

A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN ROMANIAN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In the current Romanian social environment, characterized by continuous and permanent changes, the educational institutions tend towards a greater efficiency and performance, due in particular to the human resource and its proper management.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the Romanian pre-university educational system from the human resource management perspective. The research relies on the statistical analysis based on a set of indicators from „Report on the state of pre-university education in Romania” elaborated by The Ministry of National Education. The research findings also show the strategic decisions and main directions of future action.

The conclusion of the research is that human resource in pre-university is well-qualified and willing to improve their teaching competences, while the school organizations must provide each teacher and student the most suitable conditions for developing their socio-professional competences, attitudes, skills and motivation to continue the long-life-learning process.

KEYWORDS: *human resource management, strategic approach, pre-university education, professional development.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the field of education, human resource management represents one of the most important contemporary management issues. There is little research examining human resource management characteristics and practices within the pre-university setting in Romania. Yet, the research problem I have explored is related to human resource from different educational levels: preschool, primary, gymnasium, high school, professional, vocational and secondary education. Although the report presents the situation registered in the pre-university educational system, considering the following dimensions: participation in education; human resource; student results; the results of the integration of the labor market, the most relevant aspect this research analyzed is represented by human resource.

Conducting a strategic review or analysis of variance, as the „*Report on the state of pre-university education in Romania*” can be interpreted as a common activity to strategic management, so that the education system can review its current practice and the success or failure of previous strategic decisions and plan its future policies. The scientific issue that was investigated is represented by the state of pre-university education, in terms of the improvement of human resources, as a factor of increasing the performance and professionalization of the teaching career, which is reflected in the teaching process, but also on the image and position of the organization in community.

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The educational policy of the Romanian government aims to strengthen the role of the school as the main institution of education, and, on the other hand, the educational policy at regional and local level is in favor of developing collaborative relations between officials and schools. Moreover, the current political context of Romania, as a member of the European Union, ensures the mobility of teachers in the European space, and not only, reflected in the openness offered to schools by the MEN to access programs specific to the needs of the development of human and financial resources.

2. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT VERSUS STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Human resource management represents the set of activities oriented towards recruiting, motivating and optimizing staff development of human resource performing in an education institution in order to achieve its goals, satisfying the requirements of the employees (Cristea, 2003).

Seen as a practical activity, human resource management consists in exercising the duties of management within the activities carried out with the purpose of ensuring and maintaining the human potential of the organization (Burduş, 2017).

Nowadays, organizations face challenges in human resource management, due to geographic and staff mobility. For example, rural pre-university institutions have to find solution to determine their teachers not to migrate to urban schools. *Having the right people with the right capabilities—and being able to retain them— are crucial current HR concerns in many organizations* (Mathis and Jackson, 2006). Consequently, the implementation of the plan involves administrations and development strategies.

On the other hand, strategic management is defined by David Fred (1991) as *the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives*.

From the strategic perspective, the organizational analysis focus on the proactive strategy and aims at developing and revising policies and procedures, identifying organizational training needs, HR planning and linking with external staffing resources, measuring HR with metrics and helping set strategic HR goals (Nicolescu, 2004).

The defining feature of the strategic management consists of the integrated character: the strategies are considered as being vertically integrated with the economic strategic plan of the educational institution and, on horizontal level, with each other. The implementation of the most efficient methods and procedures for managing human resources represents an important component of the strategic planning process, which is a key factor of the organization's performance.

3. HUMAN RESOURCE OF THE ROMANIAN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION SYSTEM

In pre-university education, human capital consists of individuals with good knowledge and competencies, professional experience and expertise, and also relationships which can enable them to provide an efficient teaching-learning process. The professional qualities of the teaching staff, their degree of engagement in fulfilling the responsibilities regarding the education of the students represent the key elements in the educational process (Petrescu, 2003). The first ones interested in the quality and effects of the educational process in the school are represented by the local community and the school managerial team.

The human resources strategy and planning process in a pre-university education unit is developed according to the respective organization's strategic plan (Pell, 2006). There are also some factors to be taken into consideration when determining the type and extent of the requirements needed to be

achieved by human resource strategic planning: demographic features, socio-economic characteristics of the area and recruitment policies.

The recruitment of the personnel, as organized activity of attracting unoccupied human resources, in order to satisfy the labor force needs of the respective period, represents the takeover of the selected individuals, those whose professional knowledge in the field, personality and aptitudes, best correspond to the vacancies taken out to the competition (Pânișoară and Pânișoară, 2004). The main purpose of the recruitment activities is to attract a sufficient number of possible corresponding employees, who apply for vacancies within the organization.

For the recruitment of the teaching staff from the pre-university education, the Ministry of National Education elaborates the schedule of the national competition for the occupation of teaching positions; ministry orders, decisions of the general school inspectorate and the methodology - issued by institutions empowered in this regard: Ministry of National Education, school inspectorates, national distribution commissions (Law no. 1/2011).

The document provided by the Ministry of National Education „*Report on the state of pre-university education in Romania*” for the 2017-2018 school year presents, in the first part, a statistical analysis based on a set of indicators included in the National System of Education Indicators (SNIE). SNIE is compatible with the international indicators systems - the European statistical system Eurostat, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) system, the United Nations system for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO), the World Bank system - and includes some of the target indicators specific to the European field. and vocational training.

The set of indicators has been calculated both for the whole system, as well as for each level of education partly (pre-school, primary, secondary, high school, professional and post-secondary).

During the process of calculating the indicators, the official primary data of the National Institute of Statistics (INS) and of the Ministry of National Education (MEN) were used. In the case of the indicators that use the information at the beginning of the school year (entry indicators), the analysis was carried out with reference to the school year 2017 / 2018, for which the output data were unavailable at the time of the report (www.edu.ro).

For the indicators that use information collected when the school year ended (exit indicators), the analysis was performed having as a reference the previous school year (2016/2017) (www.edu.ro).

In summary, the key points that can be relevant for the human resource analysis in this document are:

- the evolution of staff numbers in pre-university education;
- the share of qualified teachers, by educational levels;
- the share of teachers with full working time, by education levels;
- the share of female staff from the total of teaching staff, by educational levels.

The first aspect is represented by the evolution of staff numbers in Romanian pre-university education. Contrary to the downward trend registered since 2013/2014, in the school year 2017 / 2018 the staff numbers in education did not slightly increase. The number of teaching staff increased at all levels of education, with the exception of gymnasium and high school teachers. The highest growth occurred in the vocational education level, as a result of the revival of this training route.

On a general level, the share of teaching staff from the total staff in education remained relatively constant, accounting for 72.1% of the total staff in education. The highest share of the teaching staff out of the total staff is registered in primary and secondary education (77.5%). The teaching staffs have some variations depending on the level of education. The number of teaching staff is slightly increasing at pre-school and primary level, respectively slightly decreasing at the high school and high school level. As in the previous school year, at the level of vocational

education there is a significant increase of the teaching staff, as a result of the revival of this training route.

Table 1. Structure of the personnel from the pre-university education in the 2017-2018 school year

Education level	Teaching staff	Auxiliary teaching staff	Administrative personnel	Maintenance and operational personnel	Total Personnel 1 2017/ 2018	% from total personnel 2017/ 2018	% teaching staff from total personnel
Preschool	34720	1695	1261	16359	54035	18,6	64,3
Primary and gymnasium	117183	9811	2715	21432	151141	52,1	77,5
High School	54257	9069	2878	14132	80336	27,7	67,5
Professional	1155	316	131	296	1898	0,7	60,9
Secondary, Vocational	1879	368	341	203	2791	1,0	67,3
Total 2017/2018	209194	21259	7326	52422	290201	100,0	72,1
Total 2016/2017	208566	20585	6896	50889	286936		
Total 2015/2016	210008	22815	7453	51549	291825		

Source: Data calculated based on INS information, 2018, adapted by the authors

The analysis by residence means indicates that, at a general level, while in the urban environment, there was a slight increase, in the rural area there was a slight decrease of the teaching staff. At the primary level, the number of teaching staff has increased in both rural and urban areas. In the analysis, it should also be taken into account that the school network is unevenly developed on the basis of residence, in the case of high school and post-secondary education (to the detriment of the rural environment).

In the 2017/2018 school year, the share of the qualified personnel registered increases compared to the previous school year, at all educational levels. If the value of the indicator is analysed as being reported to the one registered in the previous year, a slight increase can be detected, due to the fact that about 98% of the teachers at the level of primary and secondary education are qualified.

The variation does not register a similar tendency reported to each education level. High school education is characterised by the smallest increase (by 0.2 p.p.), while the most significant can be met in the case of vocational education (by 1.3 p.p.), where human resource was, firstly, reoriented from the high school teachers' category.

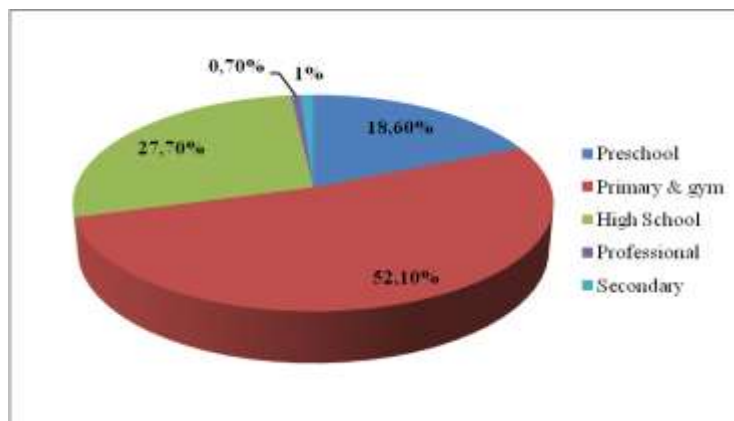
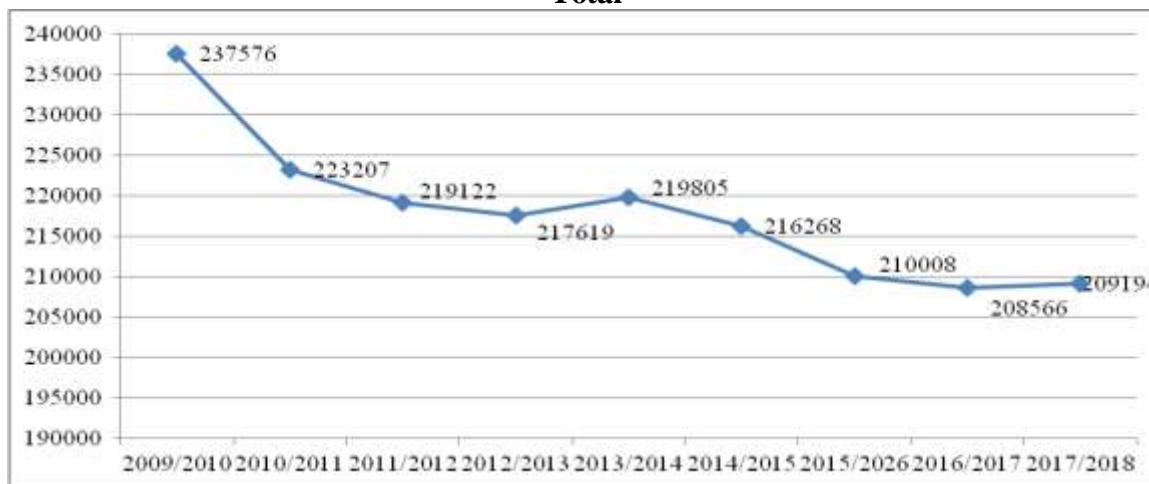


Figure 1. Personnel share of pre-university education, by study levels, 2017-2018

Source: adapted by the authors

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Total



By education level

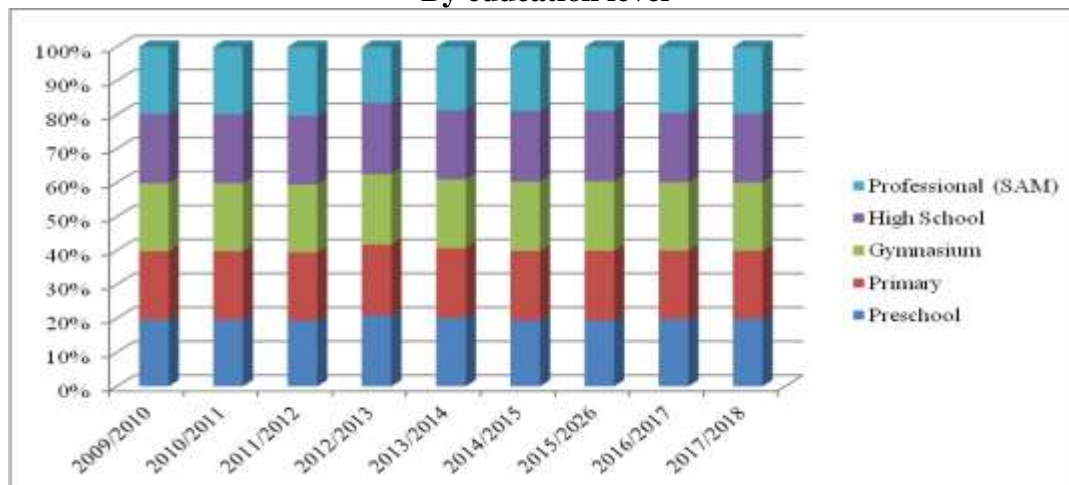


Figure 2. Evolution of the teaching staff in pre-university education

Source: adapted by authors

The number of teaching staff is slightly increasing at pre-school and primary level, respectively slightly decreasing at the high school and high school level. As in the previous school year, at the level of vocational education there is a significant increase of the teaching staff, as a result of the revival of this training.

The analysis by residence means indicates that, at a general level, while in the urban environment, there was a slight increase, in the rural area there was a slight decrease of the teaching staff. At the primary level, the number of teaching staff has increased in both rural and urban areas. In the analysis, it should also be taken into account that the school network is unevenly developed on the basis of residence, in the case of high school and post-secondary education (to the detriment of the rural environment).

Table 2. Share of qualified teachers, by educational levels

Education Level		2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018*
Preschool	Total	95.4	95.6	95.2	97.3	96.9	91.6	91.9	95.9	96.6
	Urban	97.0	97.1	95.4	97.6	97.3	91.3	91.3	96.0	96.4
	Rural	93.2	93.3	95.0	96.9	96.1	92.2	92.9	95.5	97.0
Primary	Total	98.5	98.8	98.8	98.0	98.0	97.0	96.8	97.8	97.7
	Urban	98.9	99.4	99.1	98.8	98.5	97.1	96.7	98.2	98.0
	Rural	98.1	98.3	98.6	97.2	97.5	97.0	96.9	97.4	
Gymnasium	Total	97.1	97.8	98.1	96.8	96.6	96.4	96.3	97.2	97.5
	Urban	98.6	99.1	99.1	97.9	97.5	96.8	96.5	97.5	
	Rural	95.7	96.8	97.4	95.9	95.8	96.2	96.1	96.9	
High School	Total	99.5	99.4	99.3	97.6	97.5	98.4	98.6	98.8	99.1
	Urban	99.5	99.5	99.4	97.6	97.5	98.4	98.6	98.9	99.2
	Rural	99.1	98.7	99.2	97.6	97.9	97.5	98.3	97.7	98.0
Professional (SAM)	Total	96.0	96.6	100.0	77.3	89.4	89.2	88.6	94.2	95.5
	Urban	95.5	99.1	100.0	74.8	89.5	91.7	91.4	95.8	96.5
	Rural	97.0	40.0	100.0	100.0	88.9	81.0	80.6	90.7	93.4
Secondary	Total	98.9	96.4	97.6	93.4	96.0	93.6	94.1	95.6	96.3
	Urban	98.9	96.3	97.5	93.3	95.9	93.6	94.1	95.7	96.3
	Rural	100	100	100	100	100	95.9	94.1	91.9	100

Note: For high school, professional and post-secondary education, the type of locality in which the educational unit is located has been taken into account for the area of residence.

Source: Data calculated based on INS information, 2018, adapted by the authors

The data regarding the qualified personnel in the education system highlights the need to identify difficult jobs to cover with qualified staff, as well as to evaluate the opportunity of developing programs to attract qualified staff in schools. In the case of professional and vocational education, the need for qualified teachers, especially in the rural schools is increased, as only 93,4% of the teachers own the proper competencies, skills and knowledge to ensure an efficient teaching-learning process.

Comparing the level of study, the percentage of full-time teaching staff is higher in preschool, primary, and secondary education, in high school and in vocational schools. The lowest percentage of full-time teaching staff can be found in post-secondary schools. As a conclusion, the share of full-time teachers in education has slight fluctuations compared to the previous school year.

Table 3. Share of teachers with full working time, by education levels

Education level		2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018*
Preschool	Total	99.1	98.8	98.4	99.5	99.4	99.1	99.1	99.3	99.4
	Urban	98.9	98.5	98.0	99.4	99.3	99.0	99.0	99.3	99.3
	Rural	99.4	99.2	98.9	99.6	99.4	99.2	99.4	99.4	99.7
Primary	Total	93.7	95.1	94.7	97.8	98.0	98.5	98.7	98.8	90.2
	Urban	94.7	96.2	95.4	98.4	98.3	98.3	98.7	98.7	90.9
	Rural	92.9	94.2	94.1	97.2	97.7	98.6	98.7	98.9	
Gymnasium	Total	70.2	67.9	65.4	71.8	71.0	79.2	82.1	83.0	89.6
	Urban	75.0	72.7	68.8	75.2	74.8	79.9	82.4	83.5	
	Rural	66.1	63.9	62.6	69.0	67.8	78.6	81.9	82.6	
High School	Total	84.4	82.4	79.9	84.8	83.4	89.7	89.9	89.5	90.2
	Urban	84.8	82.9	80.2	84.9	83.5	89.7	89.8	89.4	90.2
	Rural	79.7	76.5	76.1	82.8	82.0	89.0	90.8	91.2	89.4
Professional / SAM	Total	70.3	70.7	92.2	72.0	78.9	90.0	88.6	92.2	90.0
	Urban	69.6	69.4	93.5	68.9	77.4	91.2	87.4	91.5	91.5
	Rural	71.5	100.0	50.0	100.0	88.9	86.2	91.8	93.8	86.8
Secondary	Total	61.7	66.4	58.5	60.7	62.9	62.0	65.1	67.6	68.0
	Urban	62.0	66.8	58.3	60.2	62.4	61.6	64.8	67.0	67.6
	Rural	0.0	25.0	61.1	77.3	78.9	77.6	85.3	94.6	92.9

Note: Starting with the 2014/2015 school year, no data are available on full-time teaching staff, from special education, which is why the indicator was removed from the data series.

Source: Data calculated based on INS information, 2018, adapted by the authors

The share of female teaching staff in the Romanian education system is highest at the preschool and primary level; moreover, the younger the children / students, the greater the number of female teaching staff.

Table 4. The share of female staff from the total of teaching staff, by educational levels

Education level		2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018
Preschool	Total	99.7	99.6	99.7	99.7	99.6	99.7	99.6	99.7	99.7
	Urban	99.8	99.8	99.8	99.7	99.7	99.7	99.6	99.7	99.7
	Rural	99.6	99.5	99.5	99.6	99.5	99.6	99.6	99.6	99.6
Primary	Total	86.1	86.8	86.9	88.1	88.6	89.0	89.5	89.8	90.2
	Urban	90.0	90.6	90.9	91.8	92.1	92.3	92.8	93.0	*
	Rural	82.8	83.4	83.3	84.6	85.2	85.8	86.3	86.6	*
-Primary (general)	Total	86.0	86.7	86.9	88.1	88.6	89.0	89.5	89.7	90.1
	Urban	90.1	90.9	91.2	92.1	92.4	92.6	93.0	93.1	*
	Rural	82.8	83.4	83.3	84.6	85.2	85.8	86.3	86.6	*
-Primary (special needs)	Total	88.6	87.9	87.8	88.6	89.6	89.4	90.4	91.8	92.3
	Urban	88.6	87.9	87.7	88.7	89.5	89.4	90.5	91.8	92.2
	Rural	88.8	87.3	88.2	87.1	90.8	90.0	89.2	91.9	93.3
Gymnasium	Total	68.3	68.8	68.8	69.3	69.8	71.3	72.2	72.6	72.8
	Urban	71.6	72.3	72.3	72.8	73.0	75.9	76.2	77.0	*
	Rural	65.1	65.6	65.5	66.1	66.8	67.5	68.7	68.8	*
-Gymnasium(general)	Total	67.7	68.1	68.1	68.6	69.1	70.7	71.5	71.9	72.1
	Urban	70.7	71.3	71.2	71.7	71.8	75.1	75.2	76.0	*
	Rural	65.0	65.5	65.4	66	66.8	67.4	68.6	68.7	*
-Gymnasium (special needs)	Total	80.8	81.6	81.7	82.2	82.4	82.7	83.9	84.3	85.0
	Urban	80.9	81.9	82.1	82.4	82.8	82.8	84.1	84.4	85.1
	Rural	78.3	77.2	76.2	78.5	77.3	80.6	81.2	82.8	84.5
Total	67.8	68.1	68.7	68.9	69.1	70.0	70.4	70.9	71.5	

Education level		2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018
High School	Urban	68.3	68.5	69.1	69.4	69.6	70.4	70.8	71.2	71.8
	Rural	60.5	62.5	63.2	63.3	64.0	65.1	65.7	67.4	67.8
Professional/ SAM	Total	58.3	50.9	56.3	52.7	63.4	64.9	62.0	69.9	68.2
	Urban	59.2	51.4	56.5	55.6	66.9	68.4	64.0	75.0	71.4
	Rural	56.8	40.0	50.0	26.7	38.9	53.4	56.1	58.2	61.8
Secondary	Total	68.4	69.9	72.0	74.7	76.4	77.8	78.3	78.3	77.8
	Urban	68.5	69.9	73.4	75.7	77.6	78.8	79.4	79.4	77.7
	Rural	40.0	75.0	38.9	38.6	36.8	40.8	23.5	21.6	25.0

Note: For high school, professional and post-secondary education, the type of locality in which the educational unit is located has been taken into account for the area of residence. Starting with the 2017/2018 school year, data on female staff are no longer available as divided into the primary and secondary levels, respectively.

Source: Data calculated based on INS information, 2018, adapted by the authors

4. THE STRATEGIC APPROACH OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The performance of pre-university education institutions is closely related to quality and results and aims to link organizational efforts to achieving professional excellence. The SWOT analysis of the pre-university education system allows an overview of the quality of the activity of these institutions as well as of the performance in the management of the human resources and the implementation of modern systems necessary for the strategic and decision-making management.

The strengths represent the attributes which allow pre-university education institutions to achieve the objectives, referring to the advantages of the Romanian educational system in comparison with other systems, the identification of human and financial resources, management and evaluation of the performance. The performance is assessed from the perspective of the accreditations, of exams results, human resources involved in the educational act and continuous teacher training.

The weaknesses consist of the elements that block the goal achievement and refer to the disadvantages of the Romanian education system in comparison with the European ones (the lack of material and human resources, changes in legislation).

The opportunities relate to the conditions from the external environment of the education system needed to achieve the objectives, such as the possibilities of developing pre-university education through training courses and Erasmus projects.

For a better understanding of the activities carried out as well as for the current situation of human resources in the Romanian pre-university education, we present the SWOT Analysis in figure 3.



Figure 3. SWOT analysis of the pre-university education system

Source: adapted by the authors

The threats are all external conditions that may affect the achievement of objectives and relate to the negative impact of political and legislative effects on the pre-university education system, decreased motivation of the human resource, as well as to the insufficiency or lack of funding sources.

Based on this SWOT analysis, pre-university education institutions should develop strengths, eliminate weaknesses, avoid threats and capitalize the opportunities, in order to be performant.

The public policies of the Ministry of National Education, coherent with the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Strategic Framework for Education and Training 2020, the Government Programs and other national programmatic documents, are included in the National Strategic Framework for Education and Vocational Training comprised of 4 strategic objectives:

1. Improving the relevance of vocational training systems for the labor market
2. Increasing participation and facilitating access to vocational training programs
3. Improving the quality of professional development training
4. Developing national and international innovation and cooperation in the field of vocational training

The main programmes and measures proposed to achieve the objectives of this strategy are grouped into four strategic pillars: Pillar 1: Ensuring access to education and quality education for all children; Pillar 2: Ensuring the completion of compulsory education for all children; Pillar 3: Reintegration into the education system of people who left school early; Pillar 4: Developing adequate institutional support.

In order to attend these strategic objectives, MEN organised a series of the programs dealing with continuous professional training of the teaching staff, such as: Development of the professional and managerial skills necessary for the methods, Curricular qualification of the teaching staff who teach preparatory classes, Management and counseling in the teaching career. In the school year 2017-2018, a number of 43 high quality training courses were accredited, which mainly focused on the following topics: Quality assurance in education, Educational management, Management and communication, Project management, ICT, Teaching and evaluation methods, Financial education and resource management humanities, Inclusive school, Disadvantaged environments, School dropout and absenteeism management, Curriculum - design and implementation models.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In our contemporary world, embracing strategic management at the human resource level and implementing it tend to represent a necessity for schools and their managers. To enable schools to perform and do their duties. More importantly, school principals should adopt strategic management in their schools. Educational systems must be in struggle for realizing an education which is suitable for universal values for they are the systems established to bring up individuals for the societies of the future. In order to ensure their community's benefits, they should always develop and be ready to face any challenges in the future. To accomplish this, managerial understanding, organizational structures and leadership approaches should be reevaluated according to necessities of the contemporary social demands. Through its activities, the school must provide each teacher and student the most suitable conditions for developing their socio-professional competences, attitudes, skills and motivation to continue the long-life-learning process.

Through the management of human resources, the necessary labor force is provided in all educational institution, by categories of different categories of personnel, in order to carry out specific teaching activities and to obtain the expected results. Along with the economic or social purpose of an organization, the last decades have demonstrated the need to take into account its social purpose. Nowadays, without a doubt, the human resource is considered to be strategic and therefore the personnel function has come to be in a position of "arbitrator" between the organization's economic targets and the social and human imperatives. Human resources should not

be viewed as a component of cost, but as an investment within the educational field, not only of the production costs, but as the main promotor of education and performance.

At the end of this research, following suggestions were made;

- the literature review has shown that, in Romania, the number of research studies on human resource management in education, in general, and especially in pre-university education, is little. Ministry of Education should support qualitative and quantitative studies by reinforcing strategic management implementations in schools through County Inspectorates.
- the specific educational framework which envisages the decentralization and autonomy of the education system, especially regarding the recruitment and selection of teachers;
- a more stable legislative framework favorable to attracting complementary financial resources for the development of the education and human resources infrastructure (from community programmes, MEN);
- increasing the material and informational resources available to the educational units through projects and programs financed by the Romanian state or by the European bodies - the programs for equipping laboratories, equipping with sports equipment, improving the book fund, SEI (computerized educational system);
- State funding of social assistance programs for students from disadvantaged categories;
- awarding scholarships for students with problems and for performant students;
- further professional development opportunities for senior teachers, in order to help them adapting to the new technologies and teaching methods;
- implementing teaching strategies that facilitate the assesment of competences through formal and non-formal education.

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