

# The Influence of Educational Management in the Modernization of Romanian Education

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ABSTRACT: The education system in Romania reached a high degree of maturity in the period after the First World War, integrating different educational systems, thus managing to include a large number of the country's population in a form of organized education. At that time, only primary education was compulsory and free, and the country was faced with illiteracy that affected especially the elderly segments of the population. Education has been and will remain a priority. It begins at birth and continues throughout life in various forms. To support this judgement, we proceed to the development of policies that integrate the health and social fields into education.

KEYWORDS: management, education, PISA, school management

## Introduction

The complex management process involves the conception, preparation, organization, coordination and administration of various elements in order to achieve specific objectives. The management process involves the conscious direction and coordination of both individual and group actions, along with the allocation of an organization's resources to achieve its goals in accordance with its mission, goals, and economic and social responsibilities. The term that was once limited to the economic sphere has seen an expansion in recent decades. The compliancy of the concept extends to various other fields, such as education and training, where it fulfills the same functions and dimensions as in any other field, albeit with specific nuances shaped by the unique character of the teaching activity. Thus, educational management applies the theory and practice of general management to the education system and process, to schools and classes of students. Educational management, as it emerges from the vision of the author Tudorică (2006), consists in the science and art of training human resources, of polishing characters and behaviors in order to prepare them for adapting to the needs and demands of society. The concept of educational management is a comprehensive and strategic approach to education. It involves a set of principles and methods that ensure the achievement of the objectives of the educational system in an efficient and high-quality manner.

Educational management has clear and hierarchical objectives, specific functions and strategic elements that encourage creative problem solving. Its approach is interdisciplinary and systematic, with an emphasis on fundamental research. Unlike general management, educational management is tailored to specific goals of education, content, trained staff, and communication and uses specific instructional strategies to encourage positive behaviors and attitudes such as motivation, responsibility, cooperation, logic, and affectivity (Thompson & Anderson 2003, 45).

The magnitude of the changes, the difficult and surprising problems that humanity has faced and still faces, require the formation or development of necessary skills to be able to adapt and to be able to face the challenges we face. A school that takes into account the needs of teachers is a school that, over time, can adapt to society changes and the demands of the community. To reach this level, a motivated and motivating manager, well organized, who sets well-defined targets is needed. After, from a theoretical point of view, I have mostly shown the role of management in the evolution and modernization of Romanian education, the research carried out highlighted how important the manager's strategy is, both at macrostructural and microstructural levels, in achieving performance by motivating teaching staff who do the same with the students. In fact, the improvement of school results depends on the degree of involvement and satisfaction of those who sum up the education system. We could observe this by analyzing the teachers' initial answers compared to the final ones, but also by analyzing the students' answers from the questionnaire "Modern methods used in the training process" through which we learned that students understand information better when it is delivered attractively, they are more engaged when activities are interactive and interesting, and find it easier to work when they are willing to work in teams. Thus, the research hypothesis, according to which:

I1: We assume that, within the activities carried out in a Romanian educational institution, the manager can guide the collective towards performance by ensuring training and creating a favorable environment, confirmed by the questionnaire method. The second hypothesis, according to which:

I2: We assume that, following the elaboration of the resource analysis and their solution, job satisfaction increases and thus performance also increases, it was confirmed by the method of studying school documents, namely the analysis of the Institutional Development Project, as well as by the questionnaire method.

#### **Educational management strategies**

Effective implementation of educational activities requires careful organization and control of the implementation context, conditions, forms and instructional content. In order to achieve the desired goals, it is important to have a solid understanding of the advantages and limitations of the educational strategies used. Proper devising and design are crucial elements of effective training program management. Improving the quality of education and achieving expected learning goals in schools is strongly influenced by the environment in which teachers are trained and, by extension, school management. Numerous studies have shown that the management of a school has a significant impact on the academic performance of its students (Păun & Potolea 2002, 103).

While most OECD countries have shifted towards a management approach that focuses on transforming the educational process, school principals in Romania are mostly responsible for administrative tasks. The leadership responsibilities of today's principals are diverse and include defining school goals, monitoring classroom lessons to provide valuable feedback to teachers, supporting professional development, and collaborating with teachers and parents to improve students' performance. Romanian executives frequently face numerous challenges without adequate training or support. Those in urban areas are responsible for overseeing large and diverse educational institutions, while those in rural areas must manage schools with a high proportion of disadvantaged students, who face numerous obstacles that hinder learning outcomes and increase the likelihood of early school leaving. So, creating schools where teachers feel supported and where all students can realize their potential requires leaders of integrity, dedication and performance. Strategies that favor the motivation of educational factors: Effective use of praise and recognition of merits, Creating a friendly atmosphere, Marking important events, Organizing performance review sessions.

#### Principles and functions of school management

Just because an educational institution works does not guarantee its success. The key to success lies in execution, as well as the principles and values that guide its practices. Running a school is a difficult task mainly because of the many variables involved such as students, teachers, curriculum and educational technology. It is obvious that in order to be a school principal, one must possess not only excellent teaching skills, but also managerial skills. (Latham and Pinder 2005, 67)

The management that offers solutions to issues such as keeping a balance between work and family, adapting conditions to changes that produce various effects, devising a work team in which members support and cooperate, encouraging the desire for change and modernization is principled leadership. Principles that guide managerial activity:

- The principle of efficiency of managerial activity;
- The principle of participative management and unity of action;
- The principle of rational organization and programming;
- The principle of dynamic management;
- The principle of permanent innovation

## Functions of the education system

The education system includes the institutions organized on the basis of some principles and functionally interconnected within which the training and education of man is carried out, his preparation for entering society, for assuming a role within it, for adapting to the constant changes that occur. So, we can distinguish three main functions of it: the economic function, the social function and the cultural function (Dowling and Sayles 1978, 55).

*Economic function* is closely related to the importance of knowledge and education in the development of society, in economic progress. In the education policy "Education for Economic Growth and Inclusion", the Council of the European Union states that each country is responsible for its own education and training system. Ensuring that citizens possess the skills to succeed in the labor market is essential to improving growth and employment in the EU. Education and professional training can contribute to combating poverty and social exclusion, ensuring the maintenance of human and civic values and preventing and eliminating forms of discrimination.

*Social function-* in any community the school is expected to train individuals prepared to face society. In order for them to be successful in the labor market, it is absolutely necessary that they have formats and skills related to social behavior. Social integration is supported by family, school, church, as well as by political and professional institutions. This function is achieved through the process of socialization through which the child acquires a cultural identity and reacts to it. Through education, the school forms citizens who are actively involved in the realization and management of social production, capable of fulfilling various roles. The purpose, organization and systematization of educational influences transforms the education system into the main channel for the transmission of social experience from generation to generation and for the continuous formation of the human personality (Grant 2007, 94).

*Cultural function*-The transfer of cultural values between generations is facilitated by the dissemination of culture in society. The preservation of national culture and its distinctive features is a vital function of the education system. As a person becomes immersed in the culture, he becomes the bearer of the collective national consciousness and psychology. The process of education plays a vital role in maintaining social and cultural norms. It provides knowledge of manufacturing and construction techniques, as well as enables the systematization, communication and accumulation of information. As a result, the exchange of knowledge and experiences becomes rather widespread and dynamic.

## Human resources

## Training and improvement of teaching staff

A profession, a high status and recognized nationally and internationally, depends on the qualification, competence and professionalism of those who practice it. In the field of education, in order for its beneficiaries to reach a level of performance, a thorough theoretical and practical training of teaching staff is necessary. The occupation of a position for the period of this internship can be achieved through a competition for the occupation of vacant or reserved positions or chairs, or through the assignment by the school inspectorates to positions left

unoccupied following the competition. The first level grants the right to occupy teaching positions in prepreschool, preschool, primary and secondary education. The condition for granting this right is the accumulation of 30 transferable credits from the training program.

The second level grants university graduates the right to hold positions in high school and post-high school educational institutions. Unlike level I, it is conditional on the fulfillment of two conditions, namely obtaining 60 credits by cumulating those from the previous level with those obtained in level II and graduating a master's degree in the field in which the university degree was obtained license (Iosifescu 1999, 87).

There are also exceptions to the provisions mentioned above: the training of staff in the educator-childcare function can be done through pedagogic high schools or other equivalent schools that can offer specialization corresponding to each didactic function. However, practicing the teaching profession does not only involve initial training, but also requires opportunities and interest for continuous training. In a changing society, it is necessary to adapt the educational system to the new economic, social, cultural and even scientific reality.

Thus, the formation of continuous adjustment and adaptability capacities must be ensured. According to Law no. 1/2011, in Romania, continuous training is not only a right, but also a mandatory task for teachers, principals and not only, this having as components career evolution and continuous professional development. The career evolution of preuniversity teachers is achieved by passing three exams: Definitive, degree II and degree I. Professional development is mainly achieved through continuous training programs and improvement of psycho-pedagogical and didactic training, studies in the field of another specialization, professional conversion programs.

The Romanian quality management system has the following distinct aspects:

- the existence of an evaluation system in the form of qualifications in primary education: Insufficient (I), Sufficient (S), Good (B), Very good (FB); (LEN, 2011/2022)

- changing the evaluation system in the form of grades from 1 to 10 starting with the secondary school cycle;

- at the end of the secondary school cycle, students take a national exam in the two main subjects: Romanian and mathematics; passing this exam is necessary in order to get admitted to high school (high school cycle); (European Commission 2022).

- at the end of the high school cycle, students take the Baccalaureate exam in three subjects: Romanian language, the mandatory profile test and the elective test depending on the profile and the chosen specialization; passing this exam is necessary in order for the high school studies to be considered as completed but also for admission to higher education institutions; (Points for designing, updating and evaluating the National Curriculum, 2022).

- the Romanian state provides the students' textbooks and they have the obligation to return them to the institution they belong to at the end of each school year;

- students spend approximately 4 hours at kindergarten and 5-6 hours at school during a normal schedule, every day, Monday to Friday;

- the existence of educational framework plans for early education (organized according to the type of kindergarten and learning activities) and for primary, secondary and high school education (study subjects are grouped into seven curricular areas: language and communication, mathematics and sciences of nature, human and society, arts, physical education, sports and health, technologies, counseling and orientation); (Guidelines for the design, updating and evaluation of the National Curriculum 2022).

## The evolution of the Romanian education system

The concept of "educational policy" indicates both the goals that the leadership sets and the way in which the achievement of these goals is undertaken, the way of putting into practice the

fundamental options. The education system in Romania reached a high degree of maturity in the period after the First World War, integrating different educational systems, thus managing to include a large number of the country's population in a form of organized education. At that time, only primary education was compulsory and free, and the country was faced with illiteracy that affected especially the older segments of the population. Later, the law was established according to which 9 grades with compulsory frequency on a weekly day-to-day basis are mandatory. A major success of the educational policy was the implementation through Law no. 268/2003 of compulsory education of 10 grades, which caused a large percentage of the country's population to attend school. The policies of the education system in recent years have evolved trying to cope with the new demands and determinations of the changing society and the economy in transition. According to the Education Law of 1995, Romanian citizens have equal rights of access to all forms and levels of education, the state promoting the principles of democratic education and guaranteeing the right to differentiated education (Cristea 2002, 56). Several state policies provide transportation and lodging for out-of-town students and provide free rail transportation to day school students. The state assumes the obligation to cover the fees of libraries, school clubs, camps, merit scholarships and social scholarships and takes responsibility for students with special requirements, disabled students and orphans, which implies the establishment of special schools and providing support to students and students belonging to these categories. Another priority for the education system in Romania, at the policy level, was the idea of respecting the rights of minorities to be educated in their mother tongue. To achieve this goal, classes/study formations were organized with teaching in the mother tongue, where appropriate. The state also allocated special places for the Roma population to try to remedy the situation where the school results of the Roma presented a major difference compared to the results of other children, assigning inspectors to monitor their education. In 2016, the national project "Educated Romania" was launched, which aimed to reset society on values, to increase work, performance, talent, honesty and integrity.

Within this project, three stages were carried out over a span of 2 years. Its bases were: the personalization and quality assurance of the educational process for all pupils or students, the flexibility of the education system to understand and adequately respond to changes and adaptability to external changes and future trends, so that it was desired to increase access to education and training for people with disabilities, updating and adapting the educational offer to the labor market, improving the training of teaching staff to increase the quality and effectiveness of the instructional-educational process.

Also in the same year, the National Strategy for reducing early school leaving in Romania was discussed. In the long term, this strategy aims to contribute to the Government's efforts to increase the economy, productivity, by increasing the number of people aged between 18 and 24 who have completed a cycle of lower secondary education and who enroll in other education or vocational training courses. The strategy will ensure that the level of European funding for projects focused on tackling early school leaving will increase. According to the Eurydice platform, the official website of the European Union, this idea is approved and is being implemented. As it can be observed, education has been and will remain a priority. It begins at birth and continues throughout life in various forms. Thus, in order to support this judgement, we move on to the development of policies that integrate the health and social fields into education.

The adopted measures are diverse, they start from supporting parents in raising newborns by ensuring their integration in nurseries, the construction of a considerable number of nurseries and kindergartens, the development of the curriculum and the training of teaching staff for the care and education of children between 0 and 3 years of age (Cristea 2002, 44), the development of entrepreneurship programs from primary school to university, the construction of new student dormitories, the establishment of measures for students from disadvantaged groups, the increase in the quality and relevance of university study programs,

measures that refer to the beneficiaries of the education system, up to the redefinition the status and role of the teaching staff to ensure the quality of the educational process, the motivation of young teachers, the development of specialist practice strategies, the formation of the entrepreneurial spirit in both pre-university and university education, the development of the continuous training system, of community centers for permanent learning.

The magnitude of the changes, the difficult and surprising problems that humanity has faced and still faces, require the formation or development of necessary skills to be able to adapt and to be able to face the challenges we face. In the present, Romania is facing a difficult, unpredictable situation, for which the education system was not prepared.

Thus, the Internet, computers, tablets and phones, social networks and educational platforms have come to take control of culture and economy around the world. In this form of education, it is much more difficult to capture the attention of students and difficult to maintain their interest in learning. As a solution to this problem, education needs to be rethought and polished so that the end result is engaging, continuous and coherent. According to UNICEF, the priorities, in the medium term, for the period of the pandemic are: adaptation of the school curriculum, development of the environment in which online education is carried out and of the mixed educational approach, support for teachers, their training and professional development, the implementation of educational programs to come to help students. In the long term, the integration of socio-emotional skills, teaching and study practices in the curriculum, the transformation of pedagogical practices, the introduction of mixed education and the evaluation of the impact of closing schools on education is desired. In order to make online education possible, it was necessary to implement a Pilot Project on digitized education, connect all schools to the Internet through high-speed connections, build a virtual library, and implement the electronic catalog, purchase, at the educational unit level, an educational platform where teachers and pupils/students can conduct their courses. According to the Emergency Ordinance no. 144 of 08/24/2020, students' access to the learning process is ensured by equipping them with mobile equipment such as tablets so that teaching activities can be carried out online. (Heghes 2020, 141)

In the situation where, in the context of the pandemic, the courses are held physically, the measure of providing medical protection equipment was adopted: masks, disinfectant, visors, and coveralls. In 2022, the Ministry of Education, in partnership with other ministries capable of providing help in this area, proposed the implementation of a National Strategy for parenting "educated parents, happy children". The stage reached is not mentioned, but after approval by the Government, it is desired to develop a National Plan for the development of parental education and some integrated action plans with the participation of the ministries involved. This strategy aims to ensure for each child a favorable environment to develop to their maximum potential and become a responsible adult. The orientation towards change and action in education led to the theorization, approval by GD no. 59/2023 and even the implementation of a Strategy regarding education for the environment and climate change. Starting from January 2023 until December 2030, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment, Waters and Forests aims to contribute to the shaping of individual, group or system behaviors that lead to the deterioration of nature and the environment, to support people in finding some solutions in the fight against pollution, environmental degradation and climate change.

#### Mini research

#### Questionnaire method

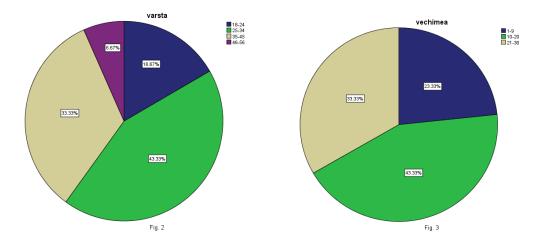
The questionnaire is made up of well-organized questions that have the role of informing with the most accurate data about a person or a group of people whose answers are recorded in writing. It is a method used quite often in research with the help of which information can be collected about the psyche of an individual.

#### The method of studying school documents

This method involves the analysis from the perspective of some factors established in accordance with the objectives and purpose of the research. You can study official documents such as minutes, catalogs, school documents that allow building an overview of the organization of activities. The PDI constitutes a document that is the basis for the development of a school unit. It paints a real portrait of the school, analyzing its past and present status and activity, and at the same time projects the future by setting clear targets.

## The research batch

In my research I observed, for the case study, a school, and the questionnaires were applied to 60 subjects, 30 teachers and 30 students. The case study followed the activity of an urban school. The "Modern methods used in training" questionnaire was applied to a group of 30 students, 15 of them studying in a rural school and 15 in an urban school. The 30 respondents to the first questionnaires are among the teachers from Secondary School No. 2 "Poet Ovidiu" from the town of Ovidiu and Ciobanu Technological High School.



Figures 2 and 3 show that the majority of respondents, 43.33%, are between 25 and 34 years old and have 10 to 20 years of experience in the system. In second place, with a proper percentage, 33.33%, are those aged between 35 and 45 years with 21- 30 years of experience. One step below we find teachers between the ages of 18 and 24 years old, 16.67%, and teachers at the beginning of their career, ranging from 1 to 9 years of field experience. The lowest percentage of age in the two schools is represented by teachers aged between 46 to 56 years old.

## **Organization of research**

## Description of the stages:

1. Evaluation of the level of job satisfaction of teachers from both schools - In October 2022, a questionnaire was applied to teachers from the experimental group and the control group, and the results are analyzed. The workplace performance questionnaire is also applied to both batches.

2. Elaboration of the SWOT analysis - Following the results of the analysis of the questionnaires aimed at the satisfaction of the teaching staff in terms of the workplace, for a good diagnosis of the educational institution, the analysis is prepared for the school where the teaching staff from the experimental group are part of and tries solving the identified problems. This was done in October 2023.

3. Progress evaluation - At the end of April 2023, the questionnaire regarding job satisfaction was again applied to the teaching staff from the experimental group, and the "Workplace performance scale" questionnaire was also applied. In order to perform a

comparative analysis at the end of the activity, they were also distributed to the teachers in the control group.

4. Carrying out final research - The answers to the "Satisfaction at work" questionnaire will be compared with the initial answers to see if things have improved, but also with the results from the "Workplace performance scale" questionnaire to see whether performance is influenced by satisfaction and management strategies. A case study is drawn up based on the analysis of the institutional development project and the observations from the school where the teachers from the experimental group belong. At the end, a questionnaire is applied to the group of students and the results are analyzed.

#### Conclusion

The development of human society is characterized by rapid variability, a fact that requires continuous improvement. The most important mission of school will be to teach students how to learn. Day by day, the means of self-education are gaining more and more ground. The teacher stops teaching the subject, his role being that of a "torch" that illuminates and guides the students' steps through the "tunnel of knowledge". Teachers from the urban environment are more motivated to get out of the routine and try new methods, those who agree to a great extent with the statement being in a percentage of 33.33%, and to a great extent 26.67%. The efforts made by the manager, teaching staff and the community lead to increased satisfaction and implicitly performance. In the urban environment, 50% of the teaching staff claim that they have initiated ways to improve the way of teaching to a very large extent, while in the rural environment it is only 6.67%. The fact that they are satisfied with the recognition they receive, leads teachers to invest more resources and energy in increasing the quality of the teaching act. With a percentage of 26.67%, teaching staff from the urban environment who largely bring about changes in the way of carrying out their work tasks, surpass the teaching staff from the rural environment, who are at a percentage of 20%. In the urban environment it seems that teachers have more conditions and opportunities, this prompts 46.67% of them to be concerned with the constant improvement of the way of carrying out tasks. 53.33% of the teaching staff from the urban environment believe that they have largely offered ideas for increasing the efficiency of the organization and 33.33% to a very large extent. In the countryside, things are less good. Of these, only 40% offer suggestions to a great extent, 13.33% to a very great extent, and an equal percentage to a small extent (Ghergut 2007, 74). Therefore, the manager's managerial style influences the openness and involvement of teaching staff. In our case, their satisfaction with this approach increased and along with it the performance in the organization increased. Creating a pleasant, safe environment where everyone strives for the same results makes teachers more involved. This statement can be proven by comparing the answers of the teaching staff from the school in the urban environment, where work was done to intensify collaboration both internally and with the local community, with the answers of the teaching staff in the rural environment. Thus, at the first school, 46.67% of the respondents state that they were involved to a large extent in changes to increase the efficiency of the organization and 33.33% to a very large extent, compared to the second school where the percentage is 26.67% for large measure and 13.33% for very large measure. When they are cooperative and support each other, there is a greater chance for teachers to get involved both in analyzing the environment, offering ideas, initiatives to make the activity in the institution more efficient, and in their implementation. Following the analysis of the activity products, it was found that 82.00% of the students noted that different methods are used in class compared to regular teaching, 70.00% believe that it is important for the teacher to use interactive games in class, and 66.00% claim that they better comprehend the information they receive when it is conveyed through an activity that appeals to them. The majority of students, represented by a percentage of 68.00% of the respondents, share the opinion that teamwork is much more pleasant and easier. Of these, 78.00% say that the activities they do in class motivate them to study more and 82.00%

think that the games and activities increase their willingness to be more involved in the activity. Of the 50 students responding to the questionnaire, 90.00% claim that the teacher's role is to help the students in the activities they do, not just to teach. In conclusion, through the case study method, it was found that the success of the school also lies in the passion that the principal shows towards the basic activity of the job, working with children. It is necessary for the manager to be a symbol of the leadership and training approach to inspire the teachers under supervision to be more involved and effective. Another value possessed by an interested and interesting school manager is the ability to listen actively, along with his decision-making skills. He must listen to ideas, proposals and issues from all parties involved and be able to find solutions that are beneficial to everyone.

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