

INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' OPTIONS FOR THE TEACHING PROFESSION

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Abstract

According to the Regulation for admission and assessment of students at the Department of Teacher Training, University of Craiova, the admission to the of teacher training programme is open to all students enrolled in the first or second year of the Bachelor's (faculties with a four-year length programme) with no discriminatory criteria. The admission is the occasion of an initial assessment by taking an interview.

This interview aims to assess the academic competences of each candidate, to analyse the motivation and attitude towards the teaching profession. The current paper presents the quantitative and qualitative results of the candidates of the teacher training level 1 in the the academic year 2017-2018. They highlight: clearly assumed options for teacher training, supported by intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, multiple determination, expected profiles of future students or teachers, in general.

Keywords: *interview; students; motivation; qualities; teacher.*

The interview is the assessment instrument for admission to the Teacher training programme, Department of Teacher Training, University of Craiova. For university teachers, the quantitative and qualitative results are useful for the overall initial assessment of the prospective students.

In the first part of the Interview Guide, level 1, 2017-2018, the candidates filled in with factual data: Name, Father's Initial and Last Name of the candidate/candidate, Faculty, Specialization, Personal Identification Code (Social Security Number) of the candidate, Date of interview.

As it can be seen in the following table, the key criteria for assessment targeted two components: identification of motivation for pursuing teacher training - if any, its type; assessment of perceptions, initial representations about the teaching profession.

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Table no. 1. Interview Answers Rating Grid, Level 1

Item no.	Criteria	Answer and score 2 p	Answer and score 1 p	Answer and score 0 p
1	Clearly outlined and assumed option for the teacher training programme	a	c	b
2	Type of motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic, undetermined)	c/a/depending on case, d	b/depending on case, d	e
3	Experience of certain events with significant educational impact	a/b/depending on case, d	c/depending on case, d	e
4	Representative personal qualities	at least two from: a, b, c, d, depending on case, e	at least one of: a, b, c, d, depending on case, e	f
5	Relevance of identification of characteristics necessary for a teacher	at least two from : a, b, c, d, e, f, depending on case, g	at least one from : a, b, c, d, e, f, depending on case, g	h
Total		10 p	5p	0 p

The final rating was set as follows: Rejected (0-4 points), Accepted (5-10 points).

The sample of subjects whose results were considered in our analysis is randomly selected, i.e., the participants' responses in the first three days of the interview were processed. The 1,082 subjects from the Faculty of Agronomy, Faculty of Automation, Computers and Electronics, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport, Faculty of Horticulture, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Faculty of Letters, Faculty of Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, and Faculty of Theology responded as follows:

Table no. 2. Global quantitative results (related to the number of students)

Answer	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5
a)	1,028	391	351	756	977
b)	14	483	310	766	341
c)	40	202	324	181	407
d)	-	4	20	151	540
e)	-	2	77	18	243
f)	-	-	-	22	466
g)	-	-	-	-	22
h)	-	-	-	-	0

We specify that, given the non-standardized nature of the instrument used, the assessment of each student was done relying on accepted or rejected assessments; but for scientific rigour, from a calculation of the average of the scores obtained globally, by reference to Table 1 and Table 2, the result of this exam is 7.60.

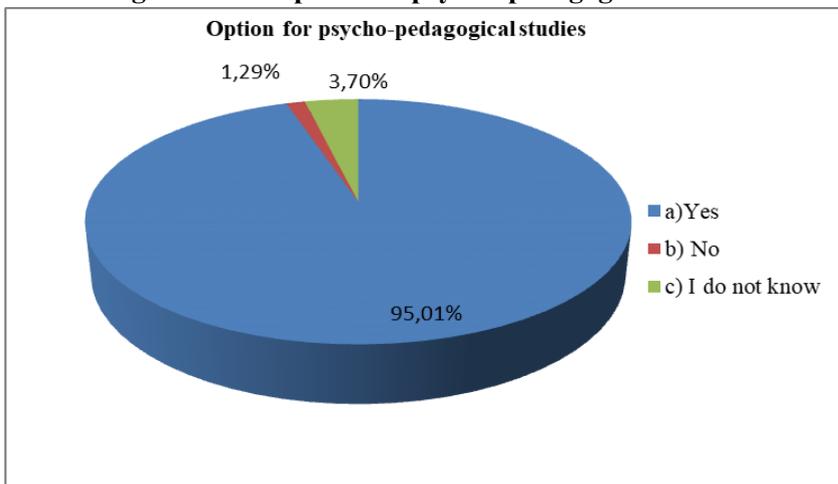
1. In a detailed presentation, the quantitative answers (numerical or percentage) for each item of the interview, which expressed the choices formulated by the students admitted to the teacher training programme, were as follows:

Item 1: *Is the teacher training programme a clear and assumed option for you?* (Choose a single answer by ticking!)

The answer variants and the number of students were:

- a) *Yes* – 1,028
- b) *No* – 14
- c) *I do not know* – 40

Figure no. 1. Option for psycho-pedagogical studies

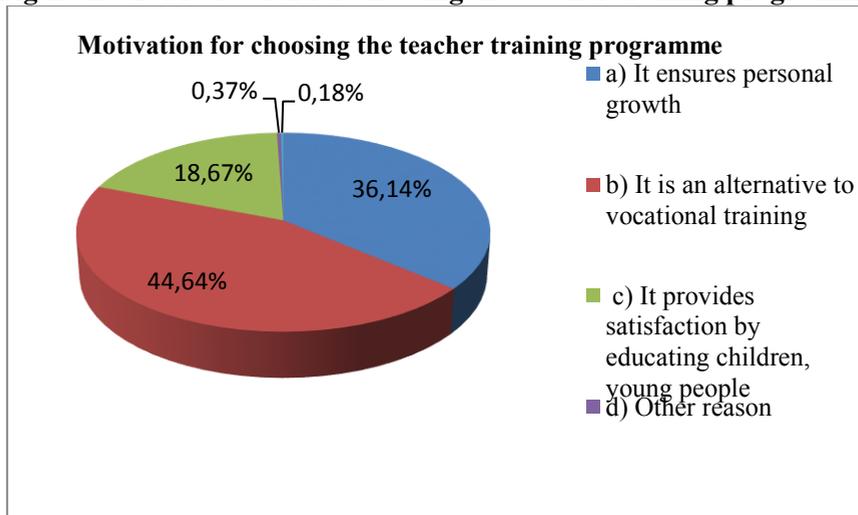


It can be observed that a very large proportion of students consider the teacher training programme a clearly defined and assumed option for them.

Item 2: *What is the motivation to attend the teacher training programme?* (Choose a single answer by ticking!)

The answer variants and the number of students were:

- a) *It ensures personal growth* – 391
- b) *It is an alternative to vocational training* – 483
- c) *It provides satisfaction by educating children, young people* – 202
- d) *Other reason (which?)* – 4
- e) *None* – 2

Figure no. 2. Motivation for choosing the teacher training programme

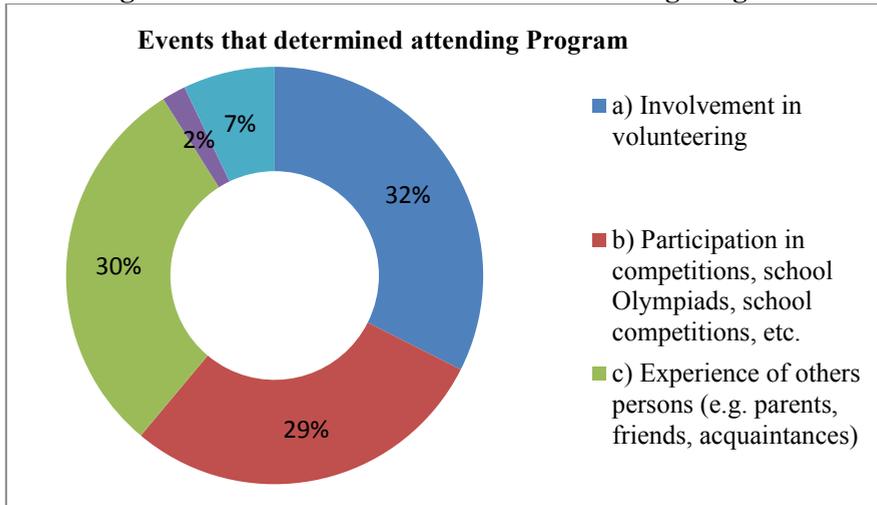
The answer with the highest frequency is the second one, this option referring to the fact that the teacher training programme and, implicitly, the possibility to become a practitioner represent an alternative to the specialized professional training of students. Ranking the second was the answer related to the personal growth of students, which can be achieved through the teacher training programme. This, together with the fact that it offers the satisfaction to educate children, is an internal motivation for young people, which sustains long-term learning. Thus, we can assume that, cumulatively, 54.81% of the candidates have developed intrinsic motivation, which is encouraging.

An extremely small percentage is represented by those who choose another reason for attending the teacher training programme. Only four of a total of 1,082 students chose the penultimate variant and listed the following reasons: help, support in the chosen profession, graduation from the pedagogical high-school – the vocational branch.

Item 3: *The option to attend the teacher training programme is determined by a significant educational event? (Choose a single answer by ticking!)*

The answer variants and the number of students were:

- a) *Involvement in volunteering* – 351
- b) *Participation in competitions, school Olympiads, school competitions, etc.* – 310
- c) *Experience of others persons (e.g. parents, friends, acquaintances)* – 324
- d) *Another event (which?)* – 20
- e) *There is no significant educational event* – 77

Figure no. 3. Events that determined attending Program

Most respondents chose the first option for this item, which means that volunteering has been particularly important in recent years among young people in our country. The percentage of those who mentioned that there was no other significant educational event to determine the option for attending the teacher training programme is 7%.

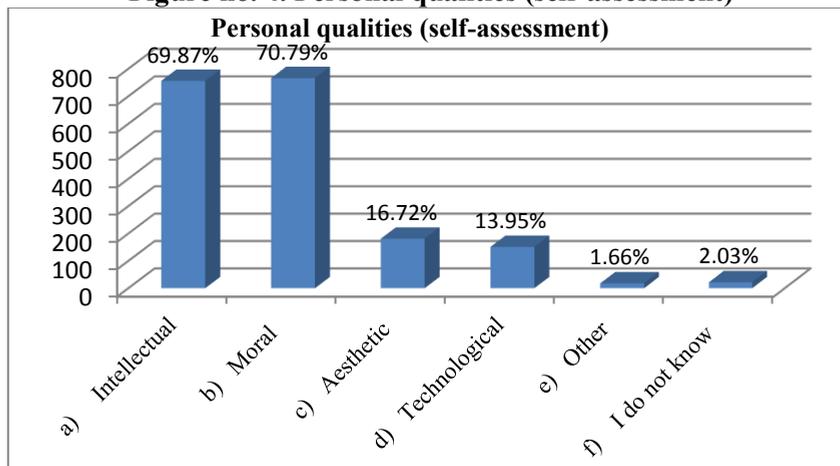
Among the events mentioned by the students who chose the penultimate variant are: professional reconversion, presentation of the educational offer of the University, continuation of the pedagogical specialisation after high school, role models inspired by other teachers, own interest in education and personal growth.

Item 4: *Which of the following qualities do you consider to represent you?*
(Choose multiple responses by ticking!)

The answer variants and the number of students were:

- a) *Intellectual* – 756
- b) *Moral* – 766
- c) *Aesthetic* – 181
- d) *Technological* – 151
- e) *Other (which?)* – 18
- f) *I do not know* – 22

This item aimed at identifying the values which relate them to the students already attending the courses of the teacher training programme in the academic year 2017-2018.

Figure no. 4. Personal qualities (self-assessment)

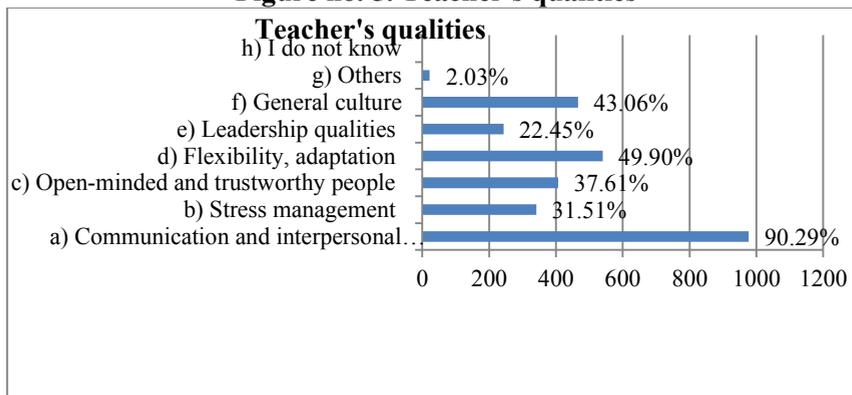
As seen in the previous chart, close percentages were recorded for the first two variants. Thus, almost 70% of the respondents considered that they are represented by their intellectual and moral values. Patience, calmness, prospectiveness, communication, organizational qualities, sporting skills, perspicacity, perseverance, determination, dedication, creativity, modesty and pedagogical practice during the pedagogical high-school are the answers mentioned by those who chose other qualities that represent them. There is a percentage of 2.03% students who did not know how to characterise themselves.

Unfortunately, aesthetic or technological qualities are not given importance, meaning that they are not part of a harmonious profile that we would like to develop at the beginning of studies, even for the faculties and specializations requesting these qualities. Therefore, it is important for these less developed aspects to be observed during the initial training of the young person, being absolutely necessary for the teaching career and adapting to socio-educational changes in universities or the labour market.

Item 5: *Identify which of the following characteristics you consider to be necessary for a teacher! (Choose multiple responses by ticking!)*

The answer variants and the number of students were:

- a) *Communication and interpersonal skills* – 977
- b) *Stress management* – 341
- c) *Open-minded and trustworthy people* – 407
- d) *Flexibility, adaptation* – 540
- e) *Leadership qualities* – 243
- f) *General culture* – 466
- g) *Other (which?)* – 22
- h) *I do not know* – 0

Figure no. 5. Teacher's qualities

The students chose, to a very large extent (about 90%), the first variant, which means they value the relationship with others and consider communication important. The second place in the order of preferences goes to flexibility and adaptation (for half of the students), but importance is also given to general culture, openness and trust in people or stress management (43.06% and 37.61%). The last place in student choices is quality. A very small number of students (2.03%) mentioned other characteristics: energy and enthusiasm, elements of advanced psychology, passion, clear and concise expression, tolerance, desire to transfer information, passion, authority, spontaneity, feed-back, humanism.

In fact, the ideal teacher profile includes transversal competences that are transferable (for example, cooperation, communication, creativity), and they belong to the socio-relational domain. Such skills can be used in real life, being the driving force of other types of competencies.

2. The profile of personal qualities, depending on faculty specialization, is presented in the following charts.

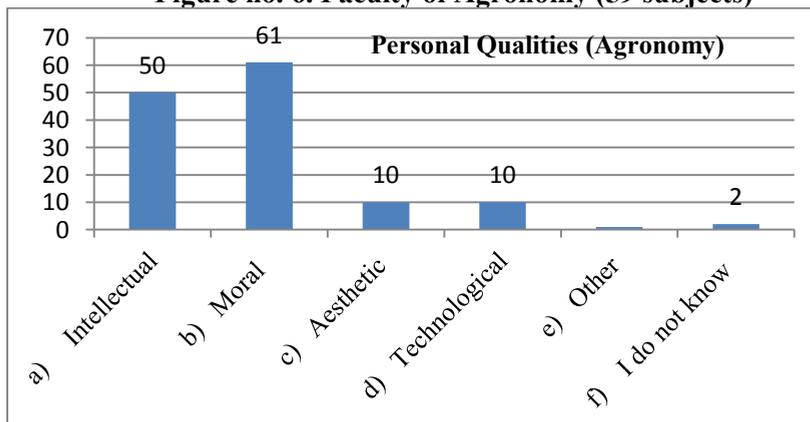
Figure no. 6. Faculty of Agronomy (59 subjects)

Figure no. 7. Faculty of Automation, Computers and Electronics (133 subjects)

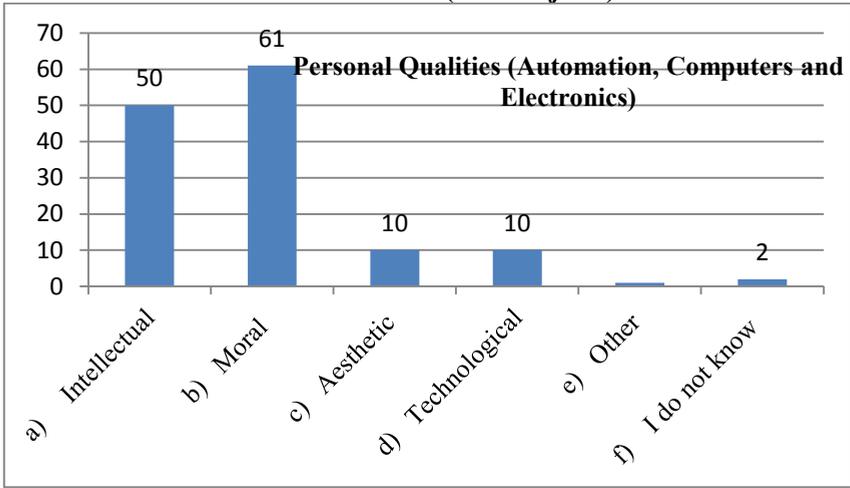


Figure no. 8. Faculty of Law (122 subjects)

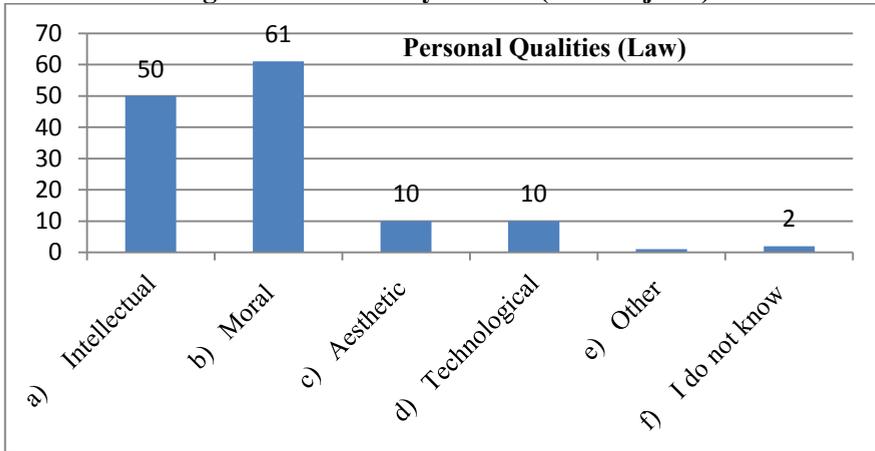


Figure no. 9. Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (47 subjects)

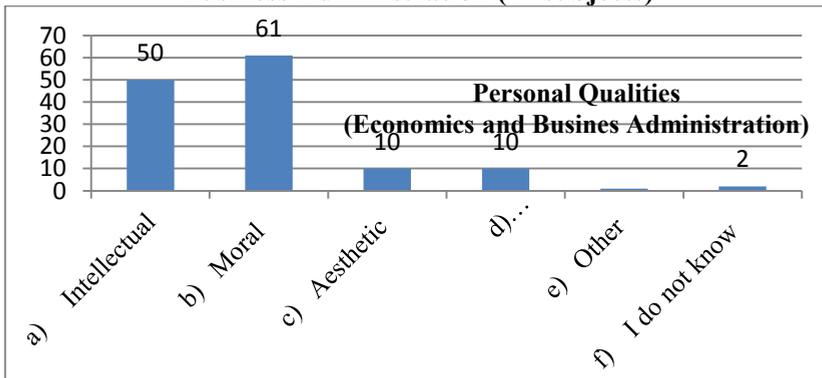


Figure no. 10. Faculty of Physical Education and Sport (91 subjects)

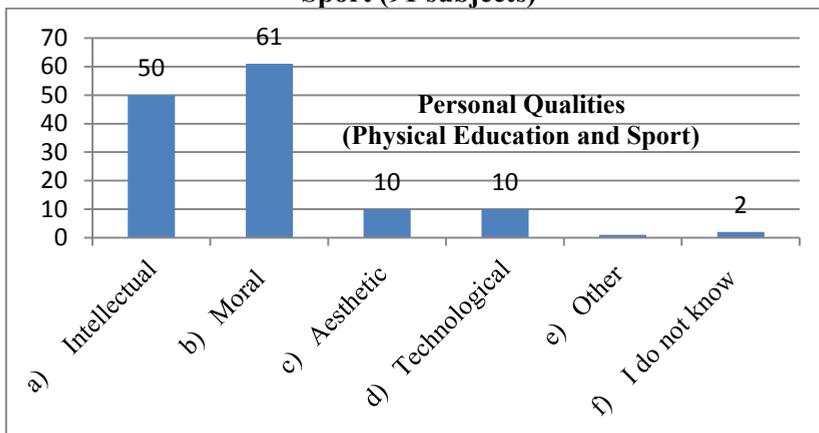


Figure no. 11. Faculty of Horticulture (68 subjects)

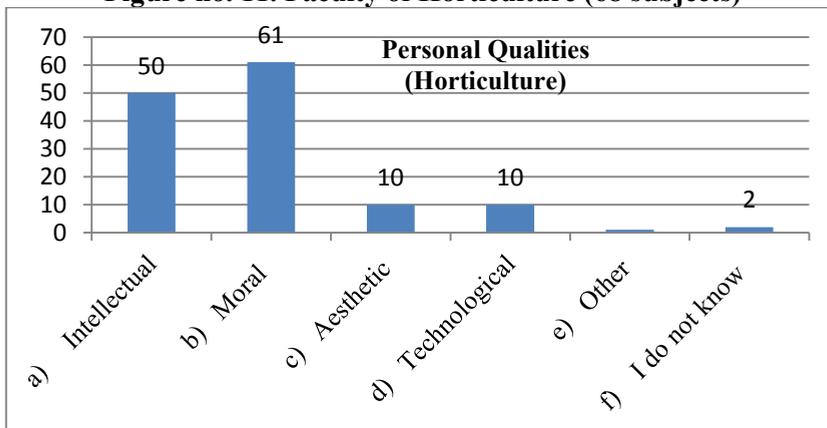


Figure no. 12. Faculty of Electrical Engineering (46 subjects)

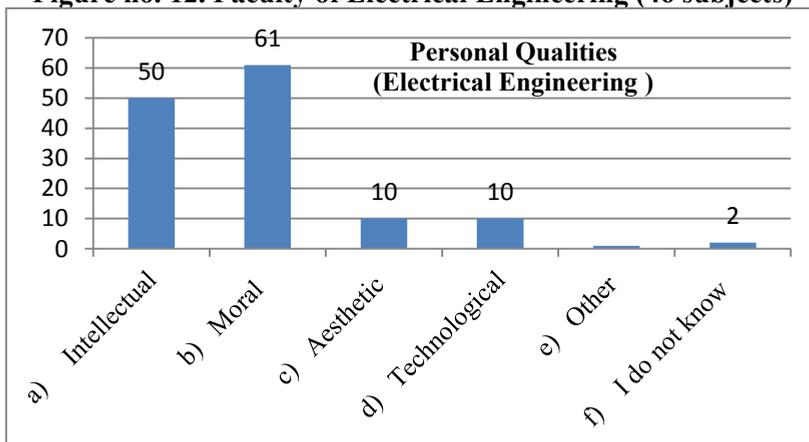


Figure no. 13. Faculty of Letters (201 subjects)

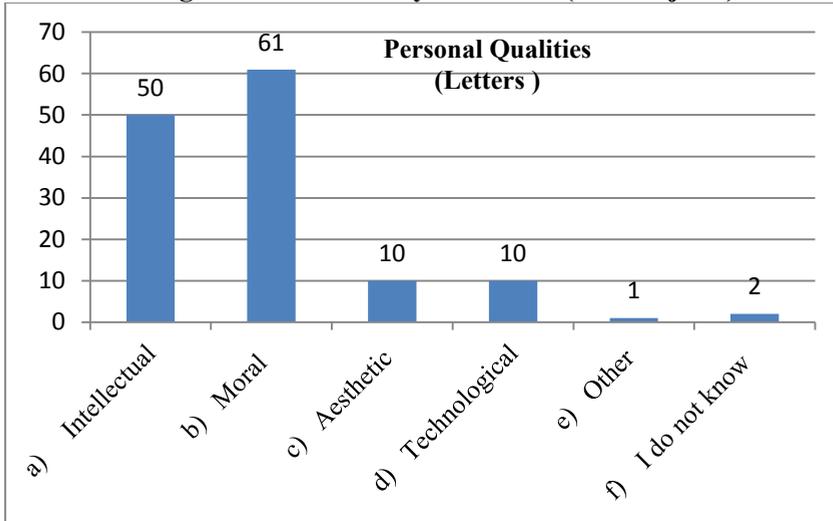
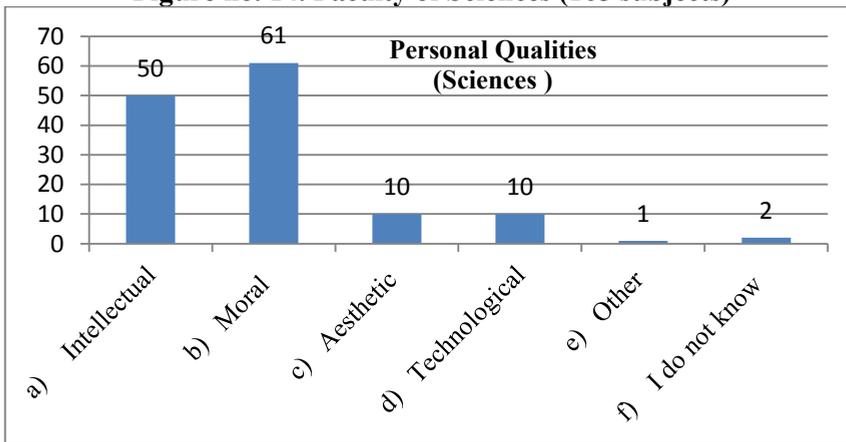
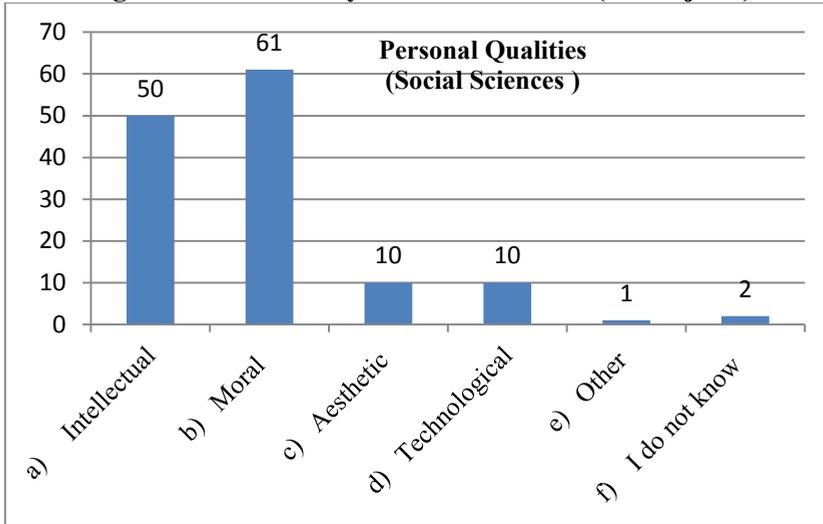
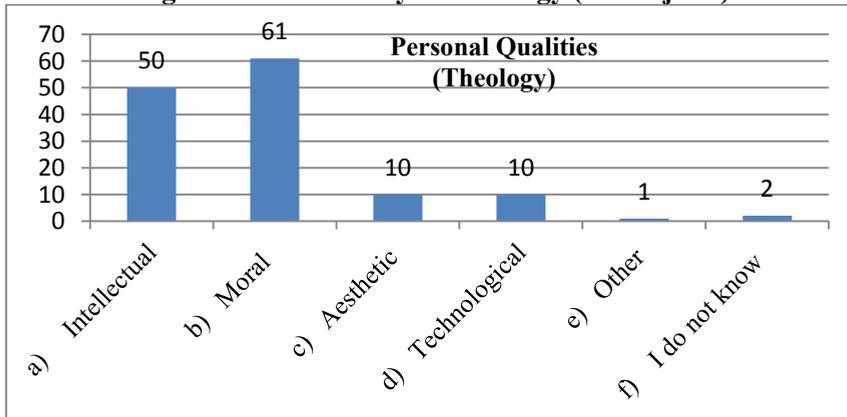


Figure no. 14. Faculty of Sciences (165 subjects)



The Faculty of Sciences included: The Department of Geography: 45 subjects, The Department of Mathematics: 39 subjects, The Department of Physics: 28 subjects, The Department of Information Science: 27 subjects, The Department of Chemistry: 26 subjects.

Figure no. 15. Faculty of Social Sciences (67 subjects)**Figure no. 16. Faculty of Theology (83 subjects)**

The profile of students according to the specializations (Figures 6-16) presents similar values, with moral and intellectual qualities prevailing, self-assessed by the young respondents or with a higher self-apprehension of the existence of technological skills related to their specializations.

Conclusions

We consider that the responses of the subjects who were part of this large sample are relevant and, in our opinion, they have internal and external consistency, in the sense that they do not contradict, but confirm other empirical results in the field. In addition to their evaluation role, we retain their diagnostic and prognostic value, in relation to aspects that will develop further at the university level through the teacher training programme:

A) from teachers - real student focus;

B) from students themselves:

- assuming and developing the motivation for the chosen study programme;
- overcoming classical and restrictive conceptions/judgments about the teacher's activity;
- effective involvement in their own training, promoting interactivity.

The data provided by the assessment through the interview will be supplemented by the initial assessment in the future, which will be carried out by each teacher in charge with the corresponding subject at the beginning of each discipline within the curriculum, aiming at further identifying the level of knowledge, skills, attitudes, as an absolutely necessary action for quality education in the teaching profession.

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