

**ERD 2019**  
**Education, Reflection, Development, Seventh Edition**  
**PARENTAL MIGRATION – A FUNDAMENTAL FACTOR IN THE**  
**DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN**

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***Abstract***

The article "Parental migration - a fundamental factor in the development of school children" aims to highlight the results of parents' migration on children left at home. Thus, the study wants to highlight the fact that students whose parents have migrated in foreign countries for a high standard of living, for the possibility of finding a job or for high standards of living and opportunities for education, are facing socio-emotional and behavioral problems. Various forms of expression of children regarding departure of parents are indicated such as: anxiety, depression, feeling of vulnerability, feelings of abandonment, feelings of anger, stress, psychosomatic reactions or behavioral problems. These reactions of the educables are more perceived as response to the complex phenomenon of abandonment. The article aims to present the effects of parental migration, but also the moderating factors of the impact of parental migration on the development of children left home in Romania. The "Parental migration" approach, both in the spectrum of the normative and actional plan, is based on the new evolution of the modern society, whose major objectives are the inclusion and development of well-being in the multicultural and intercultural society, through the related institutions. In this context, the dimension of the educational philosophy is directed towards new topics, and the mission of the educative is to promote the educational context in the development of these policies, in agreement with the new dimensions of the remodeling and development of the social dynamics of the demography in Romania.

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**Keywords:** Parental migration, educable, parenting model, coping strategies, school adaptation, behavioral disorders.



## 1. Introduction

Migration is a complex phenomenon, existing for thousands of years, from the beginning of our human existence. Over time it has been influenced by different political, economic, natural, social or religious factors, it has taken on new forms through the changes registered. The phenomenon has grown, increased and diversified the issues and effects of migration in contemporary society. The exodus, the founding myth of the Israelite people representing the cornerstone of the foundation of human civilization, is followed by other migration processes, which throughout human evolution have led to the emergence of multicultural societies, which in the ongoing struggle for human rights have rethought the concept of citizenship implementing another strategy for national policies. Today, the modern welfare states promote multicultural policies and support the action directions of interculturality. Migration is an old phenomenon, but also current, it must be viewed by researchers, society and the related institutions, as a normal phenomenon in which the individual or the groups of individuals have this right to move from one geopolitical region to another, because "Any person has the right to move freely and to choose his residence within the borders of a state" (Declarația Universală a Drepturilor Omului, 1948, art. 13, paragraph 1) and "Any person has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country" (Declarația Universală a Drepturilor Omului, 1948, art.13, paragraph 2) or "In case of persecution, any person has the right to seek asylum and to benefit from asylum in other countries" (Declarația Universală a Drepturilor Omului, 1948, art. 14, paragraph 1). The Maastricht Treaty outlines for EU citizens, the foundation of the right of free movement and residence in the EU, the EU's internal borders are abolished by Schengen agreements, and Directive 2004/38 / EC reinforces this desire for EU citizens, regarding the right to free movement and residence on EU territory, "Citizenship of the Union confers on each citizen of the Union a fundamental and individual right to free movement and residence within the territory of the Member States" (Directiva 2004/38/CE, n.d., art. 1), and "Free movement of persons is one of the fundamental freedoms of the internal market, which represents an area without internal borders, in which freedom is ensured in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty" (Directiva 2004/38/CE, n.d., art. 2). The European Union has based its philosophy on a right granted to citizens from the beginning by the Community legislation, free movement, and from this point of view at EU level, a major and common objective is the outline of common, cursive, coherent and flexible policies regarding the migration phenomenon. In this legal framework, well-grounded at EU level, the Romanian population which migrates to a certain destination country sought to cross the context of the economic crisis, the lack of opportunities in multiple spectrum: financial, economic, social, professional, cultural etc, but also the elimination from the family life of the low living standards, due to the lack of a job, of the poverty that governs the populations from the disadvantaged regions with a high unemployment rate or from isolated areas of the country with a poorly developed infrastructure and lacking means of communication. Another problem of parental migration was for the Romanian citizens the high standards of the country of destination, regardless of whether it is from the EU or not, as well as the opportunity of access to education, to educational institutions that are living organisms that ensure the well-being state and the feeling of belonging of the educable person, reinforced by the development of the professional competences necessary for an active social and professional insertion (Chiș, 2002, 2005; Chiș & Oltean, 2019; Chiș, Magdaș, Dulamă, & Moldován, 2019; Cuc, 2013a, 2014a, 2014c, 2015, 2019a, 2019c; Ursu, Dulamă, & Chiș, 2019). We need to consider the whole complex

dimension of the concept of migration, in addition to the push and pull factors, population migration and in particular the feminization of migration, Eastern Europe records the highest proportion of female migrants (57.3% of total migrantstock )” (Koser & Laczko, 2010, p. 184), has led to transformations of gender roles in emigrant parents.

## 2. Problem Statement

The migration from Romania for a period of time indicated advantages at the macro and microeconomic level, contributed to the increase of the economic and social status of the family, to the increase of its purchasing power, to a social mobility that the individual and the family in a short period of time crossed it. But, the parental migration meant for the family, in general and for the children left at home in particular, negative effects materialized in the emotional, social and psychological costs, on which the opportunities offered by the country of destination, the high standards of the level of living and civilization, could not limit or improve them. On both sides, from the parents who migrated, but also from the family left at home, these costs were substantial and in most cases the benefits could not be covered, they left deficiencies, legions, the child received the migration of the father or mother as an abandonment, and the fundamental mistake of the departed parent is the belief that he supplements through the financial part, which makes the child in this reality of the family manifest resentment, negative emotional states, to fill the absence through the material resources received, leading in time at these children to the appearance of attachment to material resources and to a rethinking of personal values and needs. In this context, Romania with the new policies of economic reform, faces a new configuration of family, the transnational family, as an effect of economic restructuring, of the policies of globalism and new communication technologies. The parents decide to go to work abroad in the interest of the child, of the family, confronting in the destination country with the parental cultural shock, as an effect of cultural adaptation. The child does not understand the financial needs, he only feels the abandonment, which contributes to the appearance of the problems of communication, relationship, alienation. The relational approach between the emigrant parent and the child decreases, even if it is supplemented by information technology, social networks, taking care of child at distance through these methods or by the legal custodian, emphasizes day by day that family members live separately, which in some situations can lead to divorce or separation. The emigrant parents, even if they are not physically present in their family, do not abandon their responsibilities, but even strengthen and intensify these responsibilities, especially the material ones, the control being achieved through the new technologies, which for these cross-border families contribute to the compression of time and space that separates them. But new technologies cannot fulfill the role of parent, do not offer guidance, necessary care, cannot build respect for moral values, they deteriorate attachment to parents, deprive the child of parental affection (Chiş & Oltean, 2019; Chiş et al., 2019; Cuc, 2013b, 2014b, 2017; Pânişoară, Sălăvăstru, & Mitrofan, 2016; Stan, 2016; Ursu et al., 2019). Another effect of the parental migration from Romania was represented by the emergence of the substitution families, in which the grandparents are those who assume the role of custodian, from the desire to meet the interests and needs that the children left at home have. Following the age indicators, the family structure, the ethnic structure, the social, economic, cultural level, the health status, those who assume the care of the children and their contribution to their development, in this acute crisis the family goes through, are the grandparents, as substitute parents, they become the

solution, which often affects a child's well-being through expectations, different life and social experiences, contributing to the emergence of the intergenerational ambivalence phenomenon or strengthens the conflict within the core family once with parental migration.

### **3. Research Questions**

Considering strategies, government policies and programs promoted in the last decade in Romania, in terms of migration, we propose that research to follow:

To what extent does parental migration have an impact on and affect in Romania the development of the remaining educable in the country?

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

The motivation of the theme is centered on the applicative dimension, on the identification of the problems of parental migration and the effects that this social phenomenon at present, in Romania has on the educable ones, but also from the perspective of the long term policies on the social dynamics and on the national economy. The global recession that the country has gone through has left its mark also on the Romanian society, which is at the beginning of the accession to the European Union. The crisis in Romania has left its mark on the national economy, especially at financial, banking and commercial levels, thus influencing the labor market and economic growth. But in these years politics has lost sight of another factor, just as primordial as the ones mentioned above, the psychological factor, which year after year left its mark on the social dynamics, and on the growth of the economy and favored year by year development of the migration phenomenon. Today, in the country, we are facing this social reality, a demographic decline, "The process of demographic aging has deepened ...The rates of demographic aging have increased from 114.4 (as of January 1, 2017) to 116.9 elderly people to 100 young people (as of January 1, 2018) ... Romania continues to be an emigration country, the emigration phenomenon being the second main cause of the reduction of the population of the country" (Comunicat de presă No. 215, 2018, p. 2). Migration, this "black sheep of demography" (Iftimoaie & Baciu, 2018, p. 168; Rotariu, 2009, p. 146) has left its mark on the labor mobility process, influencing the social, professional status of the individual, the standard of living and civilization, but also its residential status. He has also made his mark on the social level, raising on the working agenda of the government extremely complex social problems, which require in an extreme urgency the implementation on the working agenda of research and analysis programs in the field of migration, the development of some working strategies to examine the complex issues identified from a long-term approach and from an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspective, in order to solve an efficient decision management (Cristea, 2015; McAuliffe & Ruhs, 2018). The migration of the population from Romania leaves its mark at the macro and micro level, aiming that in the countries of destination the family members year by year feel the increase of the standard of living, a higher level of wages, the possibility of finding a better job in accordance with professional skills held; also these indicators aim the increase of the purchasing power of the family, but implicitly also the increase of the economic and social status of the family, both in the country of destination and in Romania. However, the increase of the economic and social status of the family along with the parental migration entails a cost avalanche in the

development of the children left in the country, in the care of one of the parents, of the grandparents or close relatives, these costs are felt at the level of the emotional and behavioral problems of the daily life of the educable, in the optimal functioning of the educable from a physiological, mental, emotional, somatic, social and spiritual point of view; in the process of self-knowledge and personal development of it through the active or passive state of manifestation in the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and the level of its adaptation; the costs are high for the children left at home because the absence of the parents or one of them leads to the loss of the behavioral model, with implications in the internalization of moral values and the development of personal values, through the lack of parental supervision, also with negative effects and on the learning and information management level, influencing the lifestyle, quality of life of the educable and implicitly the quality of his social relations (Băban, 2011; Cosmovici & Iacob, 1999; Dafinoiu & Boncu, 2014; Lemeni, & Miclea, 2010; Stan, 2016).

## **5. Research Methods**

This research approach represents an action model for educational activity in the gymnasium, an exercise of good practice for teachers, and in its creative approach it promotes effective strategies to reduce and improve the symptoms generated by parental migration. It is also the exercise that the teacher carries out in order to develop self-regulation mechanisms for the educables and to generate alternative behaviors to the undesirable ones, because “parental migration actually marks the loss of the minor's connection with the figure of the primary attachment, usually represented by parents. The produced separation can subsequently create difficulties in restoring normal, close relationships with parents. Children can perceive the migration of parents as abandonment” (Gherasim, 2016, p. 255).

The research purpose is to establish the impact that parental migration has on the overall personality development of learners.

### **5.1. Research objectives**

1. Radiography of the existing state of affairs regarding the effects of parental migration on the socio-emotional and cognitive development of learners, as a priority condition for interaction and adaptation to the school environment.

2. Highlighting the possible solutions advanced by the teachers to the problematic situations of the impact of the parental migration on the development of the educable ones, as a priority condition in the school orientation and the active social integration;

The pursuit of the aforementioned objectives is supported by the formulation of the working hypothesis.

### **5.2. Research hypothesis**

Acquiring the resources needed to develop the socio-emotional and adaptive skills, but also exercising the mobilization of these resources determine the positive reaction to the impact that parental migration has on the development of the educable.

For the research project, it was necessary to carry out the operation of sampling the target population, thus the sample of subjects was composed of 120 subjects, based on the simple random sampling procedure,

direct actors of the instructive-educational action, teachers from the pre-university education. We mention, interviewed teachers are from nine institutions and their structures with a cultural diversity of the school population. In view of the description of the sample of subjects, the following were considered: initial training and continuous training, seniority in the education system and seniority in the specialty registered in the system, seniority allocated to function in the institution where he is a holder, completing psychopedagogical training programs; the didactic degree obtained. In accordance with the research objectives, were delimited the working methods and instruments, which would ensure the sustainability of the substantive research, and the package of the instruments used had the purpose of highlighting the impact that parental migration has on the development of the educable ones. It was envisaged that the subjects answer the questions from the questionnaire in the possibility of the time they can manage; as an alternative method was used also the technique of the semi-standardized and non-standardized interview, there were followed the expectations of the teachers regarding the problem. In this research was used also the method of research curriculum documents and other school documents, as well as research tools and methods used in data collection, whose analysis would verify the hypothesis.

## **6. Findings**

In the constitutive stage, it was considered to build a global image on the problem of parental migration, identifying the factors that encourage parental migration, but also its direct and indirect effects on the development of the remaining educables in the country. The survey based on the questionnaire identified effects of parental migration on the development of educables and the problems that teachers face in the didactic activity as a result of these effects: high absenteeism, emotional problems, which leave their mark on the cognitive processes in the educational activity, a management of poor learning, low level of academic self-concept influences academic performance contributing to school failure, relational failure, increased aggression in the school environment, devaluation and lack of employment, weak social identification, effects of stereotype threat in school environment, dysfunctional behavior from the academic environment, victimization, rejection of classmates or their exclusion from the learning group or school environment are only part of the fundamental effects of the impact of parental migration, which has become a major social phenomenon within our society, for community development and integration into the dynamics of global society. The survey method based on the questionnaire emphasized that 83.33% of the respondents correlated the effects of parental migration with deficiencies in the development of the educable students left at home, in cognitive and socio-emotional level. Another relevant aspect, presented by 75% emphasized the communication problems and interrelation between the students left at home and one of the parents, grandparents or custodians, difficulties that arose due to the deficient internalization of the rules, the moral and social principles, the interests, the poor understanding of the needs, priorities and responsibilities in the family, in school and in society. Also, the interviewees reinforced the assumption of responsibilities set by the emigrant parents to the older siblings, who take on the role of parent, managing most often the younger siblings remaining at home, which can also generate rivalry between siblings. In this context, by departure of one or both parents, in the family environment the interactions change, the children left at home assume responsibility in front of the obligations, become a custodian for the little ones, exceeding their resolute skills and strategies for adapting to the different and difficult life situations,

strategies necessary also in promoting their well-being. Parental migration affects each member of the family differently, but in this social game of family interests and needs, children are vulnerable and do not present mechanisms of adjustment to situation that generate distress (coping mechanisms), developing dysfunctional behavior over time. From this point of view, 70.83% of the teachers highlighted another problem encountered in the educational activity of educables, self-knowledge and self-acceptance, subjective self-awareness, by referring to subjective social standards imposed by the media, social networks that develop self-destructive behaviors with severe repercussions on the physical and mental development of the educable. These self-destructive behaviors: excess of alcohol, tobacco, substances, food and even the suicide attempt emphasize emotional disturbances, the presence of the recurrence of negative emotions, which by chronicling them lead to the state of anxiety and depression, but also to the difficult task assumed by the subject of self-escape (Albulescu, 2003; Baumeister & Scher, 1988; Cuc, 2014b, 2014c, 2017; Dafinoiu & Boncu, 2014, p. 89). Also 66.66% of the respondents reported the existence of low self-esteem in children, poor self-regulation mechanisms, appreciation of personal effectiveness, frequent manifestation of negative emotions, feel unappreciated, manifest negative attitude towards self, all generated from the negative and traumatic experiences suffered in the absence of one parent or both emigrated parents. A percentage of 70.83% of the teachers noted the correlation between the self concept and the academic performance of the subjects, which decreased in the subjects in the absence of appreciation of personal effectiveness, skills, competences, personal values, in mobilizing their motivational mechanisms, but also in identifying the objectives of active professional and social development, promoting a healthy lifestyle, a quality of individual life and social relations. From this point of view 66.66% worry about the fear of school failure in the educables, because in a competitive society the result obtained by the individual leads to success, and its lack generates the failure, which also attracts the labeling of the individual, the consequences of the stigma felt by the subject through acceptance in the social group and based on its success. The negative impact that the child experiences of the stigma associated with the failure is also felt by the family members, who are also affected, feel guilty, ashamed, frustrated, they no longer trust, they feel the rejection of the group, and their mental and physical state of well-being are altered. Interviewees pointed out that cognitive failure in the educables is associated with the non-cognitive and relational school failure, which points out that the inadequacy of the educable to the activity and life regime of the school institutions generates in the educable delinquent behaviors: verbal violence, impoliteness, failure to comply with the rules, lie, hypersensitivity, physical violence manifested on colleagues, leading to serious delinquent behavior: insults, behavioral inconsistency, dropping out of school, expulsion, refusal to recognize school and community authority, disciplinary problems, school vandalism, alcohol consumption, tobacco, drugs, crime, etc. (Boncu & Ceobanu, 2013). In this context, 91.66% of the respondents stated that the primordial effect of parental migration is felt by educables due to the lack of influence of the parental models in the harmonious development of their personalities, which are the first landmarks of information, rules and norms of moral conduct, are the first landmarks of orientation in society, because the behavior of the educables is reinforced by the model generated by the parent in social interactions and with social institutions. The respondents also pointed out that, in his existence, the individual develops several types of fundamental relationships in forming his identity, but the primordial relationship is generated by the family, the communication and the interrelation with the family, and in this partnership the child identifies

the status of each member and the way of assuming consequences, in the virtue of the dominant competences and authority; it discovers a whole history of relationships, and depending on the attitudinal set formed in the family: values, beliefs about oneself and the world, it will develop patterns of attitude, behavior, it will form mechanisms of emotional self-regulation, which it will make them functional in the context school or community environment (Crețu, 2016; Cuc, 2013a, 2013b, 2014a, 2014c; Dulamă, Ilovan, Ciascai, & Maroși, 2015; Dulamă & Ilovan, 2016; Dulamă, Ilovan, & Buș, 2016; Dulamă, Vana, & Ilovan, 2016; Galimard, 2017; Pânișoară, 2011; Pânișoară, Sălăvăstru, & Mitrofan, 2016). In this context 70.83% of the teachers stressed that the migration of both parents or one of them causes not only the loss of parental behavioral patterns, but also the act of supervision of the parent, which has as a consequence the disruption of the socio-emotional development of the educable ones, but also their school adaptation. The teachers also specified the forms of expression in the school environment or in the community of the educable ones regarding the departure of the parents abroad: manifestation of the feeling of abandonment, psychosomatic reactions, feelings of anger, guilt, vulnerability, etc. all these reactions being reported at the time of the parents' departure abroad or at the length of their staying. Also, 51.66% of the respondents pointed out that the emigrant parents did not impose high and unrealistic academic standards on the children remaining at home, by obtaining maximum marks or grades, obtaining prizes in extracurricular activities, they did not neglect them even if they had emigrated for a high standard of living, for the possibility of finding a better job and a higher salary and they were not imposed social models from their experience in the country of destination or from the experience of social networks, they did not use the threat, their social isolation from the group of friends or the punishment. The respondents stated that parental migration for the family left in the country represented a high source of annual income, correlated with the standard of living, the increase of the socioeconomic status of the family in the community, the level of civilization and culture, and this aspect contributed to the increase of the academic performances of the educable ones.

The interview in the form of a semi-structured dialogue aimed to gather data and information on the possible solutions that the interviewees have given in order to improve the effects of parental migration on the harmonious development of the educables. From this point of view 83.33% stated out the importance of involving the fundamental institutions in combating this phenomenon, but also the involvement of the long-term decision-makers in the construction and promotion at the level of the competent institutions of coherent, cursive and flexible social policies, capable to combate and stop the phenomenon of migration with primordial effects in the global development of the future adults of the society. Also 91.66% stated that it is necessary to allocate in the educational institutions a larger number of specialists regarding educational counseling and psychological counseling, which systematically carry out differentiated and personalized intervention programs with an emphasis on combating the effects of parental migration.

These intervention programs have as their objectives both prevention and remediation, to develop work topics on self-awareness and personal development, but also to promote in the school and community environment the health and well-being of educables; counseling programs contributing to increasing the quality of the individual's educational life, the quality of social interpersonal relationships, but also to ensure a quality of the professional environment through the young graduates. Thus, promoting in the school institution and at Community level a system of European principles and values: transparency, mutual responsibility, environmental responsibility, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, inclusion



([https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission / service-standards-and-principles\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/about-european-commission/service-standards-and-principles_en)), the society will go through a complex process of transformation, which in the long term contributes to the increase of the quality of social life, to the attainment of a material, emotional and professional stability, through the economic growth and the possibility of ensuring a job according to competences, which will ensure a good state for the citizens by valuing the person at social and professional level, in order to reach the major objectives at community level.

## 7. Conclusion

In this modern and dynamic society, any form of knowledge of the studied phenomenon, but also the access of teachers, parents and community representatives to the studies undertaken on the effects of parental migration is a priority. The process of demographic aging has deepened, the share of the population under 14 has decreased, and the share of the population of 65 years is growing and Romania continues to be a country with an increasing number of the emigrating population, while the resident population is decreasing by 120.7 thousand people as of January 1, 2017” ( Comunicat de presă No. 215, 2018, p.1).

In this context, an efficient family-school-community collaboration is needed, through which to identify and implement effective strategies for ameliorating the effects of parental migration, an intervention that in these extreme conditions does not aim to establish the culprits, developing unfavorable policies for Romanian society, for the emigrant parent and the child left home, sometimes alone, who has to deal with its purity to the effects of the pandora's box, but aims the specialists, civil society, family, representatives of local communities to focus on identifying effective strategies to generate alternative solutions to the effects of parental migration and the consequences that are felt in the development of educables. It is a priority at the societal level to make long-term decisions following the cost-benefit analysis, the implementation of these selected solutions, as major objectives of educational activity in school institutions, but also at the level of social context (Cuc, 2014b, 2015, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c; Dulamă, Ilovan, & Magdaş, 2017; Iftimoaie & Baciu, 2018; Ilovan et al., 2018; Nicolăescu, 2014; Păduraru, 2014; Rotariu, Dumănescu, & Hărăguş, 2017; Scridon & Ilovan, 2015; Stan, 2016).

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