

Managers, Teaching Professionals and the Crisis Impact upon the Education System in Romania – Values, Attitudes, Conduct

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Abstract: This research paper examines, based on the data of an empirical research study, the problems of the new challenges that the education actors and, especially, school managers have to face under the current global, financial and moral crisis. There are approached context elements, frequent queries, substantiations that are present in investigations, solutions and expectations of social and professional resonance.

Key-words: school management crisis, community-school relation, global crisis, optimum managerial conduct

1 General context

The economic crisis extension seems to block the paradigm change that was about to take place: the replacement of the economic perspective upon the education-work relation, followed by major outcomes upon priorities, objectives and competences, upon the school curriculum and, certainly, upon the management of education.

Into such a perspective, the revolution of mentalities, too slow for the times we currently live in, had the purpose of recovering the human values comprised in the "seven liberal arts" program, the use of a pragmatic language, appropriate and transparent, the adoption of the teleological register specific to the entrepreneurial managerial model and rationally planning, with the strategic one, which promotes the theory-good practices unity within the values of the curriculum focused on transfer competences, problem-solving and creative-innovative competences, able to support the medium and long term personal and professional development of the social actors. Let us not forget that the technical-economic dynamics, torn apart from the human side of the approaches, questions the reformation attempts focused on an accentuated / narrow specialization of graduates. For a while, the economic and the business environment (at least in Romania) required fast specializations, relatively low from the complexity perspective. Trends are, within certain limits, reconsidered, the axis consisting in the holistic/global, analytic-global triad. Thus, the influences that the globalization process has upon the national and regional economies are taken into consideration, as well as the

importance of this process concerning the strategic and local decisions of the educational management. From this point of view, Romania represents an exemplary situation for the confusions that globalization and the economic crisis maintained in the case of those educational systems that were being under the reformation process or which intended to apply positive educational alterations, imposed upon by the economic-social pressures. As a matter of fact, globalization is blamed for the export of the crisis at global level while the crisis exonerates the management structures at national and local level of the responsibility concerning inefficiency or wrong decisions: strategic decisions are mistaken, which involve adaptabilities with the European educational policies and rather large periods of time, with local decisions, which involve fast, short-term adjustments; local curricular adjustments are mistaken, imposed upon by the situation at regional level and by objectives having minor effects at the level of the students' personality, by changing the curriculum, which aims at the national and global situation and which implies another "type of desirable personality" at the level of educational ideal; future is taken for the present and the educational management's decisions seem contaminated by the (false) presumption that the future will resemble the past.

It is required the argumentation of the connexions related to the roles of educational institutions and to school managers (in Romanian schools, school manager is equivalent to school principal) in the positive change of the role of social actors for the modernisation of society with a view to creating the human capital of

tomorrow. Although limited as short-term prediction, it is not difficult to articulate and sustain.

It is undeniable the fact that the social-economic factors are located on an advanced common place, despite the differences from system to system, from country to country. Some of them highlight stimulating values in their very structures (see the organising models from well-established or emergent countries, such as Japan, Malaysia, France, USA, England, Germany, The Netherlands or Scandinavian countries). Others contain potential, indirectly creative values. When analysing some of the main countries that have customized educational patterns, a famous author (W. Cummings, 2003) used some arguments that are relevant for our topic.

a) "The leaders of education try to protect the "central" education processes against the influences from the outside; out of this reason, they make up a series of mechanisms – advisory committees, school committees, public examinations etc." During economically-stressed periods, protection is more fragile, much more vulnerable" (1).

b) During the periods when reforms cannot be sustained socially and economically (the case of Romania, between 2009 and 2010), criticism and alternative solutions come up. Some result from expert educators (in Romania, these are not quite taken into consideration) (2, 3, 5), others from the political side (these hardly have public support). It is the case, for instance, of the disputes between the supporters of "education for all" and of "education for each and every one", a theory of combinations invoked by educators. It is also the case between the options for the predominantly technological training (vocational) and those for a socio-humanistic education, or between the concepts of "excellence" and equity, which are not easily socially digestible.

On the other hand, although they are never explained, all the reformation attempts in Romania for the last twenty years have fallen in the paradigm of reforms focused on assessment and curriculum, based on the presupposition that order, the capacity to strictly control all the stages of the didactic process, the rigorous organisation of contents, of the teaching and assessment methods would establish an efficient educational system. Consequently, questions such as those asked by Seymour Papert are ignored: „What kind of people, what kind of citizens, do we want? Do we want empowered individuals who will feel the power to make their own decisions and to shape their lives? Or do we prefer citizens who will accept the discipline of following the instructions and the programs that are set up for them by others?" (www.papert.org/articles/ACritique_of_Technocentrism.html)

Today, in Romania, the reforms, including those in the area of school management, are too tightly related to political changes. The economic vectors and forces represent a powerful constraining agent, which, beyond rhetorical pleading, is highlighted within the limitations of durable development [6]. Much external pressure is added, pressure from the European Union, from the international bodies that help Romania overcome crisis situations from the financial point of view, with reductive outcomes regarding the financial resources allocated to education, the human and logistic resources, the coagulant and stimulating climate for social creativity and cohesion. In a general context analysis we point out, on the background of a social, economic, educational and cultural heritage diversity, that Europe undergoes ample processes of reorganisation and internal optimization. There are countries where the decentralised structure tends to open towards unifying solutions, while other countries, traditionally centre-oriented (Romania is a relevant case) are in search of solutions to reorganise education, on various levels and components.

Some value trends have become issues of common interest and with high impact upon the quality of school management, of which we mention:

(i) Schooling of students – educational itineraries and efficiency;

(ii) equity, social cohesion, school inclusion/inclusion of the children that come from socially and educationally vulnerable environments, especially the children with special education requirements (with deficiencies or gifted);

(iii) behaviour deviation of students and young people;

(iv) integrated, modular, inter-disciplinary curricular organisation;

(v) balanced relation between the educational offer and the training requirements for the labour market which is dynamic, mobile and sometimes unpredictable.

2 Essential interrogations, plausible answers

The field of questions that arrange the efforts of finding stimulating answers, large as it may be, may be reduced to a few:

- what is the meaning of a "successful manager", who runs a "good school" which is functional under the conditions of a global and national economy that is highly disturbed, unbalanced?

- who can he be a successful actor for: for students, for the teaching staff of the school, for the institutions he manages, for the children' parents of the school or for

the community that vested him with such responsibilities?

We may answer it in a simple way: we are in search not only of elements that result from the collective imaginary and from the professional mental state that configure the ideal portrait of a “good school” in Romania, but also of operational arguments that sustain decisional behaviours dependent on the logic of good quality, that of total quality management in education. Hence, the need to design and to legitimate the status of school manager who operates under conditions of economic recession, of pressure from a competitive environment, which is sometimes bereaved of rules or of high professional ethos, let alone the occurrence of some new challenges that add up to the already existing ones. Among these, for education in Romania, the school management and managers have to face with: processes already started but not finished; theoretically (re)defined values, but without having the substance of a founding, non-contradictory social and managerial philosophy; excellent "continuity states of discontinuities" at the higher levels of decision making (the case of continuous changes of the ministers of education, each of them being willing to change and not to continue the long-term strategies); uneven paces, as volume or impact, of financing education, of its management; lack of professionally-trained managerial competences, regulations and deregulations without long-term substance, lack of support of the solutions that come from public opinion vectors or from macro-educational policy experts; fragile mechanisms and standards related to institutional assessment and to the quality of the learning results (competences acquired); little monitoring of the efficiency of investments in the programs that are targeted at rural areas or at the poor economic and educational ones; logistic disparities, disparities of infrastructure, unemployment, school drop out or major absenteeism, of motivated or unskilled personnel.

3 Reasons for empirical research

- Because we are preoccupied with the identification of the perceptive elements, of the conducts and of the chart of values that impregnate the answers of school managers to the crisis Romania is currently undergoing and, naturally, the education system, especially high-school education, we have undergone a micro-research study, focused on several centres of interest. The major area of the investigation was defined by the management/school management axis and by the impact (the outcomes) of the global, economic, social and moral crisis upon the education system in its main components. The intensity scale was of the Likert type. The references we are to show

will be interpreted from the perspective of these centres of gravity.

3.1. The felt impact.

School managers evaluate the effects of the global crisis upon the school activities by answers that have an interesting distribution.

In a table presentation, the distribution can be grouped as follows:

Table 1: The effects of the crisis: the impact felt by school managers

Scale	Percentage
a very high degree	20%
a high degree and	73%
a relative degree	7%

Hence (see Table no. 1 The effects of the crisis: the impact felt by school managers) and shares somehow similar of the answers regarding the level at which the school-community relations are affected

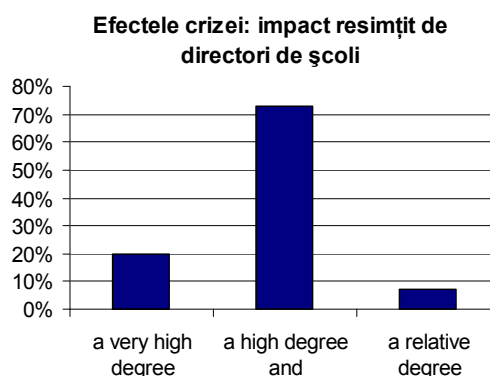


Diagram 1. The effects of the crisis: the impact felt by school managers

Table 2. The level at which the school-community relations are affected: direct effects regarding school life

Scale	Percentage
a very high degree	15%
a high degree	40%
a relative degree	26, 5%
a small or very small	13, 5%
not at all.	5%

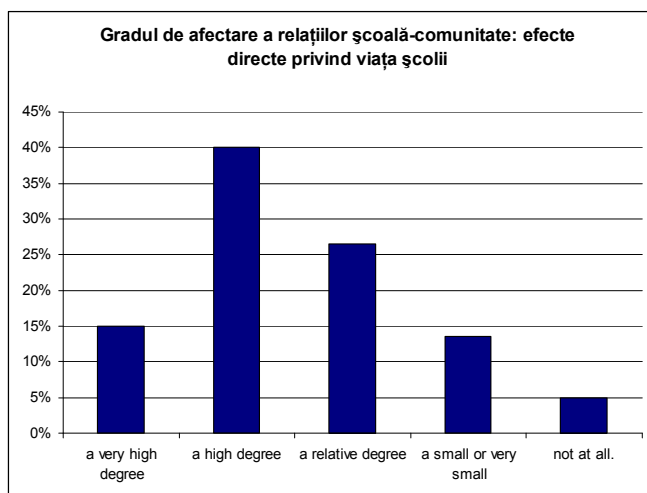


Diagram 2. The level at which the school-community relations are affected: direct effects regarding school life

Others, which are indirect, global, have the following distribution:

Table 3. The level at which the school-community relations are affected: indirect effects

Scale	Percentage
a very high degree	14%
a high degree	42%
a relative degree	23%
a small or very small	21%

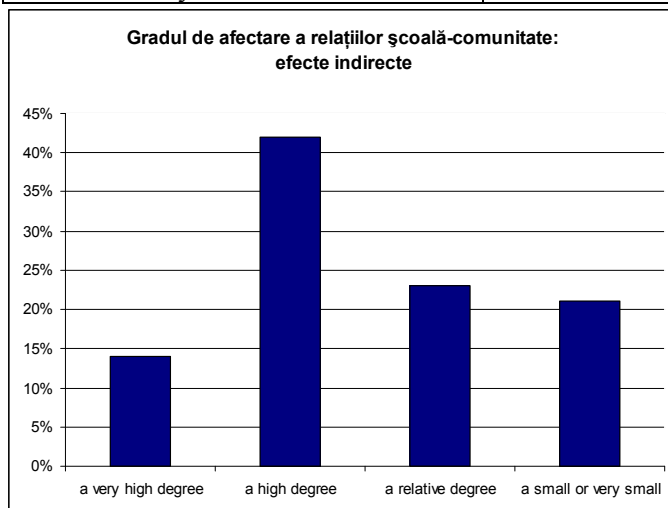


Diagram 3. The level at which the school-community relation is affected: indirect effects

3.2 The identification of the factors that cause effects which are perceived as obstacles in the school management activity.

Highly reflective and critical school managers identify a rich set of basic causes: internal causes which, either by themselves, or cumulatively, generate disturbances and vulnerabilities. By falling them into

groups, we obtain the following synthesis of factors that are specific to education:

a) *legislation* – contradictory normative acts; inconsistency in observing some rights stipulated by laws; high bureaucratic volume, of analytical, procedural elements;

b) *human resources involved in school management*: people that are not trained for management positions; unmotivated successive changes at the higher levels of the education management; instability on manager positions; lack of attractiveness for management positions; difficult dialogue with unions, etc;

c) *financing* – significant cut down of budget appropriation, lack of funds starting with quarter IV 2009, major savings in 2010; decrease of funds for institutional utilities; nonviable solutions for savings (for example, the postponement of the programs for equipments, fusion of school institutions, significant decrease of the funds for performance stimulation, etc);

d) *teaching personnel* - lack of motivation; dissatisfactions related to small salaries; psychological conditions of generalized uncertainty, lack of implication in the school life; cut down of jobs by increasing the teaching workload; difficulties to attract, stimulate and maintain young people in the education system a.s.o.;

e) *curriculum* – weak strength of completing curricula; high volume (overloading) by means of extra-curricular activities; cut down of the number of subject matters in the compulsory curriculum, etc;

f) *students* – pronounced lack of motivation; low school results; school drop out (the most frequent factor); risk behaviours (violence, for instance);

g) *learning process* – decrease in the quality of teaching, poor styles of approaching the teaching-learning-assessment processes, tense educational relations;

h) *axiology* – changes in the chart of values (money comes on the first place, material advantages become the most important, high interest for diplomas, certification without a real training base, etc);

i) *parents state/condition* – leaving to work abroad for a medium or long period of time; low interest for school; high level of unemployment etc;

j) *community and local government* – lack of support for education; lack of constructive dialogue etc.

The relevance of the analyses presented so far shall rise as far as every person is also aware of the positions of the teaching professionals from who school managers are selected. Some landmarks can complete the image created, have the possibility to make it clear how responsible the activity of a manager who works with numerous teaching staff can be, a manager who often has to deal with social issues, with salary issues (in a

substantial range of restriction as compared to other budgetary personnel), with levels of stress which is sometimes difficult to understand by political decision-makers.the argument is the working schedule, standardized between 16 and 24 hours of direct activity, but especially a highly-stimulating holiday, even attractive (72 days per year), in order to become a teacher, professionally speaking.

We also mention that in the pre-university education system, in the school units with legal personality, there were – in the school year 2008-2009 – 8115 managers, helped by deputy managers, for a number of 237270 teachers. The statistical tendency is, as a whole, decreasing, if we take into consideration the major restrictions that will apply for the school year 2010-2011. Specialty research that took place among teaching professionals highlights a series of values, attitudes, conducts and perceptions that influence, often significantly, both the quality of their own educational services, in-service training, the social image induced in the community or in other population segments and, definitely, the quality of the work of school managers.

Out of pragmatic reasons and without operating with factorial analyses and correlations, which are obviously useful, we synthesize, from the data available regarding the recent investigations in Romania (Trăistaru, 2010), some statistical values derived from samples of teaching professionals representative for:

- a) affiliation to the main types of schools – school groups, high schools – schools of arts and crafts, junior schools;
- b) the environments in which these schools function – urban and rural;
- c) gender – female personnel and male personnel.

It is worth mentioning the fact that we will show the data without comparative details and comments, despite the interpretative temptations of the statistical values or even the importance of the "factor" itself. Therefore:

1) The analysis of the selection criteria of the didactic staff in order to work in a school precedes and is complementary to the analysis of the selection criteria of managers. The teaching professional status is mandatory in order to become school manager. The value intervals within which these criteria find themselves show the importance, the credibility and the centrality of the most important factors, such as:

- a) professional competence (between 93.5%-95%);
- b) the ability to work in teams (between 77%-86%);
- c) pedagogical competences (between 92%-95%);

d) organizational competences (between 79%-83%) a.s.o.;

2) The examination of the set of conditional factors of a good selection to become "good" teachers in a school shows us different statistical intervals, the variations being given by the type of school, the location environment, gender. Factors and values such as the following are significant:

a) the selection necessity by psychological evaluation (between 77%-81%);

b) the graduation of the permanent teacher certification examination (55%);

d) training courses (between 63%-69%);

3) Factors with significant impact upon the work quality in schools of the teaching professionals (opinions regarding the "very important" and "important" interval)

a) open-mindedness and sensitivity to inter-human relations (between 62%-65%), with the indication that the percentage is much lower in the urban environment;

b) professional development possibilities (between 61%-67%);

c) turning individual work to good account (between 58%-69%);

d) working conditions (average of 55%, variation of 53%-67%)

4) The factors that suppress motivation, with a very powerful and powerful impact upon professional satisfaction and performances, reach very low values:

a) financial satisfaction (average 16.4%, with variations between 14%-18%);

b) lack of social prestige in the community (33.5%, with variations from 32% to 36%);

c) stress. With increasing tendencies, (64%-67%) both in the urban, and in the rural environment, especially after the Government's decision to cut down 15000 jobs/staff;

d) the existing bureaucracy of school activities (42.8% on average, but with high variations according to the type of school, school group - 58%, junior school - 40%)

NOTE: The presence of some distribution intervals is due to cutting out from the 5-stage Likert scale only of the values destined for the consideration of the factor as being very important – important for the respondent teachers.

4 Efficiency of managerial processes – the perspective of the obstacle factors

The easiest construction for the understanding of the way in which the value intervals are statistically

distributed (the Likert scale was used in this exercise) can be drawn by analysing the data in Table 4 and 4 b.

The data analysis, be it brief, shows us that the order established by cumulating the percentages reached by indicators 5 and 4 of the scale (to a very high extent and to a high extent) corresponds to the following levels: I – financial problems, 84%; II – organisational, design and planning issues, 50%; III – tensional relations between

school and the families that find themselves in risk situations, 46%; IV – low psycho-pedagogical and practical competence of young teachers, 30% and level V, difficult relations of school managers with the representatives of the local governments (which are politicized in excess).

Table 4.a The distribution of the answers given by school managers in respect to the item "significant obstacles in the school management activities"

BLOCKING FACTORS	5	4	3	2	1
Financial problems (payment, degrees, incentives)	67	17	14	2	-
Organisational problems (fluctuant no. of students/class, degrees etc)	4	46	20	10	20
Relational problems among teachers (school environment, tensions between groups, pressure groups, etc)	3	14	40	20	23
Unruly behaviour of teachers in school	2	13	27	23	35
Unruly behaviour of students in class, in school, outside school	3	13	40	20	24

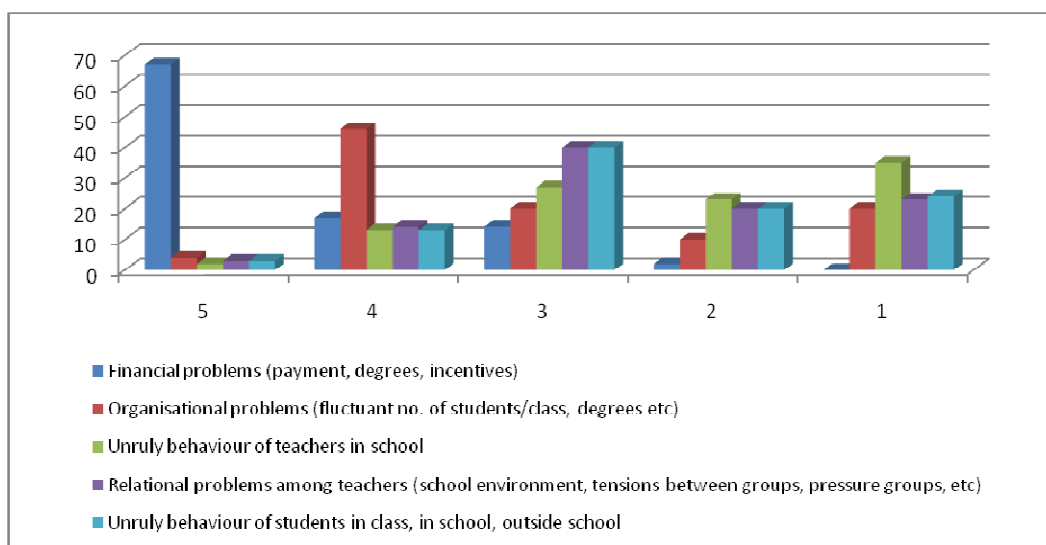
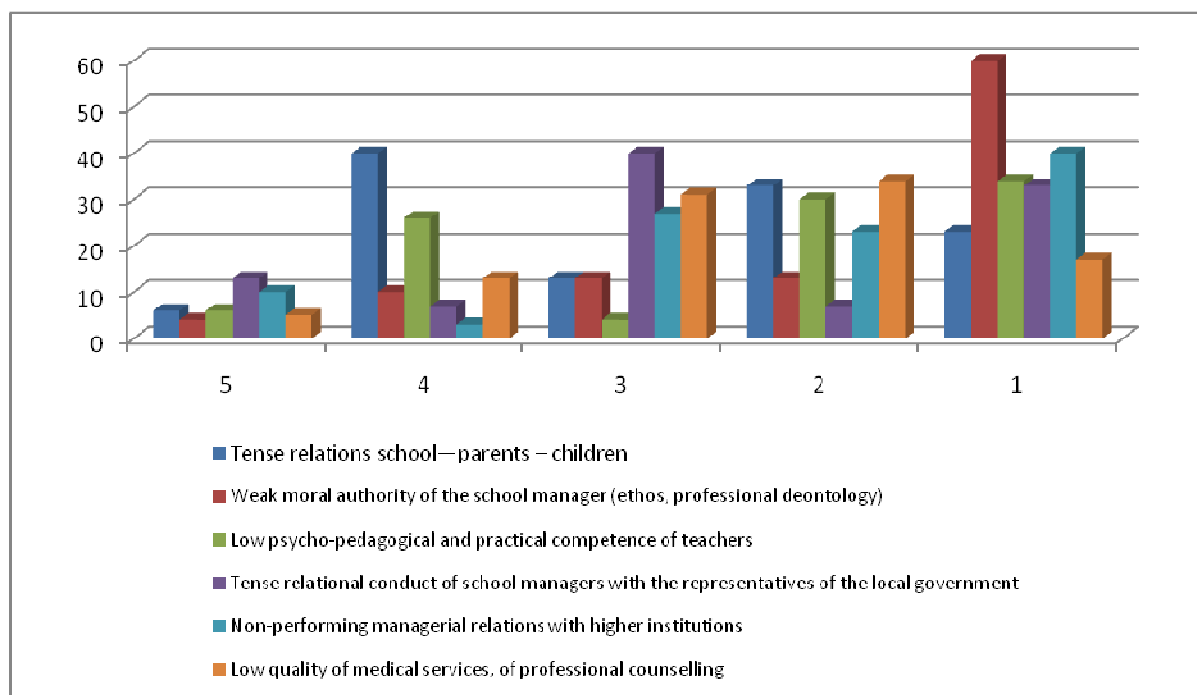


Table 4.b The distribution of the answers given by school managers in respect to the item "significant obstacles in the school management activities"

BLOCKING FACTORS	5	4	3	2	1
Tense relations school—parents – children	6	40	13	33	23
Weak moral authority of the school manager (ethos, professional deontology)	4	10	13	13	60
Low psycho-pedagogical and practical competence of teachers	6	26	4	30	34
Tense relational conduct of school managers with the representatives of the local government	13	7	40	7	33
Non-performing managerial relations with higher institutions	10	3	27	23	40

Low quality of medical services, of professional counselling	5	13	31	34	17
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Scale: 5 - to a very high degree; 4 - to a high degree; 3 - to a relative degree; 2 - to a small degree; 1 - to a very small degree



5 The teaching professionals' perceptions and opinions regarding malfunctions in the selection of personnel

The examination of the annual reports regarding the selection system of teaching professionals, among them also being potential candidates for managers' positions, leads to the identification of a wide range of limits, malfunctions that are invoked both by the teaching professionals, school managers, specialty inspectors and by the system administrators. According to our data and benefiting from the synthesis of the same research document we mentioned, we enumerate, with some alterations, statements that are found in the answers of the teaching professionals.

We mention that the wide range of opinions positively reflects:

- the lack of social fear specific to the whole community of teaching professionals, in advantage as compared to managers, much more prudent, more circumspect from the social, professional and attitude perspective;
- the low consistence of the standards of appreciation, with compensation at the level of personalised expressions;
- the inexistence of a coherent, relevant and consensual model in the field. All these will

represent landmarks in the development of a future conception and strategy.

Among the teaching professionals' significant ideas, it is worth mentioning:

- the focus on the results of the examinations, less on the processes that lead to these results; there occurs, here, a first contradiction between competence defined by the result of learning and the quality of the processes that contribute to the development of the professional-didactic competence;
- the centralization in excess of procedures, bureaucracy, the relatively restricted range of tie-breaking criteria in equal assessments;
- the insufficient relevance of the presence of curricular areas in the structure of the contest programs and especially at the level of inclusion of evaluation tests/papers;
- the lack of the assessing culture of some of the assessors, by the shift from university personnel (university teaching professionals) to the assessment performed by the personnel of pre-university personnel;
- the lack of balance between the constitutive evaluative tests of an examination, the dominant accents being on theoretical knowledge in excess and much less relevance of the topics/themes/items

that have formative value, that can turn to good account the didactic experience of those who could examine the “good practices” of the person examined; the frequent discussion is about the low validity of the tests;

- the absence, on the whole, of skill tests and pedagogical tests, of the combination between the written tests, obvious for some learning and teaching styles, in the total detriment of oral tests, obvious for other learning-teaching styles;
- the lack of correlation between the contents reflected in the syllabuses and those contained in the examination subjects;
- the lack of opportunities that should testify the communication availabilities and capacities, empathy relationship, seen as a constitutive capacity of the pedagogical competence;
- the electronic distribution does not allow the management of the school unit to select those personalities they need, taking into account the combination of some specific criteria, the teaching experience, the specific of the school – technological, humanistic, vocational, special education;
- lack of correlations between the expectations of the teacher and the reality of the school, of which the teacher is sometimes totally unaware of;
- the stressing procedural bureaucracy that adds to the low psychological stress of the examination competition and, sometimes by the lack of skill of those who provide the security in the competition rooms, which produce inhibitions and low-stimulating motivating horizons;
- relatively high transport costs to the examination centres;
- inequality for the competitors from the rural environment (lack of documents, of relevant information, of academic training).

6 Solutions, between project and limitations

The opinion of school managers in Romania referring to the segment we have investigated, which is to be found in many socio-educational research studies and financial policies of the education system, is a critical one, although attitudes can be defined as being constructive, with mobilizing, realist expectations.

The synthesis examination of some potential solutions leads to a set of important and significant landmarks, both for the area of the problems referred to in the hereby research paper, and for the sorting out of some of the critical values of the school managers' evolution in the years to come, years that will imply difficulty in guaranteeing success.

6.1. Decentralising of the system, especially of the decisions at macro, mid and micro-local institutional level.

The diagnostic and the forecast of the existing practices are relatively clear: it is required to cut down the attributes of the central authorities in favour of school institutions and their managers. Explicitly, we have in view: the appropriate correlation of the local needs with the strategy of the financial management, thus providing the data base which should support the infrastructure of a subsystem that is vulnerable from the methodological and informational point of view; the anticipation of the risk factors, especially of the additional ones that occurred as a result of emergency situation decisions, of facing social problems, which led to the reorientation of the initial training profiles, of school drop out that is increasing; careful monitoring of the negative effects generated by the cut down of the number of classrooms, of lay-offs and tensions in the human resources area; the elimination of abuses, of favouritisms; the decrease of the high coefficient of distrust in education institutions, in educators (see also the views of some famous authors, such as Fukuyava, 1995, Putnam, 1993, Gambeta, 2000, Fine, 2000 a.o.). The outcome of the positive expectations of school managers will be significantly highlighted in: the accurate understanding of the meaning of decision-making freedom under conditions of real decentralization; a continuum between constraint (total compulsoriness to total freedom, which bears, however, great responsibility); multiplication of interdisciplinary pragmatic efforts in the field of educational management (economy, demography, sociology, politics, public administration, education, psycho-sociology); creative application of principles (which are present in the educational systems in the USA, Canada, EU or in the emergent countries), equity, compliance with the equal opportunities standards, with the observance of the rights of each child/citizen to good education; carrying out assistance and protection programs for children from risk, underprivileged social and educational environments.

6.2. Undertaking the conception according to which education and the teaching system are profitable, prospective investments.

The solution depends on the macro-political decisions, not on the ones shared by all the politicians of education. Decisive reasons in sustaining such a paradigm-solution belong to two well-known laureates of the Nobel Prize for economy. The first, Theodor W. Schultz (1965), in whose view the investment in human resources has priority as compared to investment in infrastructure, goods and equipments. The second, Gary S. Becker (1967), who considered human capital as the basic

element in the socio-economic analysis of public policies.

6.3. The promotion of an organizational managerial culture, as well as of monitoring resources by means of developing, efficient and effective partnerships at the level of educational(local institutional) micro-policies.

It is worth mentioning: opportunity evaluations, the dominant indicators being not necessarily the competence of econometrics, but especially the qualitative changes. In this case, technical instruments and methods may be the SWOT method, PESTE, Benchmarking, FMEA, Six Sigma-DMAIC/dmadv, the map of educational risks (Markowitz), Value Analysis (L.D. Miles) a.s.o. Positive outcomes at the level of managerial knowledge and practices will be visible in: the optimal use of resources; the stability and credibility of predictive, planning judgements; the dynamics of the strategy of "improvement"; the increase of the satisfaction indicators of the education actors; the increase of the level of values added, as an indicator of efficiency and effectiveness, of the quality of management in education.

6.4. Reshaping of the axiological area and of the professional ethos.

The improvement of the negative states, highly perceived by school managers in critical social-economic and financial conditions, is related to what we can call "the revitalization of the chart of moral values" – features that define their personality, professionalism and educational actions. We have in view: empathy, self-confidence, trust in the power of formal and non-formal education; communication, socio-emotional intelligence; respect for the hierarchical structures oriented towards the education functionality; avoidance of power conflicts; adhesion to social standards; defending the "brand" of successful education; activation of the best perceptive schemes a.s.o. In such a context of values, an efficient managerial style will be developed, based on organisational learning, on the balance of power, on an intelligent management of the resources, including the non-conventional ones (e.g. creativity); predictability, discipline and self-discipline, respect for mutually- advantageous actions; harmony and stability in a "normal, but exigent social order"; intrinsic motivation, etc.

6.5. The development of the efficient and modern educational management standards, in line with the requirements of the risk management present in reforms and crisis situations.

The basic idea of this solution is that of preserving coherence between purpose/objectives/means/resources, be they available or potential. Visibility will be obvious, not necessarily in the investment risk, but in: the validity of the integrating options, minimising risks, maximising advantages, reducing uncertainties and increasing the motivating force of the professional calling, optimizing transactional costs (Coase, 1960), the potential negotiations with unions and groups of interest, with the need to upgrade the optional curriculum or according to the decision of the school board, by ensuring the ethos of the quality of consulting, medical, professional counselling public services etc.

7. Instead of conclusions: managerial-professional expectations

A school manager shall be defined, more and more, by what we call moral commitment in reaching some more ambitious, more comprising social-educational missions/ objectives.

If we accept the idea according to which a school manager also has the status of social leader in a community of parents, students and other interested actors, then the moral commitment defined by Csikszentmihaly as "the long-term devotion to objectives that promote the interests of the community, the people who live in it and humanity, in general" (p.279), it gets predictive importance.

This value is added another value identified by specialists (James și Coleman, 1988) under the name of connection networks built up on the basis of the social capital. From our point of view, it is also added:

- (i) *to the cultural capital;*
- (ii) *to the deontological capital;*
to the capital of hope, of motivations for the managerial profession/function, making the difference between job, career and calling (vocation)
- (iv) *to the capital of availabilities* to work a non-standardized number of hours, by developing a personal discipline with a view to structuring the working day in the education institution, for a new way of thinking the economy of professional and personal time consumption;
- (v) the interrogative capital regarding the capacity to create/discover entrepreneurial solutions required in the education institution area;

(vi) the capital of optimism regarding the unity between formal and non-formal education; we have in view not only a rhetorical optimism, but especially an optimism of fact initiatives, of the flow of positive thinking, professional thinking, embedded into the personality of the successful, efficient educational leadership.

Useful ideas put forward by school managers in Romania nowadays are present in all research studies taken into consideration. It is worth mentioning, and we put forward to the community of managers and to professional associations in the field, the following:

- stability and certified professional competence of public servants and of the managerial personnel in the respective Ministry and in the county school inspectorates;
- access to complementary financing and equity in school financing, as per some transparent criteria, grounded on values that are specific to quality education, education for all and for each and every one;
- separation of politics from school life and schools independence from the pressures of politics or from non-educational ideological parti pris;
- school managers cooperation with, not subordination to, local authorities/municipalities or to counsellors whose views and conceptions are far from the logics of modern education;
- development of modern legislation, functional for the education system of today and of tomorrow;
- real decentralization, not simulated, based on changes in all legislative compartments;
- design, development and application of medium and long term institutional development programs and projects, with real objectives and priorities;
- increase of the role played by the local community in designing the education needs and in the management of the local education system issues;
- increase of the relevance and of the impact of initial training and in-service training programs in the field of management for school managers, as well as of those who can become candidates for such a position which implies a high level of responsibility, nevertheless not

sufficiently stimulating under the conditions of such a crisis whose effects are powerfully felt by educators.

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