one hand and the factor of openness to experience on the other. The social and enterprising themes have been shown to correlate positively with the extraversion factor (Costa, McCrae, Holland, 1984, after: Gottfredson, Jones, Holland, 1993). The results of later studies proved the stability of this tendency; furthermore, the factor of conscientiousness has been shown to correlate highly with the conventional theme (Gottfredson, Jones, Holland, 1993).

Holland's theory has also been shown to apply to the field of musical education (Allen, 1996, after: Cevika et al., 2013). The researchers juxtaposed the occupational theme and the function served by Turkish music teachers and showed that they represented mainly the artistic or social themes. Furthermore, persons categorised as these two occupational themes showed higher levels of satisfaction with the function served than persons with other occupational themes (Cevika et al., 2013).

Studies conducted among students of medicine were meant to shed light on the relationship between the occupational theme they showed and the chosen medical specialty. A general tendency was recorded according to which medical studies are chosen (even if the candidates are not ultimately admitted) by persons aligned more with the investigative theme than any other theme described in Holland's theory. However, it is mostly persons exhibiting artistic and social themes who decide to pursue specialty in psychiatry. The study path aimed at specialty in orthopaedic surgery is more frequently than expected taken up by persons with realistic or investigative themes. Students who opted for radiology as their future career turned out to correspond more often to realistic or enterprising types than any other (Elam, 1994).

AMBIGUITY TOLERANCE IN CAREER DECISIONS

Issues related to the choice of professional career and the accompanying feelings of fear, doubt and hesitation are most frequently addressed in the field of career psychology. In response to the need for professional consultancy, the construct of ambiguity tolerance has been narrowed down to the idea of ambiguity tolerance in career decisions. One immanent feature of decisions taken in relation to career is ambiguity, therefore ambiguity tolerance has been accepted as a component of this decision process characterising any individual. Researchers have shown that ambiguity tolerance contributes positively to an individual's sense of effectiveness in situations related to career decisions (Xu, Tracey, 2015). Decision-taking in the context of choosing one's career path is not over after one decision. It has been pointed out that an individual experiences anxiety and uncertainty commonly and continually after entering the period of career decisions (Krumboltz, 1992, 2009, after: Xu, Tracey, 2017). On the other hand, decisions taken in relation to professional career often act reciprocally, impacting the ambiguity tolerance level. Fear has been recognised as a particular predictor of hesitation in the decision-taking process related to professional career (Germeijs, Verschueren, Soenens, 2006, after: Park, Woo, Park, Kyea, Yang, 2016).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that entrepreneurs are characterised by a particularly high level of ambiguity tolerance (Koh, 1996, after: Xu, Tracey, 2014).

Furthermore, it was noted that senior entrepreneurs were characterised by a higher level of ambiguity tolerance than persons holding positions in the same field, but of lower rank (Begley, Boyd, 1988, after: Xu, Tracey, 2014). On the other hand, studies conducted in the opposite direction showed a relation between a low level of ambiguity tolerance and excessive fears about future connected with symptoms of generalised anxiety disorders, obsessions or compulsions, or even panic attacks (Dugas, Gagnon, Ladouceur, Freeston, 1998; Buhr, Dugas, 2006; Dugas, Gosselin, Ladouceur, 2001, after: Xu, Tracey, 2014).

For the purpose of conducting a study, medicine students were asked – on the basis of the competent judges procedure – to determine the level of structuring of medical specialties within the field of medicine as such. It was determined that the most structured fields of medicine were surgery, gynaecology and obstetrics, while the least structured – psychiatry. In one of the studies addressing the choice of a specific specialty by students it was demonstrated that the least structured fields are chosen significantly more often by medical students with higher ambiguity tolerance level, as compared to more structured fields (Budner, 1962, after: Xu, Tracey, 2014).

People differ from one another in terms of the intensity of traits. It has been noted that the intensity of ambiguity tolerance can also stem from cultural grounds. To demonstrate the aforementioned differences as clearly as possible, researchers decided to compare the Chinese and the American cultures. The Chinese culture appreciates traditional values carried over from one generation to another, stressing the good of the family and emphasising hard work and usefulness (Zhang, Dik, Wei, Zhang, 2015). On the other hand, the American culture is characterised by an approach focused on the individual, his or her aims, fulfilling plans. Contrary to expectations, the studies showed that the Chinese culture is characterised by a lower level of ambiguity avoidance than the American culture (Hofstede, 2001, after: Xu, Tracey, Zhang, 2016).

Furthermore, studies conducted among students showed that Chinese students scored higher on neuroticism and extraversion scales in comparison with American students (McCrae, Terracciano, 2005, after: Xu, Tracey, Zhang, 2016). At the same time, it was demonstrated that American students seem to be much more excited about acquiring new information in the process of taking career decisions than students from the Chinese group.

Career decisions can also be tied to the concept of one's sense of self-efficacy, as introduced by Albert Bandura (1977). In the context of career decisions, it contains such aspects as: optimum self-assessment, collecting information, selective choice of goals, planning and problem solving. It has been proven that a greater sense of self-efficacy leads to lower difficulty level in career decisions (Santos, Wang, Lewis, 2018).

Another important factor connected with this decision-making process is emotional intelligence, understood as the ability to understand and experience emotions felt by oneself and others and to apply these abilities in interpersonal relations (Thorndike, 1920, after: Santos, Wang, Lewis, 2018). Similarly to one's sense of self-efficacy, it has been noted that in the context of difficulties in career decisions, there is an inverted relation. A higher level of emotional intelligence contributes to the reduction of difficulties in career decisions. In addition, a positive correlation was recorded for the relation between one's sense of self-efficacy and emotional intelligence (Santos, Wang, Lewis, 2018).

STYLES OF COPING WITH CAREER DECISION-MAKING DIFFICULTIES

The importance of the process of coping with broadly understood difficulties and adversities has been clearly indicated in the literature devoted to the development of professional career (Argyropoulou, 2007; Larson, Majors, 1998; Larson, Toulouse, Ngumba, Fitzpatrick, Heppner, 1994; Lee, 2005; Weinstein, Healy, Ender, 2002, after: Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, Tatar, 2015). The developed model (Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, Tatar, 2015) of coping with difficulties in career decisions was created on the basis of stress coping theories (Frydenberg, Lewis, 1993; Skinner, 2003, after: Lipshits-Braziler, Tatar, Gati, 2016) but it was adapted to the needs of the decision-making process in the context of career decisions. The idea behind the development of this classification was to create a conception combining theoretical assumptions with empirical evidence of their validity. The approach proposed by the researchers takes into consideration the individual character of coping with adversities. The model lists 14 strategies representing three main coping styles: productive coping, support seeking and unproductive coping.

Research points to greater usefulness of the productive style of coping as a predictor of better effectiveness of coping and greater satisfaction from professional decisions. Using positive strategies is also linked to the occurrence of positive changes, such as reduced decision fear and increase in certainty as a consequence of taking adaptive decisions (Lent, Brown, 2013, after: Lipshits-Braziler, Braunstein-Bercovitz, Kapach-Royf, 2018).

Using the unproductive style correlates positively with negative emotionality in a decision-making process and negatively with effectiveness and satisfaction from choices made (Lipshits-Braziler, Braunstein-Bercovitz, Kapach-Royf, 2018). Unproductive coping and support seeking showed a relation with the occurrence of difficulties in the emotional and personal spheres. Persons using these styles of coping with career decision-making difficulties were characterised by a greater level of emotional and personal difficulties than persons representing the productive coping style, which, on the other hand, showed strong positive correlation with the sense of self-efficacy (as opposed to the other two styles) (Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, Tatar, 2015). The sense of self-efficacy is called a motivational aspect and it serves as the predictor in the decision-making process (Betz, Hammond, Multon, 2005; Betz, Vuyten, 1997, after: Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, Tatar, 2015).

There are arguments in favour of the conclusion that the style of seeking dependent support is a non-adaptive remedial measure, as the individual is more interested in getting support than in investing sufficiently in his or her own resources and in finding a solution to the problem. For example, the delegation strategy, categorised within the support seeking style, correlates also with the unproductive coping style. The situation looks similar in the case of the strategy of emotional support seeking (also defined as a strategy from the support seeking style repertoire), which showed a correlation with the unproductive coping style too. Nevertheless, adaptive and non-adaptive types of emotional support seeking are discerned depending on what other remedial processes have been undertaken when facing a problem situation (Carver, 1989; Zimmer-Gembeck, Skinner, 2008, za: Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, Tatar, 2015).

The investigation of the relationships between the coping styles and the Big Five personality factors (Cosa, McCrae, 1992) has revealed a correlation between support seeking and neuroticism. Productive coping correlated strongly and positively with conscientiousness, extraversion, openness to experience and agreeableness and nega-

tively with neuroticism. On the other hand, the unproductive coping style correlated strongly and positively with neuroticism and negatively with conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness (Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, Tatar, 2015).

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESIS

The aim of the conducted study was to investigate the relationships between the occupational theme, the ambiguity tolerance level in career decisions and the style of coping with career decision-making difficulties among students. The research hypotheses were verified with a view to this context. It was expected that the relationship between the ambiguity tolerance and the traits characteristic of enterprising, social, artistic and investigative persons is stronger than in the case of persons characterised by the realistic and conventional themes (Hypothesis 1). Furthermore, it was expected that the relationship between the level of support seeking by persons characterised by the social theme is stronger than in the case of persons characterised by the remaining occupational themes (Hypothesis 2). It was also assumed that the productive style of coping with difficulties in career decision-making correlates positively with the level of ambiguity tolerance in situations related to career decisions (Hypothesis 3).

METHOD

Study participants

The study covered 227 persons, including 48 men and 179 women at the age of 19–28. The mean of the age of men was $M = 23.02$ with standard deviation $SD = 2.66$. The mean of the age of women in the study group was $M = 22.46$ with standard deviation $SD = 1.91$.

Instruments

For the measurement of the occupational themes – the **Multifaceted Occupational Preferences Assessment** questionnaire (Polish: *Wieloaspektowa Ocena Preferencji Zawodowych*, or *WOPZ*; Paszkowska-Rogacz et al., 2013). This instrument measures occupational preferences and job features to which the participant attaches the greatest importance. The part ‘My preferences’ includes 60 statements concerning various interests and preferences. The task of the participant is to make a judgment concerning each statement by marking an answer to the question ‘To what extent does this statement characterise me?’. Each of the 60 items is diagnostic of a specific theme. The participant uses a 5-point Likert scale, thanks to which an answer concerning the intensity of the given trait in the given participant can be obtained. The study of the reliability has yielded Cronbach’s α for the scales over .80, which indicates that each of them is a homogeneous construct characterised by internal consistency.

For the investigation of the level of ambiguity tolerance in career decisions – the Career Decision Ambiguity Tolerance Scale (CDAT; Xu, Tracey, 2015). This instrument measures individual assessment and reactions of the participant to an ambiguity encountered in the process of career decision-making. The task of the participant

is to make a judgement concerning 20 statements using a 7-point Likert scale. The statements contained in the questionnaire are grouped into four scales: CDAT-Preference; CDAT-Tolerance; CDAT-Trust; and CDAT-Aversion. The alpha coefficients for the scales of Preference, Tolerance and Aversion in the present study amounted to (respectively): .79, .69, .83. After a two-week break a so-called test-retest was conducted, yielding the amounts of these coefficients: .69, .59, .78. For the purpose of this study, they were recalculated and amounted to: .84, .85, .84.

For the investigation of the style of coping with career decision-making difficulties – the Coping with Career Decision-making Difficulties questionnaire (CCDD; Lipshits-Brazilier, Gati, Tatar, 2014). The questionnaire distinguishes between three scales of coping: Productive Coping, Support Seeking and Unproductive Coping, for which the Cronbach's α is, respectively, .86, .92, .88. Each of the styles contains sub-scales. Each item belongs to one of the sub-scales and, consequently to one of the coping styles: CCDD-Productive Coping; CCDD-Support Seeking; CCDD-Unproductive Coping. The participant makes a judgment concerning each of the statements in the questionnaire using a 10-point Likert scale.

PROCEDURE

The study was conducted in 2018. The data were collected by means of the Internet. The information about the conducted study was spread in the social media and via a group of acquaintances, also using the snowball method. Volunteers were provided with a link to the Internet study. The introduction to the study contained information about the author of the study, its aim, the rules governing the use of the collected data, the anonymity of the study participants as well as voluntariness of the participation and the possibility to quit the study at any moment without any consequences. The introductory website featured also the e-mail address of the author of the study to allow the participants to contact the author in case of questions or doubts.

RESULTS

At the first stage of the analysis, the normality of the distribution was verified; it turned out to be close to normal. Secondly, the one-way analysis of variance ANOVA was applied, which did not show any statistically significant differences for the studied variables between the sexes. Consequently, the study group was analysed as a whole.

For the purpose of verifying the research hypotheses, the r -Pearson correlation coefficient was applied (Table 1). Next, for the purpose of comparing statistically significant correlations, they have been translated to z-scores (Table 2). In order to determine whether the z-score differences are statistically significant, the following formula was applied:

$$Z_{obs} = \frac{Z_1 - Z_2}{\sqrt{\frac{1}{N_1 - 3} + \frac{1}{N_2 - 3}}}$$

When $Z_{obs} > 1,96$ v $Z_{obs} < -1,96$, a z-score difference is considered to be statistically significant.

TABLE 1.
Matrix of correlations between occupational themes, dimensions of career decisions ambiguity tolerance and styles of coping with career decision-making difficulties

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.
1. Realistic	-						-.020	.224**	.353**	-.161*	.163*	-.182**	-.078
2. Investigative		-					.429**	.232**	.287**	-.063	.381**	-.013	-.044
3. Artistic			-				.299**	.248**	.082	.090	.118	.174**	.216**
4. Social				-			.191**	.017	.054	.024	.230**	.343**	.068
5. Enterprising					-		.366**	.123	.559**	-.305**	.378**	-.004	-.244**
6. Conventional						-	.102	-.170*	.027	.092	.197**	.233**	-.048
7. Preference							-			.092	.456**	.040	-.085
8. Tolerance								-			.184**	-.017	.018
9. Trust									-		.523**	-.205**	-.458**
10. Aversion										-	-.134**	.460**	.581**
11. Productive Coping											-		
12. Support Seeking												-	
13. Unproductive Coping													-

*p < .05; **p < .01

The results obtained in the Preference scale are statistically significant only in the group of occupational themes which in H1 had been considered the types characterised by higher scores than the realistic and conventional themes, forming the other group. The results related to the themes from the other group proved to be statistically insignificant, which makes the comparison of the two groups impossible. As far as the Tolerance scale is considered, the results for the realistic, investigative, artistic and conventional themes proved to be statistically significant. As far as the Trust scale is concerned, the result of the realistic theme can be compared with the results of the investigative and the enterprising themes. Productive coping showed statistically significant correlation with all scales of career decisions ambiguity tolerance, while support seeking and unproductive coping correlate statistically significantly only with trust and aversion. The productive style of coping with career decision-making difficulties proved to be statistically insignificant only in the case of the artistic theme. The results in the support seeking scale indicate that it is not statistically significant in relation to the investigative and enterprising themes. Unproductive coping, on the other hand, is statistically significant only in the case of artistic and enterprising themes (Table 1).

Statistical significance was recorded only for z-score differences between the realistic and the enterprising themes in relation to 'Trust', showing that the enterprising theme correlates more strongly with 'Trust' than the realistic theme. With respect to 'Tolerance', the conventional theme correlates strongly negatively both with the investigative and with the artistic themes, but the relation is stronger in the case of the artistic theme (Table 3).

TABLE 3.
Z-score differences between the occupational themes and tolerance, trust and aversion

Dimension of ambiguity tolerance	Occupational themes compared		Z-score difference
Tolerance	Conventional	Investigative	-4.30
		Artistic	-4.52
	Realistic	Investigative	-.05
		Artistic	.27
Trust	Realistic	Investigative	.82
		Enterprising	-2.77
Aversion	Realistic	Enterprising	1.63

In the case of support seeking, the statistically significant z-score difference was demonstrated only between the social and the realistic themes (Table 4).

The statistically significant z-score difference with respect to the unproductive coping style was shown between the artistic and the enterprising themes (Table 5).

As expected, ambiguity tolerance correlates positively with the productive coping style. Furthermore, the scales of 'Preference' and 'Trust' correlate with it much more strongly than the 'Tolerance'. Both support seeking and unproductive coping correlate negatively with trust and positively with aversion. However, when the z-score difference between support seeking and unproductive coping in respect of trust is statisti-

cally significant (unproductive coping correlates with trust negatively and much more strongly than support seeking), the difference between the two scales in the context of aversion proved to be statistically insignificant (Table 6).

TABLE 4.

Z-score differences between the social occupational theme and other occupational themes in respect of support seeking

Coping style	Occupational themes compared	Z-score difference	
Support Seeking	Social	Realistic	5.73
		Artistic	1.94
		Conventional	1.28

TABLE 5.

Z-score differences between the artistic and enterprising occupational themes in respect of unproductive coping

Coping style	Occupational themes compared	Z-score difference
Unproductive Coping	Artistic	4.93
	Enterprising	

TABLE 6.

Z-score difference between support seeking and unproductive coping in respect of the dimensions of ambiguity tolerance

Dimension of ambiguity tolerance	Coping style	Z-score difference
Trust	Support Seeking	3.06
	Unproductive Coping	
Aversion	Support Seeking	-1.75

DISCUSSION

The first step in the analysis and interpretation of the obtained data was to determine whether the studied variables differ in respect of sex. It was determined that the conducted studies showed no differences in terms of ambiguity tolerance between men and women. This means that the intensity of ambiguity tolerance is not dependent on sex. Consequently, one can conclude that this intensity is largely decided by personal dispositions. Support seeking as a style of coping with career decision-making difficulties also turned out to be unrelated to sex. Contrary to common belief and stereotype, in difficult situations connected with career decisions women do not seek support more frequently than men. The obtained results are not consistent with those reported by other researchers who showed that women scored higher than men in terms of emotional help seeking and helplessness, which was consistent with even earlier published conclusions suggesting that women have smaller ability to cope and greater tendency to seek social support than men (Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, Tatar, 2015).

The analysis of the occupational themes in respect of career decisions ambiguity tolerance has shown that, contrary to the initial assumption, the realistic theme is not characterised by a lower level of tolerance, neither in comparison with the investigative, nor the artistic theme. The realistic, artistic, and investigative themes exhibit the same relation to tolerance. Persons characterised as realistic, investigative and artistic occupational themes tolerate the same amount of career decision-making ambiguity. However, as expected, the conventional theme is characterised by a much lower level of ambiguity tolerance in comparison with the artistic and investigative themes; this relation proved stronger in the case of the conventional and the artistic themes. Persons who are ascribed the conventional theme are well-organised and conformist, they prefer well-structured activities and feel at ease in well-defined situations requiring specific actions, as opposed to persons characterised by the artistic theme, which describes expressive and original individuals with non-standard and independent ways. Persons characterised by the investigative occupational theme, on the other hand, think critically and rationally and resort, when necessary, to abstract notions and theoretical concepts in order to understand the reality better and in more dimensions, which requires openness to new experiences and flexible thinking. Moreover, an example of the investigative theme can be both a scientifically-active physicist and an academic teacher of psychology, which shows that the term is not very sharp (Paszowska-Rogacz et al., 2013; Toomey, Levinson, Morrison, 2008).

It has not been confirmed that the realistic theme should be characterised by a weaker relation to self-trust as opposed to the investigative theme. The enterprising theme, however, proved to be noticeably more strongly connected with trust than the realistic theme. This means that persons who can be characterised by the enterprising occupational theme exhibit greater trust in the course of the career decision-making process than persons with the realistic occupational theme. Trust can be understood here as faith in one's own abilities, identical to the sense of coherence, to an extent. This conclusion is consistent with Holland's occupational themes typology, which characterises persons of the enterprising theme as having social and persuasive competences, ambitious and lively, highly motivated and ready to take risks (Koh, 1996, after: Xu, Tracey, 2014).

As expected, persons of the social occupational theme seek support much more often than persons of the realistic theme. Persons of the social theme desire contact with others, they appreciate social and ethical activities. They are eager to help others or share information, but they expect the same when in need. Persons of the realistic theme, on the other hand, prefer working with machines or instruments to working with humans, which explains the negative correlation between the support seeking style and the realistic occupational theme. The differences between the social theme on the one hand and the artistic and conventional themes on the other did not prove to be statistically significant, which means that persons of these three occupational themes to the same extent seek support in the case of difficulties in career decision-making (Paszowska-Rogacz et al., 2013; Toomey, Levinson, Morrison, 2008). What is more, the unproductive coping style is connected with the artistic theme, while the theme which uses that style least frequently is the enterprising. Persons of the artistic theme can handle difficulties in an emotional, or sometimes even destructive manner; on the other hand, persons of the enterprising theme see the world in a more pragmatic manner, looking at gains and looking for optimum solutions (Paszowska-Rogacz et al., 2013; Toomey, Levinson, Morrison, 2008).

As expected, the productive coping style co-occurs with preference, tolerance and trust in ambiguity tolerance. Similarly, the more a given person uses the productive coping style, the less he or she shows symptoms related to aversion in relation to career decisions ambiguity tolerance. The reason seems to be that the productive coping style entails problem-solving combined with flexibility and adaptation, which are also inherent in ambiguity tolerance. Persons who use the productive style seek optimum solutions, consider various possibilities, are ready to adapt to environmental changes and accept changing circumstances and the need for constant adaptation (Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, Tatar, 2015; Lipshits-Braziler, Tatar, Gati, 2016).

Support seeking and unproductive coping co-occur to the same extent with aversion in respect of career decisions ambiguity tolerance. This means that persons who use the support seeking and unproductive coping styles experience aversion towards symptoms of uncertainty and the need to adapt in career decision-taking to the same extent (Lipshits-Braziler, Gati, Tatar, 2015; Lipshits-Braziler, Tatar, Gati, 2016).

STUDY LIMITATIONS

One limitation of the present study is the significantly greater number of women included, as opposed to men, even though the differences of sex proved not to play a role. As far as continuation of investigation along these lines is concerned, the research group could be extended to cover individuals at a medium age, who are not just entering the labour market, but already have some knowledge and experience of career and life in general. In such a case, it would be advisable to ensure a balanced representation of both sexes in the study sample. It would also be interesting to check whether the results obtained in this study can be repeated in a group of persons of a different age group with different professional experience.

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