

## THE SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY TOWARDS THE PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF SCHOOL DROPOUT

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**Abstract:** *This paper aims to emphasize the importance of the partnership between school and community for preventing early school leaving and reducing the school dropout. In order to achieve a successful partnership, it is necessary to go through some steps of “exploration-evaluation-planning-training-initiation-achievement-checking-regulation-consolidation-action-implementation-assessment”. Thus, the four conditions for achieving this process need to be respected: communication, coordination, cooperation and partnership. The educational partnership is the form of communication, cooperation and collaboration offering the optimal support to the child at the level of the educational process. It involves a unity of requirements, options, decisions and educational actions between educational factors and it is carried out within the educational act. A successful partnership implies identifying goals and common interests useful for the partners and the community, finding the optimal way to organize and manage the available resources in order to achieve the purpose, identifying the competencies of those involved in these projects in order to achieve most of them and implementing changes for the benefit of the institution. Preventing the school dropout should be the highest priority assumed equally by the school and the community. Beyond national policies and strategies which are more or less applied, each community has its own characteristics and dropout causes have different values from one community to another. So, the two entities, the school and the community, need to find personalized and coherent solutions to prevent this phenomenon, which will surely define the structure of the future generations.*

**Keywords:** partnership, school, community, school dropout

### 1. Introduction

In this research, I will try to emphasize the importance of collaboration between school and community for reducing the school dropouts and preventing early school leaving. Education is perceived as a vital function of society, and school as the main institution through which society perpetuates its existence. Thus, the school is a “key factor” in development. Nowadays almost everything is expected from school: helping the youth know the past and understand the present; helping them become aware, responsible and also involve themselves as much as possible in guiding the community towards a desired future. The beginning of the school year is

marked by a series of difficulties that have recently become common practice: the huge number of schools whose renovation are on hold due to the lack of funds, teachers’ dissatisfaction, but also the statistics and documents relating to the last completed school year, most of them requiring difficult and long lasting procedures. At this point we focus on both school dropouts and behavioral issues [1].

School dropout is not a new problem as multiple researches have already been done aiming to identify and prevent school failure. New factors have emerged over the time, all of them contributing to this negative phenomenon among pupils and inducing a change of the educational,

informative and formative vision. The equality of chances for education, the psycho-pedagogical support provided in schools, should involve all the factors that will enable school to stop and eventually eradicate this phenomenon [2].

## 2. Specialized Publications/Literature

School dropout is a dangerous phenomenon because it produces negative effects both at an individual, psychological level and also at a social level. The psychological effects include an alteration of the self-image of the student in question, who will increasingly lose confidence in his/her own possibilities and capacities, being afraid of failing. From a social point of view school failure is the equivalent of “stigma”, “labeling” and usually leads to social marginalization entailing a high level of deviant and criminal behavior. From a legal point of view, school is compulsory until the end of the tenth grade.

Whenever the school attendance statistics are being checked by the government, the school dropout rate before the statutory compulsory term is relatively rare, often being disguised as intense absenteeism.

In general, those who drop out of school are no longer reintegrated to the same educational institution and are not enrolled in an alternative learning program.

the conditions of social failure of social inclusion, meaning that it significantly reduces the chances of personal development and social acceptance.

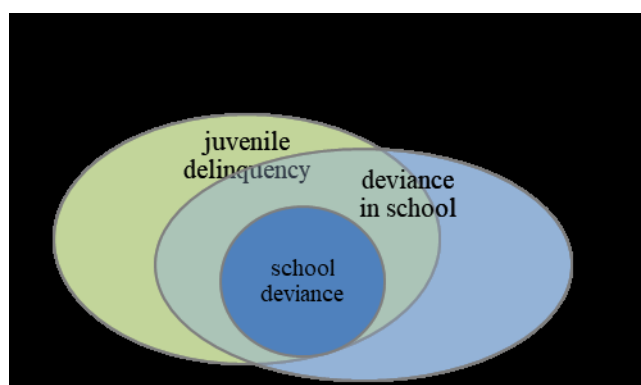
Failure to complete school education is associated with limited occupational and economic growth, taking a distance from the values of society and its institutions, and a decline in personal income over the course of one’s entire life [3].

School dropout generally designates a set of behaviors that violate or transcend the norms of school achievement. Thus, school deviation will include all the deviant behaviors and norms that regulate the school environment. They are specified in the school regulations and in those of internal order.

The deviant teaching of the teachers represents a distinct category, they are exerting a certain influence on the dynamics of school deviance, but I will not refer to them in the paper.

There are several concepts that are correlated and whose significance intertwines giving us an insight into the phenomenon of school deviance.

These are: deviant behavior, juvenile delinquency, deviance in school and school deviance, and the relationship between them can be seen in the following diagram fig.1 [4].



*Fig.1. The relationship of concepts that contribute to school deviance*

Until 1990, in Romania, there were no discussions about school leaving or non-schooling, because the communist system would not accept school failure as a reality. Unfortunately, this issue has not been a priority since 1990. School dropout creates

### 2.1. The psychosocial approach

The psychosocial approach considers that people who have dropped out of school are different from those who are constantly studying due to different personality traits. When we talk about education, we talk

about the role of motivation, intelligence, self-image that influences the process of learning. In this case, we are talking about those people who consider school a “waste of time”. Over time, researchers have been trying to show that those who drop out of school differ from those who complete their studies in one or more psychosocial attributes or personally traits; many studies from this approach investigated the role of motivation, intelligence, self-image and aggression in the decision to drop out of school.

### **2.2. Interactive perspective**

It refers to the interactions that take place between the student’s individual characteristics and the educational environment. When certain dysfunctions occur in the interaction between the two environments, it can lead to school dropout. This is considered to be the result of inadequate personal interaction with other members of the community, for example, the student cannot keep up with the material taught.

### **2.3. The theory of external constraint**

It states that school dropouts are not only the effect of population poverty but also a consequence of the pressure of environmental factors the individual cannot control.

Consequently, school dropout is determined by both psychosocial factors and external factors that act on the individual. An example of an external factor may be the lack of school units in some villages or small towns, which are at large distances that impede the pupil from going to school [5].

Among these factors, which have a great influence on keeping students in schools, are health factors, occupational and family obligations. If we accept that the interactionist perspective subsumes the psychosocial one, the paradigm of school dropout will be based on two components: one locates the forces that promote school dropout in the educational context, emphasizing the lack of a satisfactory social integration within the school institution due to certain psychosocial characteristics of the

student; the other extracurricular environment a determinant factor of school dropout, leaving the school as a response to the conflict between non-school and school obligations [6].

### **2.4. The theory of exclusion**

Considering that the main factor of school dropout is the school itself through the policies that promote it, certain school practices, such as: expulsion or suspension. All these aspects discourage the student from learning, engaging in student stigma and marginalization.

Disengagement refers to the process by which both school and student manifest disinterest between each other. Disengagement occurs by lowering the affective, intellectual, material investment of the student towards the school environment. But nowadays, we can also talk about the lack of teachers’ involvement in the education process in rural areas, precisely because of the lack of qualified teachers.

### **2.5. Systemic perspective**

This perspective is used as it seeks to maintain a research on interaction dynamics in several systems that affect student behavior.

The school dropout system includes several subsystems: family, school, personality. Between these elements there must be a symbolic relationship.

Each component is at a certain level and to some extent affected by all others. For example, if you have a child in the family that is bullied, he will not be careful at school, will not do his homework, he will be negligent and reluctant; he will shut himself up and will not communicate [7].

### **2.6. The perspective of power**

This perspective is based on the student’s forces in the process of change. It is intended to capitalize on existing resources or to discover new ones on the basis of which change will occur.

Reducing school dropout is possible by finding resources such as facilitating parent-school or parent-child communication, harnessing the child’s

intellectual abilities, or addressing teaching methods appropriate to each child's personality.

### 2.7. Practice based on behaviorist theory

It assumes helping the child, student or teacher's family to learn new behaviors and to remove annoying behaviors. We can strengthen the child's self-esteem through praising him/her in front of the class when he/she achieves better grades. Rewarding different awards in areas where students are interested. Thus, the child will improve or maintain the behavior for which he/she is rewarded and give up the conduct that is not rewarded or is punished [8].

### 2.8. Practice based on family therapy

Working with family as a subsystem and changing the types of interactions between family members is the purpose of this theory.

Different methods can be organized in family counseling. For example, the role play between the child and the parent to achieve what the student wants from the parent and vice versa. By doing this, each one becomes aware of each other's needs. The narrative method can also be used by providing examples from the community as a framework for use by strengthening the belief that the model can be reached through the proper use of its own resources. The effects of school dropout show that this type of conduct is considered particularly serious.

Those who do not have the professional qualification indispensable to socio-economic integration, nor the moral civic formation necessary to exercise the role of a parent and a citizen of a community.

Having no qualifications, those who drop out of school are the future unemployed and represent a medium and long term, a source of social difficulties and skills that exceed the investment required by initial training [9].

From the point of view of economic costs, expensive is not the well-educated person, but a sufficiently educated one who leaves school with a sub-real formation under moral, intellectual or aesthetic aspect.

Recycling such a person, prone to compromise, imposture and delinquency, will cost more and will be difficult to achieve.

## 3. Objectives

1. Highlighting the importance of school and community partnerships to reduce school dropout and prevent early school leaving.
2. Evidencing the factors that ensured cohesion within the partnerships

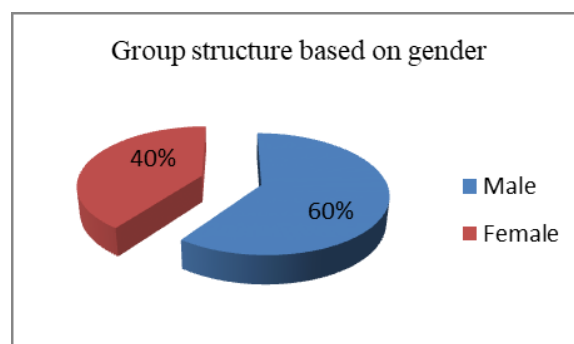
## 4. Applied methods

To conduct the research, I have used the questionnaire. A questionnaire is a data collection tool. It consists of a set of questions, but it can also contain graphics, photographs, drawings, plans, etc. It is the most used tool in research of any kind, being particularly flexible, and can incorporate a wide variety of questions.

It is an instrument that must be logically and coherently constituted, paying attention to both the facility of use and the awakening and maintenance of the interest of the interviewee.

In these areas, the order of the questions (the dynamics of the questionnaire) plays an essential role, but there is no systemic method to determine the sequence of questions in a questionnaire.

The group consists of ten school directors from Ilfov County. I have applied the questionnaire between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2019.



## 5. Results

*5.1. Have you considered the partnerships between school and the local community a management priority in order to reduce*

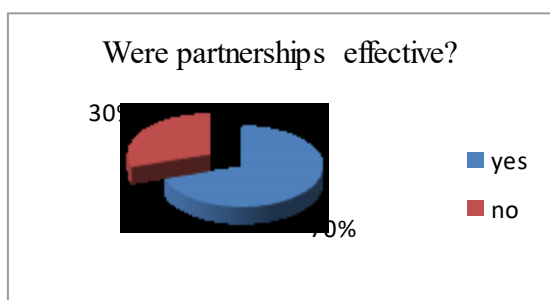
*school dropout and prevent early school leaving?*

- a. yes - 10
- b. no - 0

All respondents agree that partnerships represent a priority for managers to fulfill their goal of reducing school dropout and prevent early school leaving.

**5.2.** *Do you consider these partnerships were effective?*

- a. yes - 7
- b. no - 3



**5.3.** *What do you think are the reasons why partnerships were /were not effective?*

- a. effective:
  - the community realized the significance of completing education by all the students;
  - the desire of stakeholders to have an educated population with greater chances on the labor market.
- b. not effective:
  - stakeholders were not consistent on application of the initial programs;
  - insufficient human and material resources;
  - stakeholders hold school as the one and only responsible for reducing the school dropout.

**5.4.** *Which factors do you think ensure the cohesion within the school-community strategic partnerships?*

- a. ensuring equal opportunities in education;
- b. encouraging initiative and participation;
- c. developing cooperation;
- d. encourages discipline and responsibility;

e. all of the above.

All respondents chose „e” for their answer.

**5.5.** *What do you think school should do to ensure the success of the partnerships for reducing school dropout and preventing early school leavings?*

- should have a strategy to identify issues and inform community about its needs;
- should raise specific proposals or projects to involve community stakeholders as partners;
- ought to involve as projects active members the parents and the representatives of the local council on the board of directors;
- should try to make families more active and conscious partners of school.

## 6. Discussions

Taking into account the answers given by the questionnaires, we note that school-community partnerships are very important for reducing school dropout and preventing early school leaving.

Prevention of early school leaving is considered to be particularly important, not only to combat the negative consequences of poverty and social exclusion on child development, but also to provide children with the means that enable them to break the cycle of passing the disadvantage between generations.

Reducing school dropout should be one of the major concerns and should be established as a priority of the educational system, especially because its causing factors are multiplying and diversifying in a try to adapt to the increasingly challenging social, economic, cultural, and professional context in which the education system works.

## 7. Conclusions

School dropout and early school leaving are phenomena that take place in most schools on the territory of Romania sometimes in alarming proportions.

School dropout is noticed from the early grades and the number of students who quit

education grows with each grade.

Although at the legislative level there were issued documents that guide the schools in diminishing this phenomenon, the causes that generate it remain: poverty, parents working abroad, illiterate parents, disadvantaged categories, etc.

School, as a directly involved institution, is overwhelmed by the situation of successfully managing school dropout, especially because the local community is also responsible for the administrative management of the school dropout.

There are still divergent views in the community about the responsibility for dropouts and school is often considered the only institution directly responsible.

It is essential that every community stakeholder should be aware of the fact that the prevention of school dropout consists of a set of measures in the field of education, improvement of the socio-economic conditions, use of free time, facilitation of communication, behavioral modeling, improvement of environmental conditions taken to reduce risk factors and to strengthen the protection factors.

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