

Valuing the educational changes in the Romanian educational system

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Abstract

This research aims to provide an insight into the level of assumption regarding the responsibility of implementing and promoting the educational changes in the Romanian educational system. The diagnosis highlights the need to build an organizational identity, the need for professionalizing the human resources and the orientation towards social values. This research was conducted on a representative sample of teachers in the pre-university education system in the South-East of Romania. It allowed an analysis of the changing phenomenon (of the educational reforms) using scientific methods to obtain information regarding the attitude of the human resource in the educational system towards the educational reform dimensions. This strategy can be considered a support to make the leap to an active portance against educational changes. The respondents realized that, in order to put into practice this goal, the school must activate its mechanisms of strategic management which are meant to lead the educational actors towards a continuously engagement in the development and reconstruction process of school and professionalizing the teaching career.

Keywords: Education, diagnosis, school, reforms.

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1. Introduction

Since 1989, in response to the new challenges of a developing society, the educational system in Romania has gone through many reforms that have affected and changed different fields of activity. During this period, in Romania, the need for freedom of thought and the expression of specific rights of a democratic society were shown. These aspects and the ability to quickly adapt to new change have led to the implementation of a set of reforms in the educational system; this change leading to the Romanian progress in the modern society. The change implied a chain of restructuring and adapting operations, of forming prospective and proactive skills according to the new educational system.

In the wake of the conducted study on a representative sample representing the human resources in the system (teachers, school managers, school inspectors, and students) we can specify that the educational change took place over a period of time, after a regeneration of the mission and practices in schools. It is worth mentioning that diagnoses have to be done in order to determine a reconsideration of the socio-educational relations.

Analyzing the dynamic of implementing the educational changes, as well as the educational resources' attitude towards this process, we need to emphasize that we found that the educational change is much faster if it is done from the inside out. Thus, the educational actors were directly involved in the teaching career professionalization plan as well as in perfecting the school organization. Furthermore, the motivation for change was accepted much easier because the respondents acknowledged the need to change, seeing it as a real potential for development.

The current guidelines for educational reform focus on (European Commission, 2011-2013; OMECTS 6194, 13.11.2012, art.1 al. 2):

1. Compatibility of schooling cycles, modern educational requirements and European Qualifications Framework.

At this level, the school education structure was reorganized comprising: ECD (0-3 years, ante preschool); preschool (3-6 years); the introduction of preparatory class in the primary education; increasing the duration of secondary education to 5 years by introducing preparatory class, whose role is to provide children a year to help them make the transition gradually, in an organized context, from pre-primary or exclusive family life to school; generalizing the 12 form schooling, and increasing the duration of secondary education to 5 years (grades V-IX). All these changes provide continuous, unified and coherent learning pathways.

2. Curriculum modernization and decongestion

The main focus is on improving the curricula. Education Law introduced a curriculum based on the 8 key competences that every individual needs for personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion and entering the labor market.

3. Reorganization of student assessment.

The main changes to this level are: the introduction of educational portfolio (diplomas, certificates) and modifications regarding students' assessment (assessment at the end of the preparatory form and at the end of the second, fourth, sixth and ninth form).

4. Ensuring a higher degree of decentralization, accountability and financing within the system.

It implied a transfer of responsibility towards the managing board of the schools and local authorities.

5. Providing equal opportunities to education for disadvantaged groups. Upgrading technical and vocational education

The aim was to implement programs like "School after school", "Second Chance", so as to equal the access to education and keep at-risk students at school, and prevent early school leaving by attracting them.

6. Reform policies in the human resource field

It was proposed the re-establishment of vocational schools, upper secondary education with technological profile, financing some training programs for those who have interrupted their studies, allowing the acquisition of appropriate qualifications according to the National Qualifications Framework.

7. Fostering lifelong learning

Lifelong Learning Centers were set up by the local authorities to implement community-based policies and strategies in the field of lifelong learning. At present, an intense acceleration of school education reforms was determined in the pre-university educational system.

Strategic objectives set by "Europe 2020" (<http://www.edu.ro>) strategy, requires a high level in terms of the education system quality, chartering to human resources in the education system the change contents providing support, resources and strategies for change.

The study highlights the willingness for change of the respondents who had prior training through proactive skills development and the capacity to adapt to new. The study led to the knowledge of teachers' attitudes, representations and expectations.

During the training program, teachers have solved their socio-cognitive conflicts, have cultivated their adaptive and development capacity, knowledge acquisitions, skills, and have formed favorable attitudes towards change.

The training program counted 240 hours. In the first phase, we found that the attitudes towards educational reform were contradictory or ambivalent. We can say that this ambivalence was present because of the prejudices, beliefs and expectations. To overcome this imbalance and to develop assertive attitude towards change, we determined teachers to realize the need for change and motivational strategies to facilitate the change implementation. Afterwards, we made a comparative analysis of the change referring to the old practices in order to clarify whether the new changes are superior to the old ones. All these allowed the evaluation of changes in relation to performance and efficiency criteria.

Analyzing teachers' availability in promoting the change, I deduced the attitude and valence ascribable to change, and made predictions regarding the involvement in promoting the change. I deduced that the basic condition of motivational strategies leading to the involvement in promoting the educational change is the extent to which teachers perceive it as a possible development both personal and professional.

Therefore, the awareness of the necessity of change and forming proactive and prospective attitudes can be achieved if it creates a cognitive structure based on the informative side. Thus, the individuals involved in this process form their representations, notions and beliefs regarding

the educational change. This is the first step to make them understand the importance and need for educational change.

I have demonstrated that it will reach the conduct if the informal translates into internal motives that will generate affective experiences and attitudes. There will always be a close connection between the cognitive and the affective. The triggered attitudes are: attitudes of acceptance, rejection or ambivalent attitudes. Analyzing the training path for change of the respondents who have participated in this study, I dare to say that the resistance to change can have as a starting point the informal side quality. In our case, this refers to not knowing the change issues and mechanisms or misunderstanding the necessity for change.

Another aspect to be accessed refers to making the respondents overcome some obstacles or misleading representations about new practices. From the observations made, I claim that, at the beginning, a large number of respondents accepted only in theory certain techniques and reforms. Another very important aspect that is worth mentioning, in terms of change, refers to the existence of an "individual cycle of change" (Iosifescu, 2000). The differences are significant, differing from one teacher to another.

Therefore, implementing the change is possible if mentalities, prejudices and stereotypes are processed. It is demonstrated that after this awareness, positive attitude and even ambivalent (bipolar) action, the pro-change conduct can be possible. As a result, we can speak of a participatory, proactive and forward-looking attitude.

In conclusion, the education program for change must be a formative approach, containing an informative side, and long-life forming, so as to realize the advantages, to overcome the outdated mentalities, prejudices and stereotypes in thinking. Thus, one can purchase the concepts leading to change in a right way, so as the new practices be learnt and form prospective and proactive competences as a proper response to the imperative needs of a modern society.

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