

THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUALS FORMAL EDUCATION ÎN THE CURRENT CENTURY

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***Abstract:** Lack of education generates unfathomable repercussions both on the individual and on the society. A State spends more money on an uneducated person than on a person that has benefited of educational services, regardless of the level graduated. A piece of information that is valid today and which we can test, might be outdated after a while, and this highlights the fact that a man should not stop his educational process as soon as he finishes his high school or university studies but should remain forever connected to what is new. Education is a topic arousing the interest of many specialists, yet also the priority axis of the European strategies. The novelty brought by the present paper is that beside a solid conceptual approach we have also realized a research based on a survey approached from two perspectives (the perception of present beneficiaries of formal education and the perception of people who finished their studies). The general conclusion of the paper is that a society without educated people is an endangered society.*

***Keywords:** education, formal education, life-long learning.*

***JEL Classification:** J20, J21.*

1. Introduction

In a 21st century society permanently evolving from the perspective of the Communications and Information Technology, education represents the most important step that people take in order to adapt to the changes occurred in the environment. In order for the young man of today to become an important person for the society, it is fundamental that among the values instilled in him there should also be the desire for continual knowledge acquired by education received in the family, in educational institutions, and also non-formally.

We shall start by presenting several advantages of the individual benefiting of the educational process, namely of education: he has the capacity of discerning good from evil; obtains, by education, skills allowing him to manage on his own; becomes independent and does not allow those around him to manipulate him because he benefits of various pieces of information. An inefficient time management by the people and also their indifference are factors that make them not get involved in their children's education and attribute this task exclusively to school. The lack of interest manifested lately by the individuals regarding education is also the result of the existing educational gaps: small budget allocated for education, lack of interest from certain teachers and insufficient endowments.

2. Conceptual approach

We are nowadays assaulted by pieces of information that either remain recorded in order to be or not to be used at some point, or follow the natural cycle of transformation into knowledge (they are decoded, assimilated, transformed and integrated in the already existing system of knowledge). Education has been analyzed in the framework of both national and international literature. Many scientists have endeavored to promote education, and among them there are: Nelson Mandela and Confucius. The first considered that the world can change through education, while the latter highlighted that lifelong learning never killed anyone.

Education is a way in which an individual can obtain knowledge, habits and skills. Knowledge can be classified by relating it to two terms: explicit knowledge and tacit

knowledge. Explicit knowledge, in point of information, is information assimilated that can be noticed and accessed by other people. Tacit knowledge, very personal and hard to formalize, represents that hidden, intangible fund of information, experiences, values, internal reflections, belonging to and accessed only by the individual himself.

Education represents a means of development of the needs of and interest in cultural values, because it corresponds to the orientation of human preferences and inclinations and because it makes our life more colorful and valuable, addressing the entire evolving being, therefore “it represents the unity between educational processes and life” (Jinga I, 1997). The strategic framework for European cooperation in the domain of education and professional training aims to support the EU member states in the development of their national systems of education and training, including by making available to them lifelong learning initiatives offering to all the members of the society the necessary means to attain their potential. This framework establishes a criterion of reference, namely that until 2020, on average, at least 15 % of the adults aged between 25 and 64 should participate to lifelong learning process. What matters most is the quality of education defined by the level of knowledge and skills obtained by the pupil or student (Craig, 2009).

The education of the 21st century concerns the complex training and development process by the improvement of the performances of each of us. The educational reform in Romania highlights the importance of shifting the accent from the informative side of the education process to its formative side, still lacking so much until recently. In this way, it has been ignored that the cognitive side of the person should be harmonized to the affective, attitudinal and behavioral one. In such an educational framework, the pupil is dealt with as if he were a "vessel" meant to receive information and to a lesser extent a real person, with individuality and emotional reactions determined by the tribulations of an evolving personality (Brown, 2006).

The pupils of the present society rely not just on the traditional forms of education (formal, informal and nonformal) but also on education on their own (self-education). This capacity of independent learning is essential for their future as it generates welfare (Lombardi, 2007).

Authentic learning aligns the way the human mind transforms information into useful, transferable knowledge. Authentic learning can rely on the educational software developed to simulate typical scenarios met in the real world settings. Along with communication tools, these online experiences often integrate intelligent tutoring systems, conceptual mapping, immediate feedback and reflection opportunities, including the possibility of rendering the events recorded and of adopting alternative ways of making decisions.

3. Analysis of the perception on formal education in the 21st century

This research is approached from two perspectives:

1. The perspective of the present beneficiaries of formal education;
2. The perspective of the persons who at present are no longer beneficiaries.

Methodological framework of the research

Aim of our research: analyzing the perception concerning the formal education of the present century.

Objectives of our research:

- identifying the extent to which pupils see in their teachers role models;
- finding out the pupils' attitude regarding the authoritarian managerial style adopted by the teachers;
- observing the extent to which teaching is focused on the pupil;

-identifying the Romanians' trust in universities.

Hypotheses:

1. Unanimously, teachers are perceived by pupils as role models;
2. Most of the pupils consider that the teachers' managerial style is authoritarian;
3. In general, pupils come up with questions and answers during the class;
4. Romanians trust the formal education realized in universities.

First approach

Analysis of secondary school pupils on formal education

We handed out a questionnaire to the 8th grade pupils of the Primary and Secondary School "Mihai Viteazul" (No.8) of Târgovi te to observe their perception regarding formal education. The sample was made up of 30 pupils – representing the class; this sample was not chosen randomly, but relied on the one hand on the fact that they obtained the best average marks on the level of their school, and on the other hand they are also at the last stage of development and training in school. This analysis was realized to highlight the role of the teacher in the educational act from the perspective of its beneficiaries.

In order to obtain some pertinent results for the research, we started from the diagnosis of the class representing the very sample of our research.

Table no. 1. SWOT analysis of the 8th grade from the Primary and Secondary School "Mihai Viteazul" of Târgovi te

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Openness of the class master to dialogue in order to maintain a continuous partnership with the pupils' parents;</p> <p>Qualified human resources -of the highly qualified titular teaching staff of over 80% of the total teaching staff;</p> <p>For pupils with special educational demands, there are teachers with special skills meant to assure a better integration;</p> <p>The classroom is endowed with resources belonging to the Information and Communication Technology;</p> <p>The average of the class at the disciplines studied was 9.20;</p> <p>Diplomas and prizes received by the pupils during the olympics of informatics, the olympics of technology, and also in sport contests;</p> <p>Attentive monitoring and surveillance by the class master of the pupils' school situation;</p> <p>The whole class together with the class master participate each year at the programme Eco-school.</p>	<p>Poor administration of the material assets in class;</p> <p>Lack of interest of some teachers regarding personal and professional development;</p> <p>Manifestation of a superficial behavior of weight the class towards young teachers;</p> <p>The use in a low proportion, by the teachers, of the teaching-learning focused on the pupil;</p> <p>The small number of extracurricular activities in which parents are involved;</p> <p>Poor involvement of teachers and pupils in international projects;</p> <p>The school offer does not meet the needs of all the pupils;</p> <p>Insufficient development of team work.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>The presence of school guards maintains a constant state of security;</p> <p>The experience exchange between the pupils of the class and those of "Coresi" School of Târgovi te, but also between the teachers;</p> <p>The possibility of benefiting of European funds to rehabilitate the classroom;</p> <p>The partnership with the Police, Gendarmery, General Public Health Directorate, Town Hall;</p> <p>The present technical means can be used to improve the teaching and self-teaching process, through the improvement of the presentation, the</p>	<p>Moral depreciation of ICT resources and appearance of new ones with higher performances;</p> <p>Negative influences from the entourage;</p> <p>Migration of the pupils towards other classes from school;</p> <p>Transfer of pupils to other schools, where there is an educational offer corresponding to their needs and also to their parents' needs;</p> <p>The economic situation of the country has repercussions on the labor market – labor force migration;</p> <p>Inefficient time management and ignorance generate</p>

reduction of the transmission time, improved communication between teacher and pupil, increased number of sources of information and documentation	lack of pupils-parents partnerships; The great expectations of the parents and of the community concerning the pupils' capabilities generate stress; Increased juvenile delinquency for urban dwellers aged up to 15; Mutations in the socio-cultural environment;
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4. Research results

1. Present your opinion regarding the following statement: Are my teachers my mentors?

Table no. 2. The teacher having the quality of mentor

Answer	Number	Procent
a) Total agreement	2	7
b) Agreement	20	67
c) So and so	8	26
d) Disagreement	0	0
e) Total disagreement	0	0
Total	30	100

Criterion score = $(5*2+4*20+8*3)/30$, Criterion score = 3.80. According to this criterion, the respondents present Agreement regarding this statement.

The manifestations related to the teacher's interest in the realization of the training process centered on the pupils are partly determined by the results of the class

Table no. 3. Instructive-formative process centered on the pupils

Criterion score = $(5*2+4*8+3*20)/30$, Criterion score = 3.4. The result of this criterion

Answer	Number	Procent
a) Total agreement	2	7
b) Agreement	8	26
c) So and so	20	67
d) Disagreement	0	0
e) Total disagreement	0	0
Total	30	100

highlights the fact that the respondents present neither agreement, nor disagreement concerning the above-mentioned statement.

The teachers are authoritarian regarding the pupils

Table no. 4. Authoritarian managerial style adopted by the teacher in class

Answer	Number	Procent
a)Total agreement	8	26
b) Agreement	20	67
c) So and so	2	7
d)Disagreement	0	0
e)Total disagreement	0	0
Total	30	100

Criterion score = $(5*8+4*20+3*2)/30$, Criterion score = 4.2 The result of this criterion highlights the fact that the repondents agree regarding the above-mentioned statement.

More often than not the teachers use interactive games during the class

Table no. 5. Interactive means used during the transmission of the new content

Answer	Number	Procent
a)Total agreement	2	7
b) Agreement	8	26
c) So and so	20	67
d)Disagreement	0	0
e)Total disagreement	0	0
Total	30	100

Criterion score = $(5*2+4*8+3*20)/30$, Criterion score = 3.4. The result of this criterion highlights the fact that the repondents have an undetermined attitude regarding the interactive teaching methods used by the teachers in class.

The teachers involve the pupils in the development of the classes

Table no. 6. Partnership between teacher and pupil in class

a)Accord total	6	20
b) Agreement	22	73
c) So and so	2	7
d)Disagreement	0	0

e)Total disagreement	0	0
Total	30	100

Criterion score = $(5*6+4*22+3*2)/30$, Criterion score = 4.13. The result of this criterion indicates the fact that the respondents agree concerning the existence of a partnership between pupil and

teacher in class.

Is the evaluation objective?

Table no. 6. Objectiveness of evaluation

Answer	Number	Procent
a)Total agreement	2	7
b) Agreement	8	26
c) So and so	20	67
d)Disagreement	0	0
e)Total disagreement	0	0
Total	30	100

Criterion score = $(5*2+4*8+3*20)/30$, Criterion score = 3.4. The respondents are undetermined regarding the objectiveness of the evaluation realized by the teachers.

To delineate the overall perception of the pupils on formal education viewed through the prism of the services provided by the teachers, we calculate the global score.

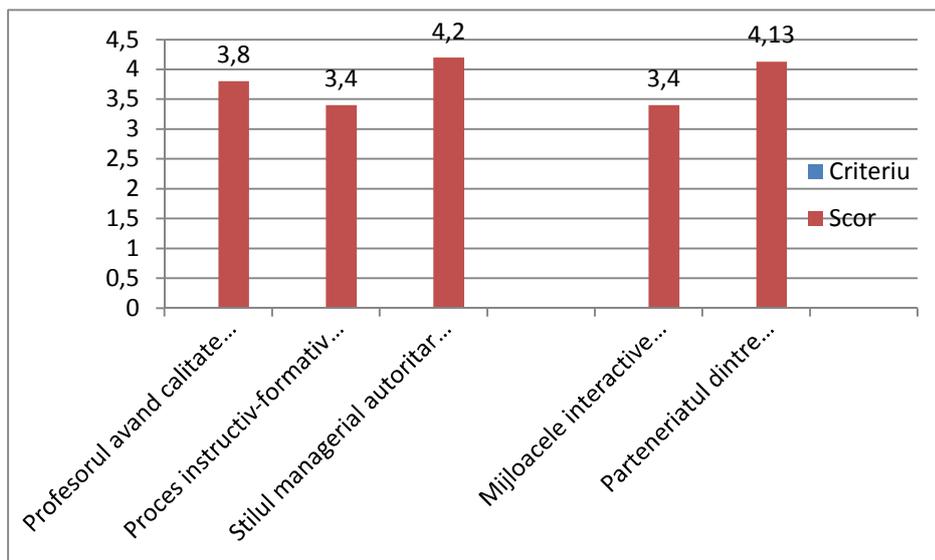


Figure no. 1. Graphic representation of the scores

Global score = 3.72. The global score highlights the fact that, on the whole, the respondents have a positive attitude as beneficiaries of formal education, secondary school.

Second approach

Analysis of the perception of the individuals aged over 18 on formal education

A marketing research was carried out, based on the analysis of secondary sources. We used a part of the database obtained following the 2012 survey by World Values Survey. The questionnaire was elaborated and applied by the representatives of World Values Survey on the territory of several world states, including Romania. The sample on the territory of our country was made up of 1503 people whose socio-professional, confessional and economic features vary.

Out of this questionnaire, we have chosen only three questions related to formal education.

How satisfied are you with the formal education realized in schools?

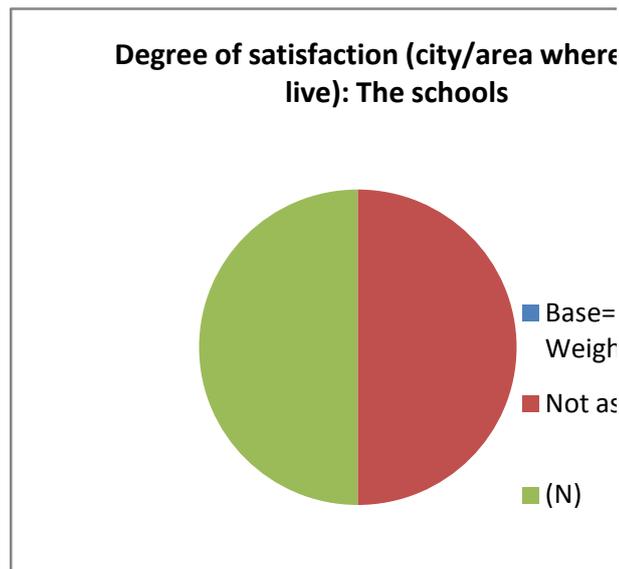


Figure no. 2. Satisfaction regarding school

Source: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>

The respondents refused to express their opinion on this fact.

How much do you trust the formal education realized in universities?

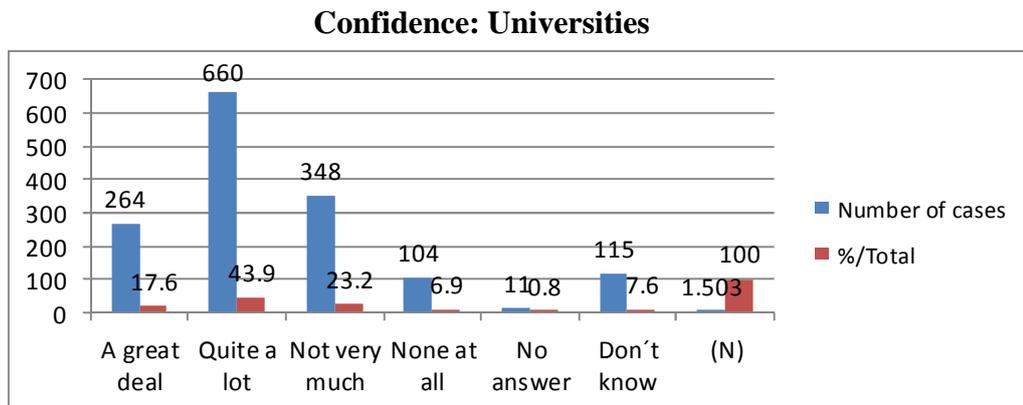


Figure no. 3. Confidence: Universities

Source: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>

Almost 60 % of the respondents declare their confidence in universities.

To identify the profile of the respondents of Romanian origin taking part in the survey, we present their structure according to the level of education graduated.

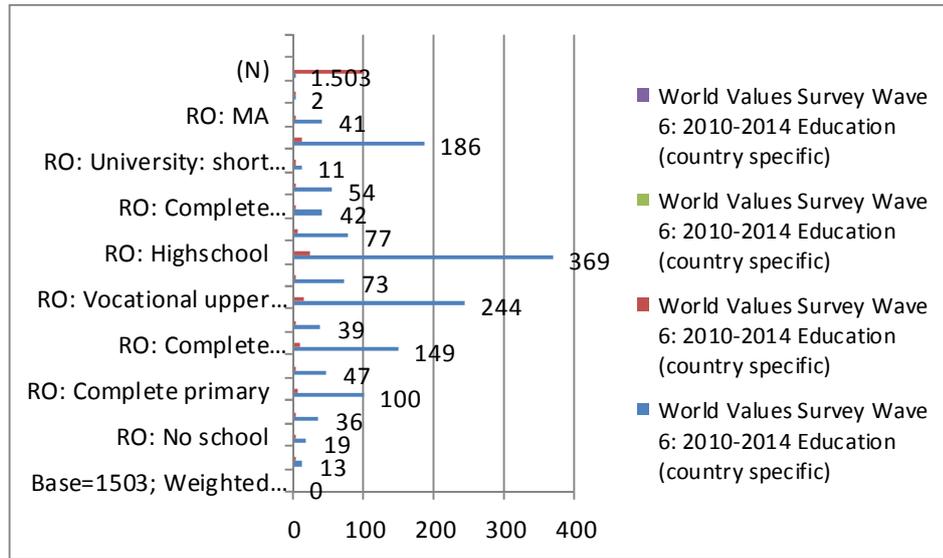


Figure no. 4. Level of education graduated by the respondents of the survey

Source: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>

The largest percentage of the participants to the survey graduated from high school (24%).

5. Conclusions

The strategic national and European framework promotes education due to the fact that it contributes to social progress. By education, people do not acquire only knowledge; they are also prepared to enter the labor market in order to obtain the revenues they need to meet their unlimited needs.

Regarding the 21st century education, there are three crucial studies. The first study was realized in the year 2011 by the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategies. The conclusions of this study underline the fact that the Romanians are more optimistic in matters of education, 5 Romanians out of 10 seeing the Romanian school as a high quality school, 8 Romanians out of 10 consider the Romanian education focused more on information and less on skills. Another study was realized in 2013 by OECD, yet the sample does not include Romania. The study applied on the European states approaches the issue of educational politics, especially the appreciation of the teachers' activity. A last important study was achieved in 2009, being a report on inclusive education. The conclusions of this study highlighted the need for changes with an accent on the pupils with special educational needs and the usefulness of the teacher-pupil-community partnership.

Out of the four hypotheses formulated at the beginning of our research, only the first was not confirmed, while the other three were confirmed. The first hypothesis was not confirmed because the pupils have an indifferent attitude regarding the fact that the teacher is a role model. The second hypothesis was confirmed, and this fact is supported by most of the respondents, who appreciate the teacher's managerial style as being authoritarian. The third hypothesis was also confirmed, as 93 % of the respondents agreed that there is a partnership during the class between teacher and pupils. The last hypothesis was also

confirmed because 60 % of the people who completed their studies trust their formal education acquired in university.

To conclude, outside the family, school adds the first brick in the shaping of the individual as an active member of the society.

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