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The Impact of the Training Programmes Over the Teacher`s Performance and Professionalism in the Pre-University Education

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Abstract

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The human resources competitiveness from the pre-university education represents a strategic priority of the Ministry of the National Education and Scientific Researches for Romania in 2016. The favourable background provided by the training schemes/programmes developed by the Sectorial Operational Programme in the Human Resources Domain allowed a numerous attendance of teachers at training courses, which had an impact over the improvement of the educational system and an increasing of its adaptability to the labour market requirements, promoting lifelong learning and acquiring competences for personal and professional development.

This research presents the most important results referring to the impact of the training programmes, developed for the last five years in the South Muntenia Region, targeting the teachers' performance and professionalism. The figures were obtained by questionnaires applied to a number of teachers from the pre-university education system of South Muntenia Region. These teachers develop their activity in theoretical, technological and vocational high schools. These figures provided a general overview of the today's training system of teachers (suppliers, duration, costs, certificates, organisation, and strengths, improving aspects) and also details referring to motivation, the quality of the training programmes, facilities, their impact over the teaching process, future training needs, needs adapted to the specialised culture, methodic and pedagogic activity.

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Keywords: Training programmes; pre-university education; teaching career; professionalism; lifelong learning.



1. Introduction

Both at European level and nationwide, one may note the importance attached to professional development of teaching staff in post-secondary education. The strategic priorities of the National Ministry of Education and Scientific Research in Romania and the sectoral action plans for 2016 regarding development of teaching career have as strategic initiative “Launching a Strategic Project Using European Funds with a view to Making Teaching/Education and Ongoing Professional Development Master Operational”.

The improvement programs for teaching staff in post-secondary schools are oriented on developing new skills to enable adaptation to educational needs, curriculum and requirements on the job market. In the past five years the post-secondary school teaching staff have benefited by a large range of professional development programs both in their specialization and in psycho-pedagogy and methods-related training.

2. Materials and Methods

The endeavour to investigate the impact of professional development programs in South Muntenia Region combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods. In terms of methods and techniques used to collect information, documentary analysis has been made of legislative regulations regarding post-secondary school teaching staff training, statistical analyses of INSSE, ongoing professional development methodology for post-secondary school staff, priorities of the Ministry of Education and the sectoral action plans for 2016, press file of the Ministry of Education on the high school leaving examination results over the past five years. The hypotheses which provided the basis of the questionnaire regarding the analysis of the impact of teaching staff development in South Muntenia Region on the growth of performance and the professionalization of teaching careers are related to the fact that the professional development programs are partially adapted to the teaching staff’s needs whereas the improvement system is sometimes deficient as regards strategies, methods and organization.

3. Results

The programs and activities in the field of the development of scientific, psycho-pedagogical and didactic training are permanently adapted to the dynamics of the educational processes and systems.

Both South Muntenia Region and other regions in Romania have seen a real enhancement of the quality of education following multiple professional development programs implemented in the past five years.

3.1. *Selecting the Sample*

The post-secondary school teaching staff sample in South Muntenia Region selected with a view to conducting the questionnaire survey consists of a number of 366 teachers out of 7515 in total. This was established on the basis of a representative sample at county level, comprising the seven counties in the region, as shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1

South Muntenia Teaching Staff/Breakdown by Counties	DB	TR	AG	PH	GR	CL	IL
7515	1248	856	1720	1965	477	625	624

Source: <http://statistici.inse.ro>

Table 2

Total Questionnaires/Breakdown by Counties	DB	TR	AG	PH	GR	CL	IL
366	60	42	86	95	23	30	30

3.2. Sample Breakdown

The sample breakdown by age criterion shows similarities with the seniority criterion and is similar to the breakdown by age groups in the total of teaching staff for the region, as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3

Age Groups (years)	Teaching Staff Interviewed (%)	Seniority in Education (years)	Teaching Staff (%)
Under 30	4,3%	Up to 5	5,6%
31 – 40	33,5%	6-10	9,0%
41 – 50	42,1%	11-20	39,5%
Over 50	20,2%	Over 20	45,9%

In this sample a higher weight is covered by the teaching staff in the urban areas that carry out their activities in vocational schools and high schools; most of these educational establishments are situated in cities, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Teaching Staff/Residence Area	Rural	Urban
366	22,4%	77,6%

Most teaching staff selected for this survey (over 89%) have reached a high level of professional training (first level teacher certification – 60.3% and second level teacher certification - 23.5%, PhD 5.6%).

In the selection of teaching staff by county, account has been taken of the curricular area and the number of high schools, vocational schools and post-secondary technological schools in the area was kept in balance, as shown in table 5.

Table 5

Curricular Area/Number of Teaching Staff	Language and Communication	Mathematics and Sciences	Human Being and Society	Technologies	Arts and Sports
	20,1%	22,3%	19,2%	34,9%	3,5%

4. Discussion

At European level teaching staff's professional development is different from country to country. France, Holland, Sweden, Island consider that teaching staff development is a **professional duty, yet the participation to such courses is optional** (***, 2008). In countries such as Spain, Portugal, Poland, Luxemburg teaching staff development is closely related to career evolution and financial

motivation. The credits obtained are taken into consideration upon career advancement. In Romania, teaching staff and management, supervision and auditing staff in post-secondary schools attend professional development programs every five years. Such programs ensure them a minimum of 90 transferable professional credits every five years (Methodology of ongoing training of teaching staff in post-secondary schools, 2009). Table 6 shows the teaching staff's reasons relating to their ongoing professional development.

Table 6

South Muntenia Teaching Staff	a right	a professional duty	an option	a career advancement facility	a salary increase opportunity	a credit accumulation	Others
	17,8%	51,7%	5,1%	13,7%	0,3%	8,9%	2,5%

According to the Education Law the teaching staff's professional development is a right of the teachers. Starting from the professional development-related activities set forth in the legislation the respondents have ticked various choices regarding forms of conducting such development activities, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

	Achievement Forms	%
Professional Development Activity over the past five years	Methods-related and psycho-pedagogical development activities within departments and school specialization commissions	3%
	Conferences	1,7%
	Seminars	1%
	Debates or other specific forms at interschool/county/national/international level	5,1%
	Development courses for specialization training	44,1%
	Development courses for methods-related and psycho-pedagogical training	28,3%
	Basic Teacher's Certification/teacher's certifications	11,8%
	Others	5,1%

Participation of teaching staff interviewed to professional development programs was completed in different manners, as indicated in Table 8.

Table 8

Type of Document		
	Professional Competence Certificate	43,6%
	Ongoing Development Attestation	28%
	Attendance Attestation	14,5%
	Attendance Diploma	8,4%
	Others (teacher's certification)	5,4%

We can summarize the Muntenia South teaching staff's participation to specialization programs over the past five years as prioritized for mathematics, economics, history, geography, Romanian language, physics, chemistry, biology, teacher's certifications, master's degrees. As for methods-related and psycho-pedagogical development, teaching staff have chosen courses for specialization didactics and basic discipline methods, mentoring, curricular qualification, assessment. The desire to develop in terms of educational management has boosted the participation to courses which enable the access to management, supervision and auditing positions, implementation of educational policy measures at organizational level. For South Muntenia development of IT skills outlines an evolution from initiation to the domain to use of educational platform in the didactic undertaking.

A gratifying element is the number of professional development programs presented in Table 9 to which respondents have participated over the past five years.

Table 9

	1	5,5%
	2	9,8%
Number of professional development programs over the past five years	3	19,7%
	4	15,4%
	5	16,9%
	Over 5	32,7%

We may notice the teaching staff's interest in professional development; the high attendance to such activities which mainly have an impact on the evolution and the adaptability to newness.

With regards to training providers, most of them belong to the public sector; however, the private providers have a rather high weight, probably due to the attractive offer which constitutes a genuine interest for the teaching staff.

Table 10

Institutions of Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research MENCS (National Centre for Professional and Technical Education Development (CNDIPT)/ Institute for Education Sciences (ISE)/National Center for Curriculum and Assessment in Post-Secondary Schools Education (CNCEIP)	30,9%
Department of Teaching Staff Training (DPPD)	11,4%
Teaching Staff House (CCD)	35,2%
County School Inspectorate (ISJ)	9,1%
NGO	2,9%
Private Companies	2,9%
Associations	1,3%
Others	6,2%

In case of respondents, the choice of a professional development program has been influenced as shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Choosing Criteria	Scor
Themes	8,29
Certification/credits awarding	7,13
Utility	8,52
Costs	5,60
Period	5,43
Training methodology	5,83
Trainers	4,99
Training Provider	5,67
Duration	5,36
Scholarships/awards	4,50

The credits system is appreciated by the teachers interviewed, however the decision to choose a professional development program is influenced by the trainer, duration and facilities offered upon courses completion.

The aspects requiring improvements in relation to professional development programs to which teaching staff have taken part refer to training program/timetable/duration, themes approached and degree of newness, adaptability to target group, costs, bureaucracy in filling documents, practical applicability, logistics, certificate issuance, selection of trainers, sustainability, seminar materials, modern methods adapted for children with special educational needs.

For the following years teaching staff interviewed target professional development courses focused on: specialization development, linguistic refinement in an international language, ICT, assessment, inter/transdisciplinarity, specialist research, counselling, educational management, integration of children with special educational needs, modern teaching/assessment methods.

The impact of the professional development programs conducted over the past 5 years in South Muntenia region is explained in Table 12.

Table 12

Impact	%
Extremely large extent	20,3%
Large extent	51,9%
Sufficient extent	22,5%
Lesser extent	2,6%
No	1,7%
Cannot assess	0,9%

The changes in the teaching career as a result of the professional development programs completion are presented below:

Table 13

Impact	Score
Improvement of current teaching/learning/assessing practices	7,60
Improvement of specialist skills	7,37
Improvement of IT skills	5,97
Improvement of communication and teamwork	6,35
Personal development	7,32
Dissemination of good practices	5,48
Inter/transdisciplinary approaches	5,77
Update on the new	6,14
Increase of self-esteem and self-valorisation	5,17
Development of a personal training portfolio	5,56
Recognition and valorisation within the organization	6,22

The score obtained indicates an improvement of key competences, a learning development, an acquisition of expertise and an adaptation to what is new in the specialist's domain.

As a consequence of the professional development programs for the post-secondary schools in South Muntenia Region, the quality of the teaching act has seen actual improvements and the results have been visible in the performances of the pupils in the school-leaving examination, except Giurgiu and Teleorman counties.

Table 14

School-leaving Examination Results	DB	PH	AG	IL	GR	CL	TR
2015	61,2%	74,4%	65,2%	67,7%	36,1%	55,7%	42,7%
2014	51,5%	65,9%	64,3%	57,4%	38,8%	53,4%	45,3%
2013	47,5%	61,7%	58,8%	57,3%	40,6%	48,9%	36,8%
2012	38,73%	45,69%	46,07%	42,18%	45,27%	37,17%	29,09%
2011	35,51%	45%	37,14%	41,07%	39,84%	41,14%	47,15%

Source: <http://www.hotnews.ro>

5. Conclusions

With regards to professional development programs and their impact on teaching careers one may observe the need for a development of training providers market so that there is a productive competition in their offers. At local level the Teaching Staff House (CCD) is the most important training provider; however, the quality of the courses does not always stand up to expectations. The universities should meet the needs of post-secondary teachers halfway especially through development programs in specialization and research.

Private providers offer mainly non-disciplinary internships, short-term qualifications requested as part of some projects/programs financed by European funds and the costs are generally high compared to the quality of the programs.

The teaching staff's motivation to participate to professional development programs is triggered by their desire to personally develop, to be in line with what is new and to be competitive in their profession. The borderline between motivations concerning professional sphere and those concerning personal sphere is difficult to distinguish, development of specialist competences as well as key or transversal competences constitutes an active side of lifelong learning program. The quick and profound transformations occurred in the learning process over the past years impose ongoing development of teaching staff, their adaptation to new and change of one side and needs of the job market of the other side.

The participation of teaching staff in South Muntenia Region to professional development courses reaches high values; the teachers attend not only obligatory development programs conducted through the public sector but also attractive development courses offered by private providers. The intention to professionally improve is closely followed by the desire to personally develop, the recognition of their position within their own educational establishment, the integration into a modern and top-of-the-class educational system.

Author Contributions

Constanța Popescu and Antoaneta Roxana (Georgescu) Surcel conceived and designed the research, Constanța Popescu and Antoaneta Roxana (Georgescu) Surcel distribute the questionnaires, Constanța Popescu and Antoaneta Roxana (Georgescu) Surcel analyzed the data, Constanța Popescu and Antoaneta Roxana (Georgescu) Surcel wrote the paper.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Abbreviations

MENCS – Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research

CNDIPT – National Centre for Professional and Technical Education Development

ISE – Institute for Educational Sciences

CNCEIP – National Center for Curriculum and Assessment in Post-Secondary Schools Education

DPPD – Department of Teaching Staff Training

CCD - Teaching Staff House

ISJ – County School Inspectorate

ONG – Non-Governmental Organizations

DB, TR, GR, PH, AG, CL, IL – counties in South Muntenia Region – Dâmbovița, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Prahova, Argeș, Călărași, Ialomița

CES- Special Education Needs

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