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SCHOOL RESILIENCE. ELEMENTS WHICH ARE INCREASING IT WITHIN THE SCHOOL: TEACHER's LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

School resilience is too little the main issue within the Romanian educational system. It is addressing especially to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. We could say, without being wrong, that our investigative approach is almost a pioneer in the Romanian education system. We have operationalized the concept of resilience in the leadership of the school principal / deputy, the leadership of teachers, educational effectiveness, the trust of parents and students in school, teachers' trust in their mission. The research was conducted in 11 disadvantaged schools, selected based on process and context indicators, schools where the dropout rate is above the national average and well above the European target. In each school, focus groups with students and parents and teachers were organized, as well as an interview with the principal/ deputy. Questionnaires were also applied to the principals / deputies, teachers, students at risk and their parents. The hypotheses were confirmed in the sense that in the investigated schools, although with students at risk, the essential elements of developing an environment conducive to assisted resilience are not defined. Teachers from investigated schools do not trust their ability to change destinies, parents do not trust school, and the school does not trust parents. The principal is not a leader, he/ she does not value his / her staff. Therefore, in schools investigated, resilient students are sporadic, unscheduled, unassisted

Keywords: School resilience, teachers's leadership, students in risk,school dropout, early school leaving.

1. Introduction

The Romanian educational system faces limits and negative effects, as evidenced by numerous studies and researches. The costs of non-education (early school dropout / lack of education) are very high. These figures are confirmed by one of the studies of the European Network of Experts in the Education Economy, authors Hanushek, and Voessmann (2010) analyzes Romania's earnings because of the improvement of the educational system, would be immense, regardless of the scenario chosen. In other words, a general improvement in the education system would bring considerable economic and social benefits. The analysis from the perspective of the National Institute of Educational Indicators (SNIE in Romanian) carried out by the Institute of Educational Sciences at the level of 2014 highlighted the characteristics of the Romanian education system, based on the statistical data provided by the National Institute of Statistics: the rate of the qualified teaching staff is in an average of 95.73%, and the number of pupils / teachers in the school year 2013-204 is 15 students. The lowest number of students / teachers is at the primary level, and in comparison, the two urban-middle-school residence environments have different dates, with fewer pupils in rural areas. The gross enrollment rate of pupils in pre-university education is 89.4% of the data provided by National Institute of Statistics for 2014, in primary and secondary education being 90.7%, in rural areas by 84.2%. The drop-out rate at primary and lower secondary level in the 2012-2013 entry level is 1.4%, the transition rate at high school and vocational at the school year 2013-2014 is 96.7% , and the school drop-out rate at secondary and vocational level in 2012-2013 is 2.8%. Also, interest for our theme is the registered graduation rate. For gymnasium education, it is 81.6% for the 2012-2013 level, in the rural area being lower, 70.7%, and in high school, with or without a baccalaureate exam, is 90.6%. The school's early school leaving rate is at 17.3%, although the target for 2020 is 11.7%, a gap, according to Eurostat, between Romania and other European countries. In 2008-2009, Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance for Pre-university Education (ARACIP in Romanian) collected data from all schools from Romania and created the National Risk Education Map (HNRE in Romanian), highlighting which risk factors correlated with student outcomes, resulting in a list of 15 risk factors approved by Romanian Minister Order No.6517 / 19.12.2012 regarding the approval of the "Methodology of external evaluation of the quality of education in pre-university education". The first risk factor and the most important that negatively affects the students' results is the socio-economic level of the family. So, according to HNRE, students come from poor families have a much greater chance of leaving school early if they are not supported by school. In this context, those who succeed are resilient students, children who, despite the precarious condition at home, have very good results in learning.

2. Problem Statement

A possible response that limits system losses by reducing early school leaving rates is to increase the resilience of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The concept of resilience as Webmaster Dictionary explains comes from Latin (lat.resiliere = kickback after a violent physical shock) is defined according to the dictionary as the ability to become strong, healthy and success after something bad happens or the ability to successfully deal with the worst disasters "(Wustmann, 2005, p. 15). The definition of the concept can be found in the material physics, as Manciaux tells us that "it is measured in kilogram of force per square centimeter and that it is shock-resistant" (Muntean, & Munteanu, 2011, p. 241). Ionescu (2013)

makes a short history of using the term: for the first time he was used by the Enlightenment philosopher Francis Bacon in 1626; in 1668, Plato's philosopher Henry More uses it; in 1857, Tomes is used by Dr. Tomes who explains how he treats the Japanese natural calamities and earthquakes; in 1952, in the "Lelia" novel or Andre Maurois's "Life of George Sand"; from a scientific point of view, we find the concept in the American Journal of Psychiatry, dedicated to the World War II when speaking of Scoville about the resilience of British children who, after the war, faced dangerous situations for their lives; in the 1970s, Wustman (2005) talks about vulnerable children at risk. Of these, some have developed behavioral disorders and other behaviors that make them survive and resist difficult life situations (Muntean, & Munteanu, 2011, p. 242). So, problems have always existed, resistance to shock has been, but at the same time resilient behaviors or vulnerable behaviors have developed. Norm Garmezy, a Minnesota University professor, pioneer in the theory of resilience, supports the identification of the forces that lead children to survive, with the aim of reducing vulnerability for others, with three phenomena of resilience: good outcomes of the students at risk, for stressed children, recovery from trauma (as cited in Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990, p. 3). In contrast, Perry et al (1995), a child trauma specialist, says they are not resilient, but are malevolent, live and develop in harmony with the suffering they are exposed to. Ionescu (2013) says about the concept of resilience that extends from individual to family, community, ethnicity, to the whole society (family resilience, community resilience, ethnic resilience, cultural resilience).

From a historical perspective, Ionescu (2013) highlights three phases of scientific use: focus on the individual (successful adaptation is conditioned by the resources available to the individual, the studies are centered on the person and on the variables that were manifested in the interaction of the person with the environment life);understanding the processes of resilience (an individual can be resilient in one context and another, cannot be resilient in a field, but in others does not, there is an understanding of the interacting mechanisms, the concept is studied at family level, group, practice); promoting resilience by specialists, also called assisted resilience; therefore, resilience can be judged eco systemically, relying on the interaction of the stressors and the vulnerability to them, in the definitions of resilience, always being adversity or stressful situations, resilience without the absence of suffering. What factors facilitate resilience? This is a question that is particularly concerned with the followers of assisted resilience. From the innumerable research done (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990), there is a multitude of factors, broken down into categories: child, family, institution (as cited in Muntean, & Munteanu, 2011, pp. 243-252). Thus, Wustmann (2005) defines them for each category: the factors related to the child are: the positive temper, the feeling of being in control, the feeling of being effective, a good self-esteem and a good self-esteem, the ability to control it, good social skills, empathy, responsible behavior in relation to others, flexible and active coping abilities (the ability to mobilize social support when needed), the ability to relax, as well as a confident optimistic attitude towards life (called sense of consistency), specific attachment behaviors, talents, inclinations, interests, hobbies; the factors present in the family are: a secure attachment figure that promotes child's confidence and autonomy; child-rearing practices based on positive emotions, cohesion, stability, communication, attachment among siblings, good social support network of the family; factors present in school: clear rules and structures, appreciative climate, high standards of constructive relations with colleagues; factors present in other social environments: the presence of competent and child-friendly adults, resources in the community, the presence of prosocial models that promote norms and values; the author identifies family-specific factors as those present in other social environments. Resilience

is usually researched retrospectively. In all cases, it has been found that an important factor of the resilient child is the existence of a reference person, the feeling of trust. So, children are resilient when they do not feel alone, when the effort counts for someone when they are appreciated (Muntean & Munteanu, 2011, pp. 252-255).

Another important aspect of resilience is that it is not a universal process, but a situational one. Thus, a child resilient in the school environment can experience failures in the social environment, the accumulation of unfortunate events leading to the diminution of resilience. Resilience may also mean the person's ability to find himself or herself in situations where changes occur or in adverse environments. In all limit situations (depression, burn out), people need an internal spiritual force if they do not want to self-destruct.

Berndt (2014) described that force strength is based on several pillars, as American development psychologist Emmy Werner and his California University team have repeatedly observed and observed for 40 years 698 Kauai boys and girls born in 1955, 201 of them grew up on the unfortunate island, 72 managed to master their difficult situation, despite the poor social prognosis, showing no strange behavioral disturbances at all. They were good at school, they were connected to the social life of the island, they were aiming realistic goals. At the age of 40, none of these people became punishable, none depended on State assistance. The young psychologist and the problem posed for these troubled children and how they had managed not to collapse. Professor Michael Fingerle emphasizes the idea that this question does not only address medicine and psychology, but also pedagogy (as cited in Berndt, 2014, p. 61). The study started in 1958 validates that one of the key factors for power is the link: each of Kauai's powerful children has at least one very close person they were interested in them and responded to their desires, which had borders and offered guidance. Even a single close connection made so much that negative factors compensated, which is pedagogically oriented. Monika Schuman argues that the trusted person must not necessarily be a mother, father, grandmother or grandfather, but also an aunt, a teacher, a neighbor, who can take over the role. It is important for these people to look at the children in their eyes, to give them safety, to recognize their steps forward, to encourage their ability, to love them independently of their performance (as cited in Berndt, 2014, p. 63). Other psychologists believe that another factor of resilience comes from the power of frustration: resilient people are not seen as victims but take their own fate in their hands, says sociologist Leppert, and Corina Wustmann Seiler who leads Zurich in the project "Accelerating early education and resilience" Instead of fleeing the problems, Kauai's powerful children tried to relive live with some degree of daily flexibility for that, without waiting for someone else to get rid of the problem or help them (as cited in Berndt, 2014,p. 67). The sense of belonging to society, the confidence in the importance of one's own person and their own actions, and the pursuit of a superior goal in life are positive factors that influence people, making them resilient. To these are added two characteristics: intelligence and humor. Some specialists, such as Karena Leppert, feel that resilience itself is a matter of personality, a characteristic mark of personality, yet more scientists have come to the belief that besides other properties of character, those who influence are the factors of the environment, the educational climate, the delegation of responsibility and the intervention of a sense of belonging (as cited by Berndt, 2014,p. 63). Wustmann Seiler Seiler says that the roots of the resilience development exist in personality as private factors, but they are also found in the living environment. The strong, resilient, knows himself/herself very well. People learn through success or failure. Self-confidence makes you strong, who does not expect to produce effects through their

own actions will not even try to change or risk anything and will try to avoid the situation and to evaluate itself negatively, said Corina Wustmann Seiler Seiler (as cited in Berndt, 2014, p. 68). The powerful Kauai children of the young were forced to take responsibility, including taking care of younger brothers, taking up a community task, or managing household care because both parents worked or were ill . Self-awareness therefore increases self-knowledge, both leading to success, Schwarzer saying that people with higher expectations of self-efficacy are tenser and tenser, thus retaining the sense of their personal value (cited in Berndt, 2014, 69). Scottish Brigid Daniel, a social welfare teacher, says the three fundamentals of resilience are I have, I am and I can. Another sense of resilience is that there is better recovery after negative experiences, and in case of illness the resilient is dominating the disease (as cited in Berndt, 2014, pp. 40-93). Ceobanu, and Măirean, (2015) demonstrate through a case study analysis the positive correlation between social support (family, friends, community) and the benefit to the subjects, health, wellbeing and life satisfaction (Escriba-Aguir & Perez - Hoyos, 2007; Moser, 2012; Runcan & Iovu, 2013). There are several categories of social support: providing emotional support, information (advice), instrumental help (Schulz & Schwarzer, 2004, p.720). Leadership of the teacher aims at his ability to influence students. The leadership concept dates back to antiquity (Marzano, Waters, & Nulty, 2005, p. 4), and the definition of leadership is complex, abound in the literature, but a central element of them is that leadership implies a process of influence, as Yukl (2002) defined it "Several definitions of leadership reflect the point of view that implies a process of social influence while intentional influence is exercised by a person or a group on a person or group to structure activities and relationships in a group or organization, "we intentionally say because leadership is based on articulated goals or results on which the process of influence is expected to be the engine (as cited in Pont , Beatriz, Nusche, Deborah, Moorm & Hunter, 2008, p. 18), while Bass (1985) says leadership is old art, talks about him appearing in Plato's works , Cezar and Plutarch, seems like a robust concept that "appears universally among people, regardless of culture, whether they are peasants from India, nomads from the Eurasian steppes or fishermen in Polynesia" (cited in Marzano, Waters & Nulty, 2005, p. 5). The term leadership comes from English and means a leader's ability to determine team members to follow in achieving their goals. So, even it refers especially to team work, the influence of a leader can be the energy of success for each member of the team.

3.   Research Questions

Our research has many questions, especially in describing the resilience assisted within the school for students at risk: identifying the characteristic features of teachers that create a resilient environment, list the defining aspects of collective efficacy, identification of the cognitive aspects of the resilient environment (teachers 'confidence in them to produce any change / improvement in the students' learning, confidence in solving cognitive problems, emphasis on obtaining improved learning outcomes of pupils), identification of the emotional-emotional aspects of the resilient environment (trust-parents and pupils in school, teachers in pupils), teachers 'trust in pupils' potential to achieve better outcomes (affective support for pupils learning), determining the role of the director in creating a safe and trustworthy environment in the school by valorizing the staff through the encouragement of obtaining good results and providing feedback and developing the self-evaluation culture of teachers. In our research on school resilience in disadvantaged environments, we formulate the following hypothesis: If teachers trust that they are making

a change / improvement in student learning, developing students' potential to achieve better results, and confidence in resolving cognitive problems, then the environment created by school has the coordinates of the model of academic optimism and vulnerable students develop resilient behavior.

4.   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research is to investigate, from the perspective of school resilience, the characteristics that lead to transformation of a school from the disadvantaged environment into school, which is conducive to assisted school resilience in Romanian schools.

5.   Research Methods

The survey took place in 11 schools from the most deprived area in Romania, 7 in rural and 4 in urban areas. For the application of questionnaires, 10-15 students (nominated as at risk), 10% official teachers, parents of students at a risk, school principal and / or deputy) were selected. For the focus groups, parents of students at risk and their children were invited. 11 focus groups with parents and students and 11 focus-groups with teachers were organized. An interview / school was conducted with the school principal / deputy, 11 structured interviews. The number of respondents for survey from all 11 schools were: 148 students, 108 parents, 113 teachers, 12 principals/ deputies. Within each case study were applied both quantitative methods (questionnaire/survey) and qualitative (interview, document analysis - institutional development project, annual internal evaluation report, webpage, focus group). Participants in focus groups from the 11 schools were 99 teachers and 112 students and parents. Teachers respondents are with experience in the investigated schools as well as in the education system. Around 30% of them think they are not part of a team. The questionnaire survey and the interview were applied to the teaching staff in each case studies. Interviews were made to deputies and school principal (Table 01).

Table 01. The structure of surveys applied

Survey to whom was applied	Dimensions
For parents	Parents's confidence in school services
	Parents' trust in teachers from the school
	Education value in parents opinion
For students	Students' confidence in school they attend
	Students' trust in teachers
	The importance of education for students
For teachers	Teachers's confidence in students
	Teachers' s confidence in their own power for chang student's life through education
For school principal and deputy	School Principal' confidence in teachers
	Valorising teachers through feedback

The structured interview for school principal and deputy had the following components: confidence in teachers, teacher valorization (through feedback addressed, through elements of gratitude to the teaching staff). Document Analysis (Institutional Development Project, Annual Internal Assessment Report, Institution Website), and Analysis Sheet. For their assessment, we considered two important criteria: fidelity (the extent to which data are specific and repeatable representations of a phenomenon or social

process) and quantification (quantitative representation for statistical interpretation of data) (Vlăsceanu, 1986, p.182). The data analysis sheet obtained from the Institutional Development Project (IDP) has the following criteria: strategies for additional support for pupils at risk, discovery / identification of students at risk. Also, the data analysis sheet of the Annual Internal Assessment Report for the 2010-2011 school year has the following criteria: improvement measures for children at risk, improvement measures to increase student / parent confidence in school. The school's web site analysis sheet followed the following criteria: evidence of additional support programs for student at risk, common activities between students at risk and the least vulnerable. The focus-group guide has the following components: teacher trust in students, teacher confidence in them that can change the lives of students. As a general finding, responses to focus groups and interviews confirmed the trends highlighted by the questionnaire responses.

6. Findings

The findings are specific to schools investigated. Leadership of teachers is measured from the perspective of communicating with students, parents and the principal. Leadership is a process of influence the leader has towards his team. What is appreciated is that, at least at declarative level, they consider that students, regardless of the social condition, can learn. However, there are also teachers who do not share the same point of view, and some, as they say, feel even capped. Teachers questioned are aware that parents do not trust school. Moreover, teachers are not convinced that their students will succeed. From the focus groups organized with the teachers it turned out that they did not pose the problem to be leaders, to lead a process of influencing. This happens through the relationship with the students, which is done after the inspiration of each one, without proposing to be leaders. What is very important is that in each school, teachers have said they support students in difficult situations, but not every student, but only those with higher academic backgrounds. Do not invest in students who do not have these characteristics. Also, the most important problem for teachers is the reaction / collaboration with the family. In their opinion, parents are the ones who are guilty of children's failure. Most teachers think that students are progressing through teaching methods, the means of teaching how teachers relate and encouragement. Corroborating the statements of students and parents, we tend to conclude that from a theoretical perspective everything is known, but in practice the students do not feel encouraged. As far as the school environment is concerned, the teachers are aware that they are not friendly, but they do not feel responsible for it. From all answers, it results the award mistake. For example, someone else is responsible for unrealistic / failures / unprivileged environment or for students' failure. Also, teachers do not feel appreciated / respected by students' parents, which is an essential argument in developing a trust-based relationship. Therefore, the school aimed to support students in learning, but according to the students' statements of what is done, this desideratum has a theoretical and formal load, being replaced by simple teaching at school. Most teachers feel valued by the director (80%), however, remains that minority for which this condition is not present (20%), close to those who do not feel like they are part of the team (18%). Descriptive statistics data confirms that in most cases, teachers do not trust parents and their own skills and competences to change students' destiny through education. Thus, it appears that they average on the "partially agree" level with the fact that *"Poor students cannot learn/ cannot have education", "I feel capped as a teacher", "The parents do not trust our school", "Teachers consider they are not responsible for making school as friendly as possible", " No method or*

means of learning can capture children who are absent from school", " Parents are not interested in coming to talk to me". "Parents see children in their households only as help", "Parents do not trust school"," Parents think that today education is useless", "Teachers are not respected by parents", "Parents do not encourage children to teach", "Students who absent do not can recover". Regarding the trust of the beneficiaries in school, students' answers, from the analysis of descriptive statistics, keep the same line. Thus, students "disagree" with the following statements:" *I am not interested in school", "I do not have time to learn at home, I must do the job most of the time", "I often do not have money for notebooks, I often get hungry at school".* This means that the students are not economically vulnerable (or do not perceive it), they are interested in school. Parents disagree or are "partially in agreement" with *"I am not interested in my child's school situation", "Trust in school", "Today you do not do anything with education", "School is just money-consuming".* Existing these statements, parents have certain school-related detentions. Additionally, the opinion of principals is added, it is noticed that the principals "are partially in agreement" with the following statements: *"Parents do not trust school", "At any activity of mine, I feel that teachers are suspicious", "If a student does not want to learn, teachers abandon the fight", "I feel safe at school because of violence among students".* The fact that the answers are on the negative side in investigated schools, completes the outline of the image of the Romanian school in the underprivileged environment**.**

7. Conclusion

The school principal as the leader and the leadership of the teachers have positive tendencies, the opinion being that they are leaders, even if they do not have a genuine leadership. The resilience of students at risk can be developed, as there are prerequisites. However, this approach is not conscious, because resilience occurs randomly, without being a conscious approach from the educational units. Teachers and principals are unaware and do not have the training to cultivate this inner force of students to overcome their condition through learning. Thus, in the schools investigated, resilient children appear randomly, with randomly existing factors. In schools investigated, teachers are not convinced of their role and purpose, they are not encouraged by the Principal, who simply considers them to be encouraging. Creating a resilient environment is a priority in helping students from disadvantaged backgrounds to support them do not develop vulnerable behaviors. At the individual / family / close circle level, links should be established, and the support person identified. Of course, this can be done with the help of the school psychologist. At school level, measures are recommended for both teachers and executives. Regarding teachers, the organization of activities, courses, roundtables, seminars to increase teachers' confidence in them to change destinies, and the development of skills, abilities, leadership capabilities. At the level of the director, the development influence capacities, teacher valorizations and feedback. At community level, increasing school visibility in the community, organizing activities with parents and pupils to increase their confidence in school and school within them. At the level of the county school inspectorate, the identification of the educational units with vulnerable children and develop the leadership competences of principals. At the Ministry's level, the realization of the educational policy aimed at developing the development of assisted resilience in schools for vulnerable students.

Acknowledgments

Resilience is a most powerful attitude the vulnerable students can have. With a specialized support, students can develop this behaviour to succeed in education and to overcome the deprived condition they belong. Also, school must reconsider its position and to act professionally against these students. These must include a reconstruction for teachers and principal mentality. Our research will continue with the identification the effectiveness integrated model of develop resilience in schools from deprived area and with vulnerable students.

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