

## MODERN WORLD CHALLENGES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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**Abstract:** A model of decision decentralization in pre-university education in Romania is motivated to educational success. The model we are proposing contains three generic motivational factors which influence success, materialized in attitude, respectively, confidence in administrative and political capacity of Romanian people to obtain notable educational results, with the aspiration of reaching this goal in the strategy this goal involves. Recent experimental studies are presented in the following pages in order to illustrate the influence of each factor, followed by a set of causal models, empirically derived, which are making the connection between involved factors and predicted results. The purpose of this paper, to which we want to give value as doctorate thesis, is to present a proposal of motivational model for success, applied especially on educational systems with decentralized decision from external to internal levels. Each generic motivational factor mentioned above will be detailed and will have examples supporting the idea that, by school, each one of them is manifesting an important influence on motivation for success in educational environment and in youth training for an active life.

To elaborate an efficient strategic plan it is highly needed to have a full analysis of social economic environment at international, national and regional level in order to discover major changes which exist and to identify trends which will influence Romanian pre-university education system in its development. This process should be in accordance with expressed needs and real transformations within society. In such conditions, certain modern world challenges should not be avoided. The globalization process manifests in multiple ways by strongly influencing future development of educational institutions. It is enough to mention the fact that the graduated of pre-university and university education will confront with a unique and global workforce market, in which multi-culture and national identity gain new meanings (values). Globalization influences (international qualification, distance education, virtual libraries, didactic process in international foreign languages, education at imposed quality standards, educational offer adapted to society's needs) are hard to neglect. Rapid innovation in science and technology, especially in information and communication technology (IT&C) requests a permanent adaptation of the educational process to theoretical and practical scientific news, such way that if education institutions are not self-generators of new, they should be in a continuous alignment to scientific news in any field, creating informational structures which sustain this challenge.

Romania, like other many countries in mass education, has a set of positive and negative effects on short and long term. In the conditions in which the phenomenon exists as consequence of needs expressed by society members, teaching staff have the duty to correctly manage and coordinate the phenomenon towards a responsible educational process and not diplomas distribution kind. Education institutions are confronting an internal and even international competitive process. To barely know which are your competitors, which are their competencies and capabilities, their trends and development strategies, represents neglects which educational institutions will feel in the nearest future. The existence of competition leads to generating comparison systems, which will decide institutions hierarchy

based on certain criteria, phase in which Romanian school has to gain as much as they concerned about assuring future. Quality training is made also outside of educational system, big transnational companies organizing refresher courses in various fields, not only, but especially for their own personnel.

The offer proves to be preferred due to lecturer mobility and adaptation of themes to stringent needs for improving human resources. Low budgeting of didactic process at ministerial level imposes reconsidering school mission and embracement of an entrepreneurial behavior materialized by enlargement of offered activities area, for community and economic environment purpose. Also, low budgeting should be correlated with norms and criteria imposed by Ministry of Education, Research and Youth, which have repercussions, as penalties in budgetary funds. It is well-known that pre-university education in Europe has traditional conservative organizations, which are hardly accepting adaptation and innovation.

All these successful schools were distinguished by the availability expressed at level of change: mission, organization, collaboration, communication, methodic, organizational culture, becoming cognitive institutions due to the reconsiderations made within system. So, in the course of its strategy, Romania should consider existing situations in European countries, mainly into EU member states.

### **Motivation, Attitude and Aspiration within the Romanian Educational Process**

Motivating students to obtain performances at school represents one of the problems which are working parents' and professors' minds. New books referring to this topic are rapidly appearing on the market and relevant studies and researches are gaining momentum also. Educational institutions are starting to offer assistance to students, to develop their abilities to study and self-adjusting (like time management).

It seems that one of the major problems, but also an opportunity for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for all schools will be the superior focusing on students and the work with them. So, they are becoming more motivated and they can have success during educational process. McCombs and Marzano (1990) viewed the educational results, generally, as a function with two characteristics, "ability" and "will". Both should be analyzed separately because only will without the needed qualities is possible not to assure success.

This model is based especially on will, or the motivation to obtain the wished goal, therefore, this will shall be analyzed separately to the level of ability. When measures for results forecasting (such as evaluation level during class) are used as criteria for reaching goals, we will take care that measures for abilities will be removed or strictly controlled. In order to directly measure the motivation for success, the measures of the engagement taken in order to pay a certain amount of effort for study or tasks completion should be examined. It is the result of motivation, not its generator. Pintrich and Schrauben (1992) posted a large quantity of research papers suggesting that the result value for a student affects student's motivation, and motivation leads to a cognitive engagement, this kind of engagement manifesting in its usage or application of certain learning strategies. Many of Pintrich and Schrauben studies were involving learning strategies as a measure of cognitive engagement.

This kind of studies were becoming dependent of what students were underlying that they did as a way of determining the involvement degree in solving the task. To avoid this kind of dependency, the studies made had made the cognitive engagement more operative as a display of effort expenses or performance itself in finishing tasks that were giving the possibility to students to realize performance tasks. The attitude which is more often used in combination with motivation for success is efficient and displays how precisely an individual

auto-evaluate and judge himself in order to successfully achieve a tasks. Bandura (1997) offers us proves and a large documentation to conclude that the efficiency is a key factor if people can obtain significant results in their lives.

Specifically, there are enough proofs to sustain that confidence in efficacy contributes to educational achievements by increasing motivation for success. For example, Schunk (1989) showed in a certain number of studies, that many children with similar intellectual level are differing as performances due to their level of efficacy. By comparing level of performance for students with high, medium and low efficacy for task, Tuckman and Sexton (1990) demonstrated that the group with the highest efficacy was two times more productive than the one with medium level and ten times more productive than the one with low level.

More than this, the groups with high level beat their own expectations with 22%, the medium ones fulfilled their expectations, and the low level ones have decrease with 77% under the expected level. The results are clearly reflecting the relation between confidence in efficacy and scholar and educational productivity. The result is consistent enough to demonstrate that confidence in efficacy contributes significantly to the level of motivation and performance.

They predict not only behavioral changes which are accompanying various environmental influences, but also the ones about the behavior between individuals which are receiving same environmental influences, as well as for one individual where level variations exist within the tasks done and the tasks avoided or approached without success. The following question arises: is this attitude about capabilities, by itself, capable to explain motivation for results? Proofs are sustaining the contrary. Kirsch (1982) was presenting to subjects a task hard to be completed, hypothetically, by taking intentionally a snake and holding it in front of them and asking if they want and agree to make same thing. They answered that they do not have the capacity and will to realize such thing. Then he offered them progressively a strong motivator (like money) and in the end he reached a level where all subjects decided that they are capable and wishful to realize the task which they where afraid of. It results that, a potential source of will for action is the stimulus value which performance has. Theories about stimulating motivation (e.g. Rotter, Phares and Chance, 1972; Overmier and Lawry, 1979) suggest that people will do a thing only when its accomplishment is considered to bring a desired result for them, or important for them.

For example, in anticipating a situation when a person is asked to fulfill a certain task, that person could be under necessity to take a considerable effort in training due to the will to win and to avoid failure. It can be said that this wish generated a motivation impulse for that person that he can be available to take that effort. Many specialized paper works showed the difference between strategy and success in school as well as in a very large range of fields. The entire concept of self-adjusting really appeared on the motivational arena to reflect the connection between specific strategies and the obtained performances, illustrated by the considerable work of Schunk and Zimmerman (e.g., Schunk, 1989; Schunk and Zimmerman, 1998; Zimmerman, 1989; 1990; Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons; 1988). The strategies demonstrated as having a particular impact on Zimmerman results (1999) are competing for setting goals and strategic planning, supervision of implementation and supervision of strategic result Zimmerman, (1998). Was discovered that a unique combination of strategy conditions and efficacy level determine the performance dimensions. The strategy of choosing tasks gave the best results for students with reduced efficacy, group strategies gave better results for students with medium efficacy, and the strategy of control gave best results for the student group with a high efficacy.

Similarly, Tuckman and Sexton (1992) illustrated that in a competitive situation, a feedback strategy gave good results for students with a medium and low efficacy. In the past decade, compiled proofs for the importance of strategies in motivation for results were substantially, especially, within self-adjusting education.

Beyond the confidence in someone capacity and the will to obtain a certain result, it is the capacity to successfully accomplish strategies associated to success in various fields (e.g. writers, athletes, musicians, students). It seems imperatively needed (according to Zimmerman; 1989 and 1998) to identify the three elements of self-adjusting education as learning strategies for students self-adjusting, auto-efficacy perception on abilities for performance, and for educational and training purposes. Pintrich and de Groot (1990), in a study about the results obtained by students in seven grade, identified as predictable variables the auto-efficacy, inherent value, anxiety testing, usage of strategies and self-adjusting. First one is - an attitudinal reflection, second and third - will, and last ones – strategy.

According to a study made by Tuckman on high-school students (1993) by analyzing the factors, a factor of attitude was identified, representing self-efficacy, one of will, influenced by grades and a factor which basically represented the ability (e.g. skills and scores at track record), but this includes also cognitive strategies. Zimmerman, Bandura and Martinez-Pons (1992) created a way to analyze ninth and tenth grade. Predicative variables were ranked as previous to the level of parents and students expectations about grades, efficacy for adjusting learning and efficacy for education results. Their results show their influence on successes (measured by grades) and an attitude factor (the two dimension of efficacy).

The direct effect of efficacy on performance was also approached by Pajares and Miller (1994). Another factor is will (reflected by parents and students expectations for degrees). The strategy factor couldn't appear because they didn't include a technique to measure the strategies used but only a confidence in the capacity of utilization. Another causal model of educational results is offered by Abry (1998). He discovered meta-cognitive strategies (planning, supervising and the use of feedback) and attitudes (efficacy, control localization) in order to forecast achievements. He also included cognitive strategies (coding, elaboration, organizing) and he discovered that they also predict accomplishments. In the end, a causal model realized by Tuckman and Abry (1998) contained techniques for measuring all three elements: attitudes (efficacy), will (inherent value, students and parents goals) and strategy (self-adjusting). Our mentioning motivation, attitude and will in the context of the scientific research we intend to fulfil and materialize into a doctorate thesis had as a purpose the highlighting of factors leading to education performance. The short description of certain models which lead to educational performance has as purpose to demonstrate the fact that the school and the community in which it performs are main social factors entitled to decide on educational and training process for an active life for youths.

This thing determines us to mark out that the decentralizing of decision by school is very important in obtaining educational performance, the school actually being the place where education is processed and not its other external institutions which manifested as powerful factors in a centralized system. Even if we didn't present an exhaustive search in field's literature, the paper which we will elaborate suggests that attitude, will and strategy bring its contribution separately as well as together to motivation for success. Without attitude, we do not have any reason to believe that a human is capable for a required action to achieve success; this is why there is no reason even to try this thing. Without will, there is not the required energy to action, but without strategy, there is no support which can help in selecting and guiding the required actions.

Since other theories are based on one or two of these elements, we consider that a better understanding is given by taking into consideration all three. An applicative implication in educational systems, important as motivation is for success, is also the quality, as high social value. Professors should make efforts to increase attitudes and students self confidence in order to nourish the engagement in education process and to teach them about relevant strategies which can be used. A considerable quantity of material about “learning” the motivation by exchange of attitudes and strategies is already available in the works of Pressley, Woloshyn and Associates, (1995); Zimmerman, Bonner and Kovach, (1996), but the greatest yet unsolved need about techniques for efficient increase also seem to be the will. In Romania, the will is hardly satisfied because of the low hope about sure access in active life, after finalizing studies. It is more serious that training in Romanian pre-university school is not correlated with local, zonal and even national and international labor market, but with maintaining a certain didactic resource specific to jobs. Due to its specialization, the existent didactic resource, scholarize a younger human resource which is not covered by the need of human resources within economy, the youths’ will to integrate into work after graduation not being satisfied.

We have the certitude that when the Romanian school will be capable to make decisions by itself about how to scholarize students, the correlation with the labor market will automatically be realized. The school which will not proceed like these risks has the tendency to self-dissolve. This fact can not be realized other than by the decentralization of decision at ministerial level, county inspectorates and school levels. In this way, the school will be able to develop and to offer to society only educated young people and trained and specialized on fields wanted by labor market, capable to go further country development at European level. If development is about each and every one of us according to our personal or social plan, then it is created through action.

If we are honest with ourselves, we can observe how little we act in comparison with our possibilities. Instead we find all kind of excuses by which we justify our non-action. In most cases, our excuses resume to the lack of resources (financial or social etc). The action is based on these resources, valuing it, no matter at what level they are. The lack of action raises more from the “nescience to do”. Without the science to make things go well, we are hesitant and we are afraid to do something because we can not anticipate positive consequences of our acts. We can not control how much and what we have available, our only thing which we can master is what we do with what we have. And we can do something with what we have, in the moment when we will know how to profit from what we have. In the pre-university educational system in Romania it is known that decentralization is the major step of reform and yet there is not that courage needed at empowered structures which can generate the respective mutations by normative acts to legislate the process. This continues to determine having school subordinated to some external decisions, and their directorate not to be management structures, but leadership ones. The essence of leadership consists in the capacity to create vision, motivation and will within a group of people. People are not lead by plans and analysis. They are conducted by the triad of other things. And the really efficient leader is focusing almost all his actions to create it – using skills, different for each element of the triad. The vision is a positive image about what school can become and the way of achieving destination.

To create a vision which is shared, the leader must be always in pursuit of new ideas, which can match with school strategy and to be sufficiently smart to think good ideas. It is extremely important that the leader is an artist on transforming these ideas into images and stories, which are exciting, logical and achievable. For individuals which are part of school,

motivation is the one which pushes towards action. The leader is using his interpersonal skills to give energy to people and to help them see how they can make profit by reaching the objective. The required will to realize projects and school initiatives is the element which helps to arrive to destination. By using energy and the skills to solve problems decided by school's external factors, the leader assures that the school is on the right track to achieve objectives. Actual leader in Romanian pre-university school is functioning also under the political influence, which is determining some prejudices within school.

The visionary is not a leader if he can not motivate. The person that sustains a will is not a leader if he can not create a vision which can be shared by all. Consequently, for small schools as well as for big schools, leadership represents a combined way of leading with vision, motivation and will. This kind of leading is nowadays in practice in pre-university education. We propose that by decentralizing decision the school will be lead by managerial teams which have a complete different structure than leadership. If leadership= vision x motivation x will, then management = science x art x spirit. From these relations clearly results the superiority of management against leadership. The superiority of management against leadership recommends it to be the leading of Romanian pre-university schools in a decentralized system.

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