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**THE WELL-BEING – A FUNDAMENTAL INDICATOR IN  
DIDACTIC ACTIVITY**

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*Abstract*

The paper "The well-being a fundamental indicator in the didactic activity" focuses on the theoretical foundation of the concept of well-being, on the fundamental components necessary for maintaining and improving the well-being, which can contribute to generating the capital value of the society, leading to the formation through education of the mental infrastructure of the Romanian society in accordance with the global culture of contemporary society. This dimension requires the intensification of the preoccupations in the educational act by harmonizing the intellectual education with the socio-emotional education, which can generate the well-being of a learner and can ensure a high school performance. It aims to develop the personality of a student`s identity in balance with cultural diversity and global policy trends. At the intersection between social, economic and cultural, educational policy is built, in a more complex analytical context, sustained by a set of interests that have generated metamorphoses in the social system, but also in the educational approaches. This state of well-being, which the individual feels leads to the promotion of a prosocial behaviour, a healthy lifestyle, time and information management, thus preventing and combating undesirable behaviours in our society that can affect well-being in social, professional and familiar relationships. Through this study, the question arises whether the objective of well-being is promoted at the level of educational action agents in view of effective psychosocial functioning of educational relations.

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**Keywords:** Teacher, well-being, student, didactic activity, global competence, flexibility.



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## 1. Introduction

Even today, the Romanian education system is still in a constant search for paradigms that rethink public and private education. The liberalization of the education market, the privatization of school institutions, the competitiveness at institutional or personal level, but also the freedom to choose educational services by the learner are concepts that the system has assumed along those 28 years of democracy. But these have been implemented through the authority of deciding factors in the political or social environment. Often, this period was under the influence of the lack of continuity, cursivity and coherence at the level of educational policies and the decident factor oscillated between contemporary or traditional paradigms, trying not to tune them, but to assess both the tradition of Romanian school and the diversity of opportunities that new paradigms or European and world-wide trends in the field of education science develop. Taking a major educational change in Romania is not just an "exercise" that we all want, whether we are teachers, parents or students, to solve it every four years. This change and adherence to global trends and developments is a national union project that requires time, effort, building a wise and competent legislative framework, based on government decisions, laws, national strategies (Cuc, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c; 2014a, 2014b), but also building a methodology of implementation in line with EU legislation, also requiring much responsibility and, last but not least, dedication from stakeholders at the level of curricular reform (Chiş, 2002, 2005; Bocoş & Chiş, 2013). Professor Albu (2013) in his book, "The Cares and Concerns of the Teacher", developed the phrase of Andre, (2009) in the book, "Moods. Learning Serenity" and analyzed it in the light of the peculiarities of the educational system in Romania, drawing attention to the worries and concerns that both the decision maker and the teaching staff have. These worries and concerns are influenced by the dynamics of educational policy changes, decisional fluctuations, social-political and financial crises, that directly affect the educational system, reorganizing institutional leadership control, and mediating "effects on mental and emotional status of teachers, on the tonus of their families (p.5), but also "the many changes and the constantly professional-institutional tasks not to be longer perceived by the vast majority of the teaching staff as delicious challenges, but imminent threats" (p.6). In this context, we should analyze the relationship of the educational binom, where the teacher through its acquired professional competences promotes an "education oriented on value, creativity, cognitive capacities, volitional capacities and active capacities, fundamental knowledge and knowledge, skills and abilities of direct utility in the profession and in society" (National Educational Law no.1 / 2011, art.1, par. 1) and forms "through education, the mental infrastructure of the Romanian society, in accordance with the new requirements, derived from Romania's status as a member country of European Union" (National Educational Law No.1 /2011, art. 1, paragraph 2). In this great national construction, we aim the most eloquent system results and graduates endowed with the necessary skills who have acquired the scientific knowledge of reality, the conception of the world, moral convictions, character traits, as well as the skills of knowledge, research and creation" (Bocoş & Jucan, 2007, p.32) for a more active social and professional insertion and reorganizing the local curriculum with all the dominant features (Dulamă & Ilovan, 2015, 2017a, 2017b). Therefore, this mission, which education has assumed, requires stability and the teachers know that the frequent changes in the system have led to all these "worries and anxiety" that pupils, parents, but also teachers experience. It is necessary to value stability, consistency and cursivity and, last but not least, to build a state of well-being at both macro and

micro level. This state of well-being, this harmony is fundamental to the quality of education, but also to performance, because depth education requires teachers to acquire, besides professional skills acquired through academic, psychological, methodological, and classroom management training to dedicate "most of their abilities, thoughts, attention and energies to students....to know their problems, to stimulate them, to encourage them, to support them, to console and to respect them, in order to understand them" (Albu, 2013, p.6).

## 2. Problem Statement

At international level, a new trend is emerging in society: the well-being of the individual, which sums up the assurance of the quality of his life at the physical, mental and emotional level, by promoting a healthy lifestyle, some quality social relations in the family, in the school, in the professional community and community environment, because "the motivation for this research is based on raising the general public level of pedagogical culture concerning cultural diversity, on the challenges of education that would prepare in a sustainable way in society the recognition and respect of cultural / ethnic differences, and equality of chances of the individual for the assertion in public social life" (Cuc, 2014a, p.54). The World Health Organization defines in its documents the well-being as <<a general term that encompasses the entire universe of the domains of human existence, including the physical, mental and social aspects, which together form what we can call "a good life">> (World Health Organization, 2004, p. 216).The universe of well-being refers to the individual's state of health with an optimal functionality from "somatic, physiological, mental, emotional, social and spiritual" point of view (Băban, 2011, p.21), but also the domains which can ensure well-being: the family, the school institution, the workplace, the community, the environment (the physical, social and attitudinal environment) with which the individual interacts. Throughout its existence, the well-being of the individual can be influenced and conditioned by changes of body functions and body structure, by its ability or by the level, performance concerned, by the socio-cultural or natural context (Dulamă & Ilovan, 2016; Ilovan, et al., 2018).The construct of happiness and well-being originates in ancient philosophy, and its evolution is dominated today by a "psychological way of interpretation" (Bălătescu, 2014, p.41), being influenced by several factors: involvement of political decision factor, the social context of evolution; the dominant paradigms of philosophy and socio-human sciences; the atmosphere of literary and cultural creation (Bălătescu, 2014, p.41). In the evolution of the concept, both Platon and Aristotle consider that the citizen's well-being, his happiness is influenced by social parameters, while enlightenment thinking links this concept to the state of progress of society. In the individualism and lifestyle approaches, Durkheim (2001) or Simmel (2017, 2018) analyses the freedom of the individual and his autonomy in a close connection with the social determinant, but also in terms of the state of well-being and happiness that can generate social cohesion and the most effective social interrelation. Thus, the concept founded in antiquity widened its connotations, the emphasis also falling on the analytical dimension, happiness becoming a "measure of general utility" related to the fundamental directive of the economy: rational choices (Bălătescu, 2014, pp. 53-54). Since the 1990s, Daniel has left his mark through his research in cognitive sciences, social psychology, or behavioural economics, and has developed new directions of thinking in hedonistic psychology in studying happiness. The happiness or state of unhappiness of the individual must also be

related to his social interrelations, also referring to the cognitive component, which through the global assessment of the individual's life establishes relevance by reporting the quality of human life to a system of performance indicators, respectively to standards and pre-established criteria: "status indicators, perceived quality of life assessment indicators, life satisfaction indicators and happiness indicator", (Bălătescu, 2014, p.50). Family and school institution become the factors responsible for the well-being of children, for the development and maintenance of this state. And this aspect is also supported by the results obtained by Romanian students in international assessments, developed by the OECD (<http://www.rocnee.eu/oecdalis>, <http://www.rocnee.eu/examene>.), which aim the level of competence development and the way in which the school exploits cultural diversity (Cuc, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2014a, 2014b) and develops global competence in students. Changes in modern school in Romania cannot be ignored, they start from developing and maintaining well-being in school, harmonizing the dimensions of education, eliminating "excessive focusing of school on the intellectual side of students and their school performance ignoring their emotional and social needs is a safe way of diminishing well-being and increasing the risk for dysfunctions and physical and mental diseases" (Băban, 2011, p.22). Initiation could be materialized by raising the awareness at the level of educational reality of the need to draw up a good practice guide that promotes the concept of happiness / general well-being and physical, social and spiritual health and facilitates the application in practice by a school in partnership with family, who in a sustained effort would lead in time to desirable changes in both educational and social reality. The concept of well-being is outlined by Ryff, (1995) as "the effort to attain the perfection of the realization of the true potential of a person" (p.100 as cited in Szentagotai-Tătar & David, 2017, p.41), structured on six pillars: "self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, control, meaning and purpose in life, personal development" (p.100 cited in Szentagotai-Tătar & David, 2017, p.41; Băban, 2011, p.22). By generating the necessary conditions for the educational action's directions supported by the two fundamental institutions, these elements harmonize at the level of the global development of the personality of the learner by developing a positive attitude towards self-image, increasing self-esteem and shaping a positive self-image in students. Both the parent and the teacher aim to strengthen in learner's self - confidence, confidence in their own performance and achievements, to increase motivation and achieve their goals.

Also, in school activity, it would be necessary that teacher extend in learners the awareness of their own previous life experiences and the achievement of an efficient management of the future personal and professional life through an active control at this level and an efficient adaptation to the educational and professional route targeted. This implies from the learner an active participation in his own training, initiative, correlated with support, counselling and orientation from the teacher, development of the motivation of the learner and flexibility in the educational process, by adapting it to the age and individual peculiarities." But changing conditions are influenced by the design mode of the favourable conditions of the initiative of actors, by the complex character of intercultural learning, to encourage introspection practice of teachers to identify any individual and cultural differences" (Cuc, 2014b, p.67).

### **3. Research Questions**

Having as foundation the new lines of research conducted under the auspices of positive psychology, a big number of studies published in international and national level regarding the concept of well-being, we set that our research to be guided by the questions: (1) To what extent do educators correlate well-being with the three basic psychological needs: autonomy, relationship and competence? (2) To what extent is the component devoted to personal awareness and development fosters happiness as an achievement of individual potential?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

According to these questions, the premises of the study were formulated as such:

- the state of well-being is significantly correlated with the educative level of the student, and among its components the level of personal development, but also the meaning and purpose in life of the educated are profoundly influenced by the educational component. Also, the happiness and the achievement of it by the educator is relevantly influenced by these two components, because the individual throughout his life focuses his purpose in his actions in order to acquire excellence and the virtuous lifestyle under the auspices of values (Ryff & Singer, 2006 cited in Szentagotai-Tătar & David, 2017, p.40).

The limitations or deficiencies that the student accumulates during his development in everything that means the complex process of structuring his own characteristics, but also the process of exploring these characteristics (skills, attitudes, motivations, emotions or defence and adaptation mechanisms developed by the student) contributes to the achievement of the happiness state through the style of thinking and the adopted behaviour, through the continuous development of the personal values and qualities that define the person.

### **5. Research Methods**

Through education, an action of universalisation of humanity is achieved at the level of the mental infrastructure, by meeting the individual's educational needs and interests, from the point of cultural diversity and the diversified value system. In this new structure of globalization and globalism, education also brings tribute to its mission, the structuring and organization of new action patterns generated by socio-economic or political dynamism. In this global dimension, the school institution, which has undergone fundamental processes of reforming and renewing its image, aims through its educational actions the reconstruction and reorganization of the socio-cognitive experiences of the students by optimizing the general well-being through the understanding, the self-perception of the concept of happiness by the student, but also awareness of how to integrate it into social and professional life. In the context of cultural, linguistic, religious diversity, in this policy of social mobility the individual, even if he is subjected to patterns of mentality and behaviour, has a high degree of personal autonomy in his action that allows him to trace new opportunities. In the context in which "the idea of a school that teaches is everywhere" (Senge, 2016, p.15), teachers can start exchanges of didactic expertise, professional development through international and comparative studies, the purpose of education is through the whole its influence, structure the human personality ideal in accordance with the global

culture, by increasing the individual's ability to develop their own strategy to achieve the highest possible level of well-being in their professional, family or community life. Contemporary man needs this general well-being in response to opportunities and success in professional and social life in response to the challenges that social dynamics projects by articulating aspirations, personal to collective interests, and in response to different standards of evaluation from one professional culture to another. In the educational context, the concept of general well-being that the student will feel in didactic activity, in the relationships in everyday life requires cognitive, affective and behavioural changes, a global development of the student. This was the premise that led to the launching of a specialized study that supports professional practice and opens new directions of dialogue to promote well-being among both students and teachers involved in the educational process by supporting some common goals based on positive social relationships, positive emotions, motivations, personal autonomy, performance or sense and commitment.

### **5.1. Research objectives**

The purpose of the research was to analyse the main components that contribute to building the well-being of the individual, but also to the efficient functioning of the individual.

Research objectives:

1. Studying the measure and the way teachers are involved in promoting well-being among students;
2. Highlighting possible advanced solutions by teachers to overcome the impasse in terms of cultivating well-being among students with sustainable effects.

The study was a pedagogical diagnosis on the cultivating the well-being among students by reference to some indicators: human resources (initial and continuing training, specializations, skills), access technologies, educational services, products and resources that favoured the relationship school-student-parents-community. The above-mentioned objectives are supported by the formulation of the working hypothesis.

### **5.2. Main hypothesis**

The knowledge and cultivation by educators of the components that make up the well-being of the student lead to the development of the individual's potential and to an efficient functioning of it throughout life.

Relying on our specialized studies, but also on information gained in teaching practice in the study was considered necessary to interview a total of 60 teachers from pre-university education system involved in the educational process. In order to describe the research sample, it was followed: initial and continuous training; the age recorded in the education system, the number of years since it is working in the institution where it is the holder; age; the didactic degree obtained. During the research, there were used the following research methods: the interview-based survey, the research of curriculum document and other school documents.

## 6. Findings

As a result of the intervention, a global picture has been gained on how to define the concept of well-being by educators and the ways in which they project it in the educational process so that the students reach the state of well-being, which in the last decades has been a fundamental theme in specialized research. The interview-based survey method emphasized that 46% of respondents aim to design the general model of well-being for students (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2006) in educational activities and, in particular, the economy of happiness; also, they aim to highlight in the teaching activities its components. Another relevant aspect, reported by 75% of teachers with over 10 years of teaching, has revealed that specialized researches still does not provide a general model of happiness or a guide of good practice that teachers in partnership with family and community can offer it to students, but each teacher in his class proposes activities in which students participate actively or not, and under the influence of socio-economic status and cultural context, develop personal autonomy, build positive relationships with others and develop decisional competences in managing social and professional life, so that happiness is defined by learning meaning and purpose in life, but also by personal development of students along the schooling level. The data and information gathered revealed that the same percentage of subjects stated that the maintenance of the well-being state of student is also supported by the need to develop the functional communication capacity, by increasing the efficiency of the communication within the interrelation and situational system taking into account the social status of the student, the representations, norms, moral principles or system of his believes. Thus, most teachers are considering managing some ways of alternative communication through which the learner can disagree about organizing perceptions about society, but also developing strategies for assessing the social environment. This aspect closely follows in the didactic work also the elimination of prejudices, stereotypes, specific barriers and blockages in didactic communication which can often generate conflicts by increasing the level of assertiveness in interaction, but also by valuing an assertive behaviour in comparison with a deviant one. The overcoming of barriers / blockages in didactic communication highlights “the way teachers are aware of importance and ethical principles of professional responsibility and social default” (Cuc, 2013c, p. 229). In addition, 60% of teachers in formal and extracurricular activities tend to increase their sensitivity to their own emotional states, improve control of impulses that can alter their well-being, and manage stressors (national evaluations, classroom teacher change, emotional and physical abuse, anxiety of separation encountered in children that are going through parental separation / divorce, emigration of a parent / both, etc.) and increase tolerance to daily stress. The answers provided by the teachers are a criterion in the analysis and the questioning about the quality of the initial and continuous training of the teaching staff in the education system in accordance with the new directions of action, as well as of the educational measures regarding the prevention of the problematic situations and the crisis in life of learners, who do not support a general well-being for learners. An educational aspect of depth that supports general well-being is the autonomy of learners highlighted by 85% of the subjects because it pursues independence through action through its decision-making process by strengthening authority and understanding the personal and professional implications so far, and for the professional and social future from the lack of expression of independent behaviour and the valorisation of personal values and principles. This aspect is highlighted by the respondents, the design and implementation of educational

programs for pupils with emigrant parents, finding solutions to the issues raised by perceived membership, as well as the perceived control of the new socio-economic status, the concrete cultural context of life, the minority status in the state where a part of the family has migrated.

In this new context, when the phenomenon of Romanian migration abroad is no longer a temporary one, has a strong impact at the macro-social level, but also at the microsocial level, on the family, the student takes over the general pattern of the happiness of the migrant parents, whose everyday happiness is under the influence of the interconnection of some major needs: "need for belonging" - (Stevens & Fiske, 1995 as cited in Chelcea, 2015, p.168) belonging to a new level of civilization and livelihood of the new state in which the parent migrated, being concerned about the new relationship that is being built between him and the society he adheres with all the principles promoted; the development of self through the assumption by the family and implicitly student of the new social role or the flexible role orientation, where through formal roles, they improve the performance, ``self-enhancing`` (Stevens & Fiske, 1995 as cited in Chelcea, 2015, p.168). Also, 80% of respondents point out that students whose parents are migrants in countries of Western Europe or North America take over from parents' attitudes and their behaviour, show positive self-emotions, significantly improve self-image, have a proactive behaviour, increase the level of social responsibility, self-confidence in achieving some high performance, and the establishment of harmonious social relationships by increasing social tolerance (Iluț, 2015). These aspects aim in educational practice to "develop the tolerance of ambiguity, adaptation to the challenges caused by the change of the cultural environment, empathy, but also the use in the evaluation procedure of student reflection on cultural/ethnic experiences of groups of belonging, which will help to understand all historical and social experiences of cultural/ethnic community groups" (Cuc, 2014a, p.57). From this point of view, the answers provided by the respondents also highlighted the advanced solutions for the promotion of well-being in the educational environment and implicitly in the social and professional one: school is the child's life studio, where life skills are formed and is generated for individual the general pattern of happiness by increasing the learner's ability to consciously maintain the well-being and at the same time to transmit it to others.

The school allows the individual to develop their social and professional life management skills to efficiently manage the variables involved: the concrete cultural context; socio-demographic factors; the socio-economic and professional status of the family and later his status; ethnic identity and values promoted by the ethnic minority of the subjects; of course age or gender, genetic and personality factors; the way in which the individual manages social and professional relationships can influence the evolution or the course of life with all the ups and downs in which he is trained (Szentagotai-Tătar & David, 2017, pp. 36-40; Cheltea, 2015, p.166); the quality of management of the educational institution; a reorganization of the psycho-pedagogical training programs of future teachers; eliminating content inappropriate for the age and individual peculiarities of students, but also their anchoring in contemporary social reality; giving more hours in the educational curriculum for school counselling and guidance; making the school-family partnership and main community institutions partnership more efficient, by promoting activities that actively engage actants; perpetuating inappropriate and passive methods of active participation of students in personal development; the development of coping adaptive mechanisms, which have the educational end to develop the attitude component of psychological



resistance in crisis situations in personal and social life; increasing the level of social autonomy, self-efficacy, social responsibility, or developing some supportive social interaction opportunities based on flexibility and commitment.

## 7. Conclusion

The state of well-developed and maintained in the family and school generates to the educated the need for positive change of self, pursues the valorisation by it and the deciding factors of the personal and creative potential; at the same time, builds the beneficial atmosphere of generating personal and professional challenges for the learner, which makes it more aware of the value of social interests as more profound and important than personal ones, and personal success is ensured by social responsibility, concentration on the values of each individual, the act of internalizing social values, the essential things in social and professional life, which make a man better.

Even if the tasks of social and professional life sometimes burden us, our mission, as teachers, is to maintain and improve the well-being of the learner, to eliminate the restriction of their independence or the uniformity of their individuality in the educational process, upon our wish to have the same type of personality in our students that we had a few years ago or before with one or two decades (Dulamă & Ilovan, 2015, 2017a, 2017b). Social dynamics are in constant change, we are facing new trends and values of globalization, the liberalization of the economy and the financial markets, which have led to the free movement of information, of capital, and the freedom of population migration in areas with financial potential. It prints also at the level of the educational act, a rethinking of the directions of action, of the policies to be implemented, to rethink the new mental infrastructure of our society in the spirit of global culture, of economic, social, informational, technological, political and cultural interdependence. This is the new approach in which we must manage the new educational strategy, the educational policy to draw the most conclusive answers, if our students, in a society of cultural diversity, are educated in the spirit of cultural diversity, learn to harmonize / balance national identity with cultural diversity, have developed their global competences and are ready for an active social and professional insertion. These directions of educational action can only be achieved in an environment favorable to maintaining and improving the well-being of the learner.

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