

HUMAN RESOURCES' PERFORMANCE IN CAREER - A GOAL FOR A COMPETITIVE ORGANIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The professional development of an employee is a long-term process that covers his entire career (Cole, 2004). This involves adding new knowledge and skills both to the qualification that a person already possesses, and in relation to multi-skilling or re-skilling. The present research shows the most important results of the teaching staff's career performance in Dâmbovița County. The performance analysis was done simultaneously with the results obtained within the organisation. The data has been collected using a questionnaire applied to a representative sample of teaching staff from the pre-university educational system in the county, teachers who are active in theoretical, technological and vocational high schools. The collected data served to provide an overview of the career performance's impact upon the teacher's results and the organization's position in the market. The close ties between the teachers and their organization lay the foundations of a collaboration which facilitates the continuous transition towards adaptability to new situations and changes, to the challenges concerning the inter- and trans-disciplinary approach of the knowledge, and to introducing the knowledge society's new technologies.

KEYWORDS: *performance, career, teaching staff, professional development, skills.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *M530, J24*

1. INTRODUCTION

Professional development is indispensable to those seeking career successes and is closely linked to personal development.

High performance is the basis of success in any job and in any position of an organization's hierarchical structure. Achieving high performance in any field of activity leads to the appreciation of the management team, to gaining the respect of one's co-workers and subordinates and draws attention to every individual's high potential. It is generally advisable that all employees have professional development plans in accordance to new opportunities that may arise. The employee must always be ready to face new professional development challenges. At the same time, the management team must be able to adopt a proper position both in relation to the capping of the staff's personal career, and their subordinates (Cole 2000). During his professional development, an employee must remain active and think seriously about improving his performance (Manolescu, 2003). Career development is the process by which employee's progress through a series of stages. Not only people, but also their careers are in a continuous change. The individual crosses various personal and professional development stages. Seen as general progress patterns, responsibilities and changes in professional activity, the career stages begin with a process of exploration. This serves as the basis for correlating ideal visions outlined during teenage years with the reality of the business environment. The end goal is achieving a high status and level of responsibility inside an

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organisation. The individual chooses from the explored roles, according to their belief system. He then discovers and develops capacities, skills, interests and values, which will aid him in creating a professional identity and in choosing a work field. Important elements for this stage are: the individual's social group, mentor and/or apprentice. In fact, through mentorship, knowledge is transferred and the competences obtained during several years of experience are further developed. Once the basic knowledge and the expertise gained in a certain domain are established, promotion and keeping the job are the two main goals that follow, as well as focusing on key-objectives, adapted to professional achievements. Near the end of one's career the employee gains influence inside the organisation, multiple responsibilities and acknowledgement of his merits. Starting from the division of the career path in stages, set by Stein, the table below presents a development template for an employee in the 21st century.

Table1. A model of career development

	Exploration	Establishment	Maintenance	Disengagement
Developmental tasks	Identify interests, skills, fit between self and work	Advancement, growth, security, develop life style	Hold on to accomplishments, update skills	Retirement planning, change balance between work and non work
Activities	Helping, learning, following directions	Making independent contributions	Training Sponsoring Policy making	Phasing out of work
Relationships to other employees	Apprentice	Colleague	Mentor	Sponsor
Typical age	Less than 30	30 - 45	45 - 60	61+
Years on job	Less than 2 years	2 - 10 years	More than 10 years	More than 10 years

Source: adapted from Schein (1996), p.102

2. RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

In many organizations, the human resources' performance means reaching certain quantitative targets, measured in terms of results. If many years ago the performance of human resources was an activity based on values and common sense, the challenges of modern society aim at adopting a coherent organizational strategy regarding an employee's performance. An employee needs to know his priorities, current actions and goals, but above all, the employee needs to know how his own performance can influence the performance of his team and, implicitly, the performance of the organization he belongs to. Career performance should be viewed both behaviourally and in terms of the results obtained in time. In order to ensure the career performance of their own employees, large companies design and implement programmes to ensure the maximum usage of human potential and competitiveness for the organization. However, in Romania, many organizations consider that the career performance is the responsibility of the employees. It is the employee who is the master of his own professional development and it is up to him to occupy a position compatible with his education, skills, abilities and values. The table below shows the roles regarding career development, which are established at an organisation level (Otte & Hutcheson, 1992).

Table 2. Roles in career development

Individual	The manager	The organisation
Accept responsibility for own career	Provide timely performance feed-back	Communicate mission, policies and procedures
Assess the interests, skills and values	Provide developmental assignments and support	Provide training and development opportunities
Seek out career information and resources	Participate in career development discussions	Provide career information and career programs
Establish goals and career plans	Support employee development plans	Offer a variety of career options
Utilize development opportunities		
Talk with the manager about career		
Follow through on realistic career plan		

Source: adapted from Otte & Hutcheson (1992), p.56

2.1. Materials and methods

The process of investigating the human resources' career performance, along with the one of the organization, has used a complex research strategy that combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods (Popescu et al., 2006). The set of the methods and techniques used in order to collect information as well as the purpose of their use is exemplified below.

2.2. The objectives of the study were:

- Identifying the teaching staff's perceptions on career performance;
- Correlating career performance with the outcomes and the position within the organization;
- Identifying the causes that lead to a decrease in the teaching staff's performance during various stages of their career;
- Identifying various incentives that can motivate a teacher to achieve career performance.

The quantitative research on the teachers' career performance in pre-university education starts from the following **assumptions**:

- A1 - Teachers in pre-university education (high school) are always concerned about their career performance;
- A2 - Professional evolution and continuous growth are the responsibility of the teaching staff and not of the organization to which the teachers belong to;
- A3 - There is a close link between career performance, professional reputation and the organization's recognition;
- A4 - Teachers are flexible in terms of workplace and career performance.

2.3. Documentary Analysis

Numerous studies and statistical indicators (Campbell, D.J., Campbell, K.M., Chia, H. 1998; Chen, Kuo, 2004) confirm that the organization's success and competitiveness depend to a large extent on the performance of their own employees. The ways in which it can grow must become a necessary and permanent concern, adapted to the challenges of inter-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approach to knowledge and the introduction of new technologies.

The evaluation of the teaching staff's performance in the pre-university institutions takes place yearly for the entire activity carried throughout the school year by each pre-university institution, and it has two main components: self-evaluation and evaluation in accordance to both the job description and the employee's evaluation form.

The teaching staff's yearly evaluation methodology in the pre-university educational institutions regulates the evaluation procedure, establishes the rules for the assessment of the individual's professional performances and those for the application of the evaluation norms, as well as evaluation instruments.

This provides the required framework for a unitary, objective and transparent rating of the teaching staff. It also provides a motivation system that can increase the individual performance.

2.4. Selecting the Sample

The sample of teachers from the pre-university education system (high school) in Dâmbovița County, on which the quantitative research has been carried out, consists of 292 teachers out of the total of 1,212.

The distribution of the sample according to the type of school in which the teachers work is shown in the table below:

Table 3. Sample distribution according to school type

SAMPLE	SCHOOL TYPE					
	THEORETICAL		TECHNOLOGICAL		VOCATIONAL	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
292	115	39%	145	50%	32	11%

Source: <http://statistici.insse.ro/>

In Dâmbovița County, according to the statistical data provided by the National Institute of Statistics in 2015, in the county's 30 high schools there are 1,212 teachers, distributed as follows: 482 teachers in theoretical high schools and colleges, 260 in vocational schools and 470 in technological high schools and colleges. In terms of gender representation, 382 are male teachers, and the rest are female.

The distribution of the sample on the age criterion presents a similarity to that of the years spent within the educational system and resembles the distribution by age group in the total number of teachers in the county, as shown in Table 4:

Table 4. Sample distribution according to age and years spent within the system

AGE GROUPS (YEARS)	INTERVIEWED TEACHERS (%)	YEARS SPENT WITHIN THE SYSTEM (ANI)	TEACHERS (%)
under 30	4.1	up to 5	5.47
31-40	33.23	6-10	8.90
41-50	41.78	11-20	39.38
over 50	20.89	more than 20	46.25

Source: made by authors using data from the quantitative research

A higher share is held by the teachers in the urban area, who work in technological high schools, theoretical high schools and colleges, and vocational high schools; most of these school types are located in towns, as shown in the table below:

Table 5. Sample distribution according to the living area

TEACHERS / LIVING AREA	RURAL	URBAN
	%	%
292	32.5%	67.5%

Source: made by authors using data from the quantitative research

Most of the interviewed teachers (89.4%) achieved a high didactic maturity (first degree - 60.3%, second degree - 23.5%, doctorate 5.6%). As a selection criterion of the teachers, the school subjects they teach were also taken into account: mathematics and science 25%, language and communication 25.68%, technologies 22.6%, arts and sports 7.53%, humans and society 19.19%.

2.5. Discussion

As ways to achieve career performance, in accordance to one's personal needs, which greatly influences the professional development goals, 32.87% of the interviewed teachers mentioned E-learning courses (on the Internet) or a mixed form of learning (face-to-face and online), 16.43% mentioned the participation in specialized conferences, workshops, various events, 32.56% mentioned the individual study, and 35.95% mentioned the educational research or school subject research.

Traditional learning, which involves regular frequency and face-to-face meetings, is mentioned by less than a half of the teachers as a way to achieve career performance (23.28%). To these an additional 30.13% of teachers consider that this type of improvement is an acceptable method, with beneficial effects on the career. Only 9.58% of the respondents believe that traditional forms do not meet their professional development needs and, implicitly, do not meet career performance.

The exchanges of experience with professionals from similar or related institutions (27.73%) and involvement in international partnerships and in job shadowing projects (39.38%) are also of great interest, as shown in the table below:

Table 6. Ways to achieve career performance

		To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all
1.	Traditional learning (frequency, face-to-face)	23.28%	30.13%	37.01%	9.58%
2.	E – learning (on the Internet) or a mixed form (face-to-face and online)	32.87%	28.08%	27.05%	12%
3.	Individual learning	26.02%	33.56%	38.01%	2.32%
4.	Educational research activity or school subject research	35.95%	32.55%	29.79%	1.71%
5.	Participation in conferences, seminars, workshops, events, etc.	16.43%	19.17%	38.35%	26.05%
6.	Exchanges of experience with professionals in the field or traditional institutions	27.73%	21.94%	38.35%	11.98%
7.	Involvement in international partnerships and in job shadowing projects	39.38%	33.56%	15.08%	11.98%

Source: made by authors using data from the quantitative research

The fact that engaging in international partnerships and educational projects is considered a way of meeting one's own professional development needs, but the distance learning via the Internet is the

preferred activity in order to achieve performance can be justified by the ever increasing bureaucratic difficulties, the effort required and the higher responsibility in the case of a traditional way of learning. E-learning also provides clearer structured tasks, with a defined timeframe allocated for each task.

We can also notice a shift in position regarding educational research activities or school subject research, which are preferred by a number of teachers due to their more applied nature and the satisfaction that the individual study generates.

Teachers in the urban area are more likely to be in favour of all the learning ways mentioned above, compared to those in the rural area. As preferred ways to achieve performance in the teaching career, we can mention the experience sharing with professionals from similar or related institutions, e-learning (on the Internet) or mixed learning (face-to-face and online), educational research activity, school subject research, participation in conferences, seminars, workshops, events. Traditional (face-to-face) learning and individual study are mentioned by less than 26% of the teachers from both urban and rural areas. According to TALIS 2013, the comparison between the situation in Romania and the international recorded average regarding the ways of development in career courses is shown below:

Table 7. The teaching staff who attended career development courses in the previous year

Career development	Romania %	International average %
Courses and workshops	52	71
Conferences and seminars on educational themes	29	44
Study visits in various schools	33	19
Study visits in companies, public institutions or non-governmental organisations	12	13
Continuous development activities in companies, public institutions or non-governmental institutions	16	14
Qualifying programmes (finalised with a diploma or certificate)	38	18
Participating in activities led by a group of teachers centred around continuous development	50	37
Individual research or in collaboration	39	31
Participating in mentorship activities and/or inter-assistance or training, organised officially at a school level	39	29

Source: OCDE, TALIS 2013 database

According to TALIS 2013, the teaching staff generally answered that career improvement activities have had a moderately or very positive impact on their teaching methods, no matter the study subject. Professional development through activities aimed at teaching competences, at self-discipline and at knowing and understanding their subject matter outclasses professional development based on teaching in a multicultural environment or on leading an organisation. Regardless of the form in which career performance is achieved, the above data support the hypothesis (A1) that teachers are constantly concerned about their own personal and professional development.

2.6. Results

The interviewed teachers believe that the areas of assessment, performance criteria, and score for each field set out in the evaluation sheet are relevant. However, more than half of respondents consider that measuring the annual performance of the teacher is more of a formal action, without any impact on the employee's motivation, position, and status within the school.

Most of them claim that obtaining a perfect grade after self-evaluation is not hard to achieve, and claim that motivating teachers in order to increase career performance would be without a doubt superior if the annual evaluation had both individual (in terms of salary and labour/workplace relationships) and institutional (their own strategy for the professional development of the school) implications.

The expected results regarding the annual performance evaluation of the interviewed teachers are as shown below:

Table 8. Expected results regarding teachers' annual performance evaluation:

No	Expected results	%
1.	Setting the salaries	60.,95%
2.	Establishing individual plans to remedy identified weaknesses	2.32%
3.	Recommendations regarding further professional development	15.7%
4.	Teacher merit appreciation	21.3%

Source: made by authors using data from the quantitative research

Access to continuous teacher training depends on the type of grade obtained after the annual evaluation. However, once the career path has been finished and the 1st degree of teaching obtained, there is a decrease in the teachers' career performance motivation. Respondents strongly agree that only a few attend postgraduate studies or go through a professional reconversion after reaching this level. The International Study on Teaching and Learning (TALIS), 2013, reveals that teachers in Romania and Malaysia feel best trained among teachers in the countries taking part in the TALIS (99.8% of teachers feel well or very well trained regarding the content of the subject taught, 98.5% of teachers feel well or very well trained regarding the pedagogy of the subject taught). This is rather alarming as if you are so well-prepared then there is no necessity for further learning.

TALIS-2013 shows that the teaching staff's need as far as professional development is concerned is aimed mostly at fields such as: teaching students with special needs, ICT teaching skills, new technologies in the work places, student behaviour and classroom management, teaching in a multicultural or multilingual setting, approaches to individualised learning.

A worrying fact is that the professional development and growth of teachers in secondary education is the result of their own funding, excluding projects and programs supported with European funds. The organization the teaching staff belongs to has no financial resources, or funds allocated for professional development and application of new technologies. This is supported not only by the respondents, but also by the TALIS 2013 results, both of which consider the costs for development programmes a barrier for professional growth, especially when the course participants are expected to pay them. This validates the A2 hypothesis.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Performance in a teaching career has a direct impact on the student's achievements. The quality of the educational act is a priority for every teacher involved in the complex approach of permanent education. Through the correlation of the teacher's performance with certain outcomes of their students (promoting within the system, national exams, graduation grades, school Olympiads and competitions results), the interviewed teachers agree that students start to perform well and very

well on all of the indicators the teachers' evaluation is also linked to. As it can be seen from the interviewees' answers, there is a strong link between the teacher's career performance, his professional reputation, continuously developed and adapted to novelty and to changes, and the reputation of the school within which he works. However, there are also exceptions such as the poor results obtained in PISA independent tests.

Several dozens of research conducted on an international level confirm the idea of supporting the relationship between a teacher's performance and their results. As the research participants claim, student education is nevertheless the result of a collective effort. The collaboration between teachers should be sought and promoted rather than the competition to attract performers to a particular field. Under competitive conditions, the transfer of best practices is blocked; Students who do not achieve performance are not given equal opportunities. Very good students are hunted down by the teachers who are eager to perform, their training is ensured, and their skills are developed for the areas of mutual interest.

Specialty literature, through a large number of studies conducted that has inspected the critical factors of an organization impacting the organization performance, considers staff quality and innovation of key importance. Interviewed teachers believe that human resource is the basis of an efficient educational system that aims to prepare future generations for the knowledge based society and the education's transformation into a socio-economic development promoter, which validates the hypothesis that sees a strong connection between the teaching staff's performance and the organisation's prestige. However, the respondents do not easily give up the stability provided by the teaching profession and are easily detained when it comes to changing jobs or vocationally retraining (62.67%), which validates the A4 hypothesis. Creating the ideal conditions for effective teacher training and continuous professional development involves complex and well-correlated measures of legislative, structural, functional, and institutional nature.

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