

ROMANIAN EDUCATION IN AN EUROPEAN CONTEXT: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, ELITE PERFORMANCES AND FUNCTIONAL DEFICIENCIES

Cristina OTOVESCU¹, Adrian OTOVESCU², Ovidiu Florin TODERICI³

¹Professor PhD, University of Craiova (Romania), E-mail: cristinaotovescu@gmail.com

² Professor PhD, University of Craiova (Romania), E-mail: adiotovescu@yahoo.com

³ Professor PhD, “Aurel Vlaicu” University of Arad (Romania), E-mail: todflorin@yahoo.com

Abstract: *This article is structured in two parts: one approaching the education process in Romania from a theoretical and statistical perspective and another that is based on the results of an empirical research, performed among 423 students, in order to know the extent to which they are integrated in the present higher education environment. Our country has a Strategy for education and professional building for the period 2016-2020 that reflects the requirements of the national context and its links with the normative framework of the European Union. At the basis of this strategy, there is a certain vision that comprises specific objectives and action directions, costs estimations and monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the strategic education programme. Our article underlines the main strategic objectives in the education field, which are being analysed through several administrative indicators. Moreover, it exposes the students' opinions and appraisals, their expectations concerning the teachers, some services of the academic administration, the higher education environment as a whole etc. The field research revealed their intentions about taking a job in the country or abroad, as well as their preferences towards certain professions.*

Keywords: strategic objectives in education, students' elite performances, Romania's depopulation, PISA, functional illiteracy, educated society.

1. Introduction

For a humanist thinker, with authentic axiological beliefs, education and health are special areas of activity and objectives of major interest in any society, so it is the case in Romania. This is because their quality depends specifically the people's lives and the future of territorial collectivities. For other thinkers other values could prevail, such as political power and parties, private economy and profits, beliefs and church, etc.

In our country, the process of education and, implicitly teacher training is organized and monitored by the Ministry of Education and Research, which has elaborated a strategy in this regard, called `The strategy of education and professional training in Romania for the period between 2016-2020 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016). Its purpose is to generate “the development of a professional training which is accessible, attractive, competitive and relevant for the requests of the labour market. The strategy approaches in an integrated manner the education and the initial and continuous vocational training and follow the cycle of public policies 2007-2013 in the domain of human resources development” the way it is mentioned in the Strategy of Minister of National Education (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016: 3). Such a document is according with the requirements, recommendations, principles and measurements laid down with the `Europe Strategy 2020 of the European Committee` which promotes the smart growth, achievable through investments in education, research, sustainable innovation, inclusive growth, focusing on the development of working places and the reduction of poverty (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016: 3). To be noticed is the fact that, in this context, there are special studies in Romania which offer not only a theoretical vision, but also a pragmatic answer regarding the way a strategical profile of a community is built (Hințea, 2015).

This approach is based on the use of many methods of research, such as: literature review, statistical method, comparative analysis, functionalism analysis and the method of opinion inquest based on surveys. A pertinent and unique methodology on planning the strategy on local communities' level, both urban and rural, is met at some famous specialists from university (Hințea, 2015).

2. Main Strategical Objectives in Education

In the actual European context, the EFP Strategy `responds to the global objective of Romania, to reduce the social and economic development discrepancies between Romania and the member states of the European Union`. At the same time, it takes into consideration the national objective for the 2020 horizon from the Nation Strategy of Enduring Development 2013-2020-2030 on the achievement of its average level of performance of the EU in the domain of education and vocational training (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016: 3).

For the period between 2010-2020, the European Strategy 2020 took into consideration a number of 4 priority objectives, which are associated with corresponding targets, therefore:

1. The permanent growth of the employment rate of the population from the groups of age between 20 and 64, from the 62,9% in the moment of the adaption of the EFP Strategy, to the minimum of 75% at the end of the range in 2020, and in Romania the target is 70%, in the same year of reference.

2. The growth to 3% for the money founds of PIB with special destination for research and development.

3. The decrease with 20% of the greenhouse gas emissions simultaneously with the growth of 20% of the renewable energy consumption in the total energy consumed and with a 20% of energetic efficiency, as compared to the year 1990.

4. The diminishing rate of school dropouts (aged 18-24 years old), the target being maximum 10% in the EU, in 2020, comparative to the previous rate in Romania, of 19,3% IN 2010, of 18,1% in 2014, which are the highest rates of school dropout among the other European states. We note that the average rate in the EU 28, of temporarily leave, was at 11,1%, in 2014, and the set target is, as mentioned, of 10% in 2020.

In addition, it is also expected an increase in the share of those in tertiary education from the member states of the European Union, aged between 30 and 34 years old, to 40% in 2020, compared to 37,9%, which was in 2014. Romania registered an ascendent tendency regarding the evolution of this indicator. Therefore, “the share of tertiary education graduates registered a good progress towards the national target, of 26,7% for 2020, growing from 16,8% in 2009, to 25% in 2014. However, a significant gap is found between the values of the indicator on a national level and those at EU 28 level: the European average of 37,9% in 2014, the European target of 40% for 2020” (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016: 7).

A relevant and synoptic image on the strategical objectives and evolution of the specific indicators in the education field and professional development in Romania, derived from the Europe Strategy 2020, we can form based on the data from the table below. These allow a comparative analysis on the 2005-2020 time period.

Table nr. 1: Strategic objectives and targets in the Romanian and EU system of education

Indicator	Unit	Romanian - period of reference							EU Median-28	Romanian target	EU target
		2005	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2014	2020	2020
The rate of early school dropouts	% (18-24 years)	19,6	16,6	19,3	18,1	17,8	17,3	18,1	11,1	11,3	10

The weight of graduation in the tertiary education	% (30-34 years)		11,4	16,8	18,3	20,3	21,7	22,9	25,0	37,9	26,7	40
The percentage rate of the people aged 15 with low reading, Maths and science competences	% (15 year olds)	Reading	-	40,4	-	-	37,3	-	-	17,8	-	15,0
		Mathematics	-	47,0	-	-	40,8	-	-	22,1	-	15,0
		Science	-	41,4	-	-	37,3	-	-	16,6	-	15,0
Adult participation in IPV	% (25-64 years)		1,6	1,5	1,2	1,4	1,2	1,8	1,5	10,6	10	15
Rate of graduate employment (ISCED 3-6)	% (20-34 years)	ISCED 3-8	72,0	77,7	71,2	70,8	70,1	67,2	66,2	76,2	-	82
		ISCED 3-4 6	62,7	69,1	60,8	58,9	59,3	55,0	57,2	70,6	-	-
		ISCED 5-8	84,7	85,9	82,4	81,3	79,0	77,1	74,2	80,9	-	-
Rate of occupation	% (20-64 ani)		63,6	63,5	64,8	63,8	64,8	64,7	65,7	69,2	70,0	75

Source: Eurostat database - update: 12th of October 2015

From the statistical data entered in the table, there is a disappointing conclusion released, that the results obtained by Romanian students, aged 15, to the P.I.S.A. tests, places our 8th grade education on double value compared to the European average regarding low skills, our country situating, from this point of view, on the first to last place among the 28 states of EU. After some assessments, formulated in the public space, Romania would have had in 2018 the weakest results in the last 9 years, to the mentioned evaluation.

The Programme for International Student Assessment, named P.I.S.A., does a standardized evaluation of skills of students aged 15 from the participant countries to this programme, which had been initiated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The first 5 cycles of testing on an international plan took place in the 2000's (in which participated 11 countries), 2003, 2006, 2009 and 2012.

Romania was involved in the International Project P.I.S.A. since September 2000, and the tests from 2012 registered an average of 445 points, while the OECD average was 494 points, and in report with the other 65 participant countries was situated on the 45th position. The applied tests view 3 education fields: reading a text of average length, understanding and discovering main ideas; use of simple elements of mathematical calculus in concrete circumstances and exact sciences – recognizing a correct explanation of a usual scientific phenomenon. The points obtained by the Romanian students indicates a rise in the functional illiteracy in the 2015-2019 time period. That is why their results are important for finding the evolution of accumulated competences and scientific substantiation of policies, on a national and global level, regarding students' education.

We keep in mind that, in essence, the strategic view on the process of education and professional development in Romania has as a general objective the development of a coherent system, flexible and dynamic in this field, permanently capable to adapt itself to the demands of the labour market and requirements of direct benefiteres. It is envisioned, in addition, that in the period of implementing the Strategy, the share of students enrolled in technical and professional education to grow with 10%, expecting a growth with 10% until 2020 in the rate of adult participation in education throughout life as well (compared to the 1,8% in the year

2013). The whole process of education and professional training from Romania is structured and detailed according to the next four strategic objectives:

1. "Improving the relevance of the training systems in the labour market", by reaching the target growth of rising the rate of youth employment, aged from 20 - 34 years old (outside the system of education) from 57.2% in 2014 to 63% until 2020;

Examining the statistic information leads us to the following conclusion: "The greatest opportunities of employment in Romania will need qualifications from an inferior level, that is ISCED 97 levels 1 and 2. Despite all these, there will be a significant number of employment opportunities which require higher qualifications, that is ISCED 97, level 5 and 6." (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016)

2. "The growth of participation and facilitation access to the professional training programs", having as strategic points: the growth of the students' GPA from technological and professional high school at 60%, in 2020, compared 49.8%, in the year 2014, as well as the rate of participation with 10 % of adults in the teacher's training programme;

3. "Enhancing the quality of professional training", first of all by touching the next strategic target: reducing the rate of school dropouts in the technological and professional high school from 4.2 % in 2014, at 2% in 2020 and the growth of those promoted in the Baccalaureat exam from the 45% in the year 2014 to 60% in the year 2020. Therefore, we can conclude that in order to achieve a high level of performance and efficiency in its activity, the teacher must develop during the initial psycho-pedagogical training a wide range of skills that would harmonize to every real pedagogical situation. In this direction, a responsible and effective teacher cannot go below the required standards imposed by the professionalism (Balaş and Bran, 2014).

4. "The developing of innovation and national cooperation in the teacher training area", achievable objective by assuming two strategic targets: a) increasing the number, from 40,000 in 2014, the 50,000 in 2020 - which would participate at different programs of innovation and training of antreprenorial spirit; b) by training the students in the programmes of international mobility - from 2,800 in the year 2014 to 4,600 in the year 2020 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2016: 21-22)

Each strategic objective is met by formulating some right directions of action to meet it, by specifying the specific actions, administrative indicators of performance, the institutions which are responsible or the deadline. It has also estimated a total cost of implementing EFP Strategies from the 2016 - 2020, which has risen to 1.8 billion lei, this being cut down in specific spendings for each direction of action. As the main sources of financing the following aspects were considered: Structural European Funds of Investment, Regional Operational Program (for construction, rehabilitation and modernization of the educational infrastructure), the National Program of Rural Development, Competitivity Operational Program and Administrative Capacity Operational Program.

Implementing the EFP Strategy has a monitoring mechanism which assures the control and permanent evaluation of the way in which the the objectives are met and the directions of actions, the performance indicators which were met, etc.

3. Major aspirations and concrete performances of the Romanian students

The following questions are often asked when we talk about students during their school preparations. They are connected with: *What I know? How much I know? What can I do? Which place does it occupy in an international hierarchy?*

We will try to offer some immediate answers, taking into account the following indicator which we have in pur analysis: 1. the results obtained by the Romanian students in the international competitions and evaluations; 2. the results of applying the P. I. S. A testing at the fifteen year old students and 3. the opinions and the students' appreciation about their professional career.

3.1. Olympiads and the students' elite performances

Despite the deficiencies and shortcomings they face at an institutional level, pre-university students participate at various national, regional, international and global Olympiads. These Olympiads mobilize them to learn as well as possible and help them adapt to the competitive environment, to know their potential value, to organize and direct their own intellectual, volitional and emotional resources. A special significance has the enrolment of young Romanian students at international Olympiads, where they have constantly obtained remarkable results.

The Romanian Olympians Gala, organized and held annually at an official level, proves that we have constant winners at various international competitions and awards that put our country on the world's map, which strengthens the fame of Romanian schools and trains students' creative intelligence. At the last edition of the Gala, on the 7th of December 2019, a top list of our Olympians stood out, registering a total number of 200 awards, for the exceptional results obtained by students at international and regional school Olympiads. They were trained by about 200 teachers from schools across the country. We note that 174 prizes were won at international Olympiads and competitions in various school subjects.

Romania's Government rewarded, through the Ministry of Education and Research, a number of 163 students who obtained 61 medals, awards and mentions at 14 international Olympiads, as well as another 37 students participating at the 26 regional inter-country competitions, in various school subjects, who won 139 medals, awards and mentions (Ministry of Education and Research, 2019).

Despite the results obtained by students in the P.I.S.A. standardized assessment, which were considered too weak or unsatisfactory, there are still countless cases of Romanian students enjoying international fame, due to their intelligence and brilliant results at competitions held in various parts of the world. Thus, for example, our students brought Romania to the leading places at the International Olympiad in Yakut, Russia, in July 2018. We note that a number of 12 Romanian high school students won as many gold and silver medals in mathematics, computer science, physics and chemistry competitions, where they had to face 200 students from 24 countries of the world. Also, the Romanian team at the XXIX edition of the International Biology Olympiad, which took place in Tehran, in the capital of Iran, between July 15-22 2018, was also on a leading place. They won a silver and three bronze medals, with over 280 competitors from 70 countries taking part in the competition. We emphasize that Romania has taken part in this biology Olympiad since 1997 and has been constantly on the podium of the laureates.

Elite students have, through their exceptional results, a considerable impact on the image of the school they come from, on the teaching staff and on the behaviour of other colleagues who can motivate or inspire them to perform better in school, as far as they consider teaching a priority and essential for their future development. Some Romanian Olympians have also received requests for collaboration with famous companies around the world, including certain NASA services in the US, who have intuited their creative and intellectual potential and the contribution they can make to scientific and technical progress.

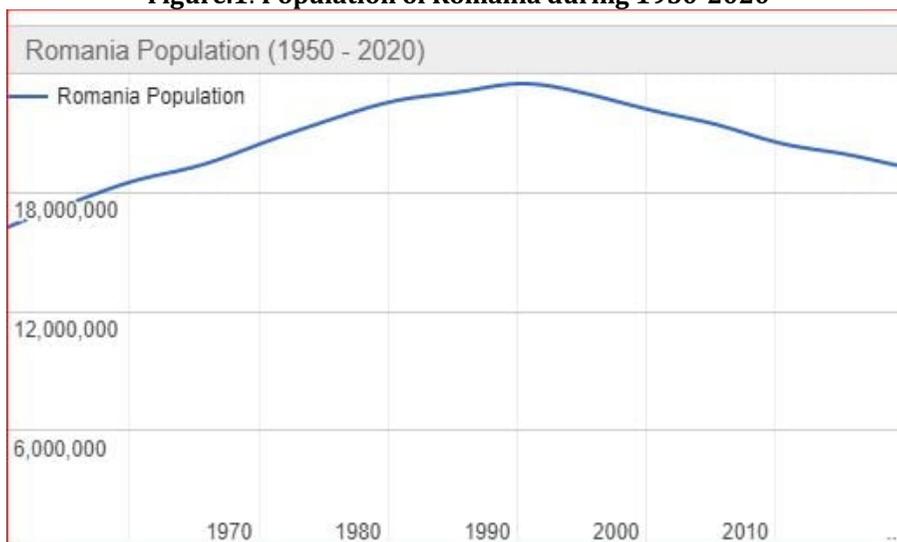
3.2. The Six Great Issues of Pre-university Education in Romania

The admirable learning results of some Romanian students and their international recognition coexist with the lacking and mediocre results of others, whose share is a considerable one, as the application of the P.I.S.A. tests proves, with the faults and disfunctionalities which are met on the scale of the entire education system. From the category of the above, we list the following, without the intention of ranking them:

1. The inability of self-reproduction with the same rhythm the scholar population. After 1990, the population of Romania entered in a process of permanent decline, which also left its mark on the amount of students. The continuous decline of scholar population and the closing of some

schools and didactic norms is a phenomenon which escalated especially in the rural area. Here, there was recorded in 2017, for instance, according to the National Statistics Institute's data, a population reduction to the total of 2.269 countryside localities, strongly affecting the perpetuation process of countryside communities. According to the latest statistics, registered with the support of the UN, the current population of Romania, on the 4th of March 2020, consisted of 19.237.691 people, representing 0.25% of the world population and having a medium age of 43,2 years. Over a half of these, which means 54,6%, were listed as living in urban communities, and 45,4% were living in the countryside.

Figure.1: Population of Romania during 1950-2020



Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/romania-population/>

In the last three decades, the population of Romania decreased with no less than 4.239.523 people, which means from 23.489.260 people, as there were in 1990, representing a demographic boom, down to 19.249.737 people in May 2020. Simultaneously with the general decrease of population, the number of teenagers has also decreased in Romania, thus reducing the number of school-aged population (6-18 years old), from year to year, a process which shall carry on in the following decades as well.

The information published by the National Statistics Institute and Eurostat shows us that along the period of 15 years (2002-2018), the educational system in Romania has lost approximately 1,3 million students, as a result of low fertility and birth rate, of mass departure across the border, which have produced a veritable demographic crisis in our country. If in 2015 scholar population aged between 6 and 18 years old was made out of 2.774.825 youngsters, later it came to decrease year after year, the prognosis made by the Eurostat highlighting a reduction of 831.091 youngsters by the year 2080. So, this equals a diminution of scholar population of 30% compared to 2015, a percentage which also reflects the degree of student number and labor force volume decrease.

The results of the calculations show that in 2015, all age groups had over 200.000 people each. The current demographic prognoses emphasize that in the period of 65 years, the number of people for each age group shall decrease under 150.000 people.

2. The inability of the Romanian state to provide to all schools in the country the comfortable, civilised material conditions of education. This deficiency generally leads to a not too attractive school vibe as well, where children do not come to learn because they enjoy it, which is the reason why there are recorded lacking study results and a high scale of school dropout. The "Education and Formation Monitor" for 2019 highlights that the early abandonment of school

(18-24 years old) indicates a percentage of 16.4% of young Romanians, compared to an average of UE students of 10.6%, and the number of superior study graduates (30-34 years old) is 24.6% for Romania, while the average on European scale is 40.7%.

3. The decrease in the quality of preparing students on a massive scale, which has led to the amplification of the functional illiteracy phenomenon. In the international Report of the Cooperation and Economic Development Organization (OECD), published on the 3rd of December 2019, the knowledge capacity and the intelligence resources of students from 170 countries of the world have been put to a test. As it is known, the aim is the discovery of some relevant data, based off of which the politics in the domain of education can be elaborated on a worldwide scale.

The results of Romanian students from 8th grade, at the P.I.S.A. assessment in 2018, have produced specific disappointing reactions among some specialists and some mass communication means. It is to be noted that the performance of students between 15-16 years old, from the compulsory education, were measured through report to a grid consisting of 6 levels of competence, which were applied in relation with 3 testing domains (reading/lecture, mathematics and science).

PISA evaluation from Romania was done in 170 schools and revealed that over half of the students met at level 2 of competence, it being one of the basic and necessary ones at all the three tests: reading - 59.2 % of applying calculus to a concrete situation - 53.4% and of recognising the concrete explanation of some usual scientific phenomenon - 56%.

According to some appreciation, the results obtained by the Romanian students are the weakest from 2009 backwards, although, in comparison, the statistic differences are not major, which situated our country on the 47th place from 79 countries and having a functional illiteracy rate among 44% of the students. Accordingly, such results are not “disastruous” as it has been said in the public space, but they are similar to those of the students from other countries such as Bulgaria, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro and the United Arab Emirates. Consequently, certain excessive critics and negative appreciation generalized at the Romanian system of education seem as unfounded and unrealistic.

A great system of education needs material, financial and human resources. But, as a man from Romania who has been living in the United States of America since 1985, person with great knowledge of the system of education from that country, the budget is important for the school but it is not decisive. According to the data which it offered, New York had a very high budget for education in the year 2017 of 25 billion dollars, that is, \$25.199 for each student (the national mean being \$12.021 for each student), but the results were not as the money invested because only 46.7% of the students from 3rd grade to the 8th grade in New York City passed English and only 42% in Maths. The scholar system of Baltimore is the third in the country for annual spending for each students with \$ 14.848. Despite all these, thirteen school from the city have reported 0 percent in passing grade at Maths for the students in the fifth to eighth grade. The lack of insufficient financial resources is disastrous.” (Pătrășconiu, 2020).

In the top of P.I.S.A ranking in Europe were the students in Estonia which took first place in Reading, Maths and Science. Worldwide, however, Estonia came 4th in science, 5th in Reading and 8th in Maths which clearly states the proficiency of the Estonian students and the efficiency of the system of education from this country. This is the result of some inspired educational policies, set up on the organic link between students, teachers and parents on fundamental values. In the top 10 ranking at P. I. S. A. there are countries like Canada, Finland, Iceland, South Korea, Poland, Sweden, New Zealand, The United States and Great Britain.

The analysis of the participating countries in the P.I.S.A test shows that neither the students from other states do not rise to the expected standards. Thus, it has been acknowledged that out of seventy- nine participating countries only twenty states have discovered top students of 10 %. This fact explains and reflects the difference from the results of the elite target group and the rest of the students.

4. The growth of illiteracy among the youth and in the society, in general, following the growth of the number of those early school dropouts and those forced to work for a living and the undervalue of the diploma given by the institutions of education. These only give the right to have a profession, not necessarily the right qualification for it, the competences which the graduate has.

The statistics given by the Romanian National Institute of Statistics for the year 2015 shows that in this year the number of illiteracy people rose to 245,487 people but the great population went through the four levels of education, according to the data of the National Institute of Statistics :

1. College– 2.263.978 people;
2. High school – 4.390.759 people;
3. Secondary– 4.868.213 people;
4. Primary – 2.556.286 people.

Romania is, next to Spain and Malta in the category of countries which early school dropouts for the youth aged between 18 and 24 years old is the highest while the European mean is 10.7%. The degree of instruction of youth aged between 20 to 24 is 79.9% which is well below the European mean which is 83.1%. The weigh of people with superior education is 25.6% which is well below the European mean which is 39.1%.

5. The escalating of violence in education, together with the weakening of the teacher’s moral and social values who cannot control the daredevil attitude and the aggressive behaviour of some students or their swear language.

6. Perpetuating the mechanic methods of teaching and learning which place emphasis on memorizing and reproducing the things they have studied not on thinking and creativity. Thus, it is encouraged the traditional models of interaction between the teachers and the students, based on teaching and not on understanding, on cohesion and dependence, not on association and free cooperation, on volunteer motivation of teaching the students. The style of learning is based on memorisation, and it is often associated with the theoretical character of the secondary education and especially the highschool education which is found in college, too. The excess of abstract and irrelevant information, in practice, the exaggerated numbers of classes, the students’ difficulty in valuing their skills in certain subjects fuels their lack of interest for the study. This is often translated with many absences and, in the end, drop-outs.

5. Opinions and appreciations of students about their own professional career

The examination and appreciation of students was made from information gathered after sociologic research which took place in 12 universities of Universities from Craiova, in the summer of 2019. The investigation looked into an opinion poll that was delivered to 423 students from a bachelor’s degree, from all studying ages. The result showed a sample of 3 and the poll was filled face to face from universities with technic profile, economic, juridical, social science and science, agriculture, horticultural, theological etc. (Otovescu and Otovescu, 2019)

The resulted data shows that students are preoccupied, in most cases, about reading texts in books (57,2% form the total), on the internet (33,2%) and from other sources (6,6%). Books are read frequently by 25% of students, 11,3% only read in weekends and 22,1% read “rarely”. The majority of those interviewed, 58,5% prefer physical books, meanwhile 41,3% prefer electronic format, this option will be kept in the future, they say. To remember that 76,6% of students read at home and 14,3% read at a library (Otovescu and Otovescu, 2019).

Most of the students, about 58%, are happy about the student life and the overall environment they live in, but they would like the learning areas to be better equipped and restored (9%), the schedule to not be so full (7,1%), information at some classes to be better summarised (4%) and to have more practising hours over theory learning (Otovescu and Otovescu, 2019).

The relationship between students is characterised trough “being close to each other and cooperating” (82,6%) same as the interactions with the teachers, in general, a psychosocial

climate of communication (66,5%), but over a quarter of students, told us that for some teachers there are relationships of “coldness and indifference” (26,5%), and wishing that teachers would be closer to them and adopt a more attractive style of teaching (11,3%), to be less “exigent” (5,3%) etc. Other sociological research show us that teachers also engage with the “lack of interest” of students, with “bad preparation for exams and seminars” (16,4%). The principles and values that guide the teachers in their relation with students are, from what they say, “Fairness and objectivity”, “seriousness” and “moral values” (Otovescu and Otovescu, 2019).

For the university community, the expectations of the students are tightly related to getting more practice in their professional training program, (21,4% of students), laboratories being better equipped (5,2%), a not so overfilled schedule (4,9%), in order to have more free time for individual learning. Secretarial services of universities were positive appreciated, in general and 21,1% of students rated them with 8,9 and 10 marks.

So, we can talk about an active and responsible integration of students in the university environment from Craiova and in the local community, shown by the high interest in studying and improvement of the educational program, functional relationships that they have with the classmates, the teachers and the administrative team from the institution, the intention of perusing the profession in their home city – 49,3%

On the other side, from a recently transitional study, coordinated by a team from Universitatea de Vest from Timișoara named Wellness-Skills for a true well-being, shows that teachers who works with adult population, the majority of students, are confronting multiple stressful situations. Among other things, teachers complained about the difficulty of coping with negative emotions and the lack of effective methods of coping with stress (Goian, 2014).

The same project aims to equip both teachers and students with the necessary skills to be able to monitor their level of well-being, stress level, and its causes, and then learn to better manage them through the skills offered by workshops specially designed for this purpose (Vintilă and Vintilă, 2013).

About 19% of the students participating in the opinion poll stated that, after graduating they expect to find a job outside Romania. Indicating the following countries: Germany, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, France, USA, etc. . The desired jobs are related to the acquired professional skills: engineer, teacher, software expert, biologist, entrepreneur, archeologist, chemist coach, politician, geographer, manager in economics, etc. (Otovescu and Otovescu, 2019)

It is very important for young students, the emerging social media context awareness competency refers to a new emerging skill regarding the trust load people give to a specific social media context they encounter. Since it is an emergent competence, it cannot be understood as standalone. If the digital context would not be available, we would not develop such a competence. Being a competence, it must be defined by three core elements: Knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Rad et al, 2020).

6. Conclusions

The education system is designed to run unitary and extended throughout society, at the national level. Therefore, the quality and effectiveness of any national education system looks like a society as a whole, it is a true mirror of the level of development and organization of society. After 1990, Romanian education underwent continuous reforms, as did the whole society, which led to innovative changes, favourable to the synchronization with the requirements of European general education, but also to certain undesirable consequences, certain imbalances and dysfunctions, which could be prevented by elaboration of impact studies. The excessive pace of change could be observed from the series of ministers and school unit managers to compulsory education programs and disciplines, student assessment systems, school year organization, national and baccalaureate exams, etc. If we consider the ministers of national education, we find that there was almost one, on average, each year, from 1990 to 2020, each with their own ideas, more or less controversial, advancing their own measures or

their own vision of the school. Romanian. In the last year alone, 2019, there were 3 ministers of education.

Under this sign, of changes at any cost and not always well enough prepared, was also the National Education Law of 2011, which was subject to numerous amendments, so that it does not even resemble the original version voted in Parliament, evading even some principles of democratization of the national public education system. Education in a society always needs unity and stability, for the instruction and education of pupils and students, it takes place in successive and organically related stages, it needs fundamental knowledge for the knowledge of the world and the formation of professional culture.

Despite the actual deficiencies and operating limits, the pre-university education in our country represents, on its assembly, not only an indispensable training framework for qualified staff or professional skills, but also a recognized one for the functioning of economic activities in Romania and in other countries, especially in Europe. This can be explained why Romanian Olympic women won 200 awards and distinguished at international competitions in 2019, why more than 5 million Romanians managed to find work abroad, most of them being 20-50 years old. Their basic school education received in Romania, their learned professions and higher education completed in their mother country provided them with the skills needed to engage in a free and competitive labour market, from Europe and other continents of the world. In the USA and Canada alone there are currently about 1,2 million Romanians working in various fields of activity. Italy absorbed more than 1,3 million Romanian immigrants, Spain – over 1 million, Britain – around 800.000 (Otovescu, 2017).

The experience of the last year, the pandemic, shows us imported to the involvement of parents in the educational process of children and has evoked how little they are equipped with the ability to help their children. In this respect, the results of a 2019 study show the usefulness of parents' advisers to increase their ability to decide and actively intervene in meeting the needs of the child (Goian, 2019). The values which the students take into account when referring to the educational process are: respect for the work of others, honesty and equal opportunities, personal involvement and accountability. In this respect, university teachers must ensure a teaching process defined by cooperation and value-based approach to activities, as a basis for training future citizens and professionals on the labour market (Țîru, 2014: 342).

Higher education needs to spend more hours on professional practice, specialized student experience and adapt it to the formation of high-class specialists in multiple fields capable of technical and social innovation, controlling national and global economic processes. A curriculum sizing is justified both by the evolution of scientific and technical knowledge and by changing labor market needs, and this can be done in line with employers' feedback, which is a very serious rebuchant of new aspects of the labor market (Trancă, 2015). For example the students of Craiova are fully integrated into the university and local Community, with almost half of them wanting to work in their hometown after they have completed their studies. They appreciate both their teachers' moral qualities (goodness, kindness, humor, patience, sincerity, fairness, etc. - 26,1%), as well as intellectual and pedagogical qualities (intelligence, level of knowledge or competence, talent in teaching, elevated language, interactive style, etc. – 10,2%). At the same time, they reject the teachers' indifference toward students, the severe attitude in assessment at exams, the obsolete and monotonous teaching style, arrogance and excessively high expectations (Otovescu and Otovescu, 2019: 18-20). As for teachers, the Welnes-skills for a true well-being project highlighted the usefulness of workshops in the following directions: Stress and health, self-esteem and self-presentation, communication and relationship. These have proven the directions in which teachers feel the greatest need for support and which, once addressed, would increase the ability of teachers to cope with the results of working with students (Vintilă and Vintilă, 2013).

References:

1. Balaş E. and Bran C. (2014). *The Q-sort technique used in identifying the level of methodological skills of the prospective teachers– Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Elsevier Ltd.
2. Goian, C. (2014). Transnational wellbeing analysis of the needs of professionals and learners engaged in adult education. *Procedia-Social and behavioral sciences*, 142: 380-388.
3. Goian, C., (2019), Parents counseling for improving the capacity of socialization of their preschool children. *Journal Plus Education*, 25(2): 122-131.
4. Hîntea, C. E. (2015). Cum se construiește profilul strategic al unei comunități. *Revista Transilvană de Științe Administrative*, 17(37): 101-119.
5. Ministry of Education and Research. (2016). *Strategia educației și formării profesionale din România pentru perioada 2016-2020 (Strategia EFP)*. [online] available at: https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/fi%C8%99iere/Minister/2016/strategii/Strategia_VET%2027%2004%202016.pdf
6. Ministry of Education and Research. (2019). *Comunicat de presă*. [online] available at: <https://www.edu.ro/comunicate-de-pres%C4%83?page=57>
7. Otovescu, A. (2017). *Conservarea identității culturale în mediile de imigranți români din Europa*. 2nd edition revised and added. Bucharest: Academiei.
8. Otovescu, A. and Otovescu, C.. (coord). (2019). *Cunoașterea consumului cultural, a preferințelor de petrecere a timpului liber, a opiniilor și așteptărilor studenților*. Research Report. Craiova: University of Craiova.
9. Pătrășconiu, C. (2020). Reflecțiile și aprecierile lui Martin S. Martin despre educația din SUA. *Ramuri*, no.4.
10. Rad, D., Balas, V., Lile, R., Demeter, E., Dughi, T., & Rad, G. (2020). Statistical Properties of a New Social Media Context Awareness Scale (SMCA)—A Preliminary Investigation. *Sustainability*, 12(12), 5201.
11. Spînu C.I., and Otovescu D. (coord.). (2017). *Monografia Universității din Craiova. Șapte decenii de învățământ superior (1947-2017)*. Bucharest: Academiei Române.
12. Țîru, C. (2014). Approaching the educational values of the students at university level (2014). *Journal Plus Education*, 10(1): 336-343.
13. Trancă, L. M. (2015). Die professionelle Ausbildung von Sozialarbeitern in Rumänien. Sagebiel, J., Muntean, A., Sagebiel, B.(Hg.) *Zivilgesellschaft und Soziale Arbeit. Herausforderungen und Perspektiven an die Arbeit im Gemeinwesen in Rumänien und Deutschland*. Munchen: AG SPAK Bucher: 254-274.
14. Vintilă, M., & Vintilă, S. D. (2013). The Stress of Managing Wellbeing. *Anale. Seria Științe Economice. Timisoara*, 19, 773.
15. Vintilă, M., & Vintilă, S. (2015). The impact of workshops on stress and health on the level of wellbeing of adults involved in learning activities. *Romanian Journal of School Psychology*, 8(16): 56-69.
16. ***https://ec.europa.eu/romania/news/20190926monitorul_educatiei_formarii_2019_ro
17. *** <https://www.edupedu.ro/grafic-populatia-de-varsta-scolara-din-romania-va-sca-dea-cu-30-pana-in-anul-2080-dupa-anul-2050-scaderile-se-atenuaza-potrivit-eurostat>
18. ***<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/romania-population/>