

BABES-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA  
FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

DOCTORAL DISERTATION

THE CORELATION OF VACATIONAL AND TECHNICAL  
CURRICULUM WITH THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS  
SUMMARY

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Key words-vocational and technical education,local development curriculum;vocational insertion;school action planning;work market.

In the context of the present reform at a Macro-social-level,a natural question arises having in view the human resources insertion on the work market force:”Is professional insertion a process of socializing,professionalizing or transformation?

Traditionally speaking,professional integration was viewed as a process of professional socializing in three stages through which the organization leads its new employees in their profession:new staff members recruiting,their training in a specialized institution and offering them a job at the end of the training process.

I have chosen the topic”The Correlation of Vocational and Technical Curriculum with the Local Development Needs” just because a successful integration of the vocational and technical educational system graduates cannot be done unless there is a very good collaboration among the factors implied in education:community-school-student.The paper has in view to offer a large analysis framework of the role that school has in the professional integration of the graduates through the correlation of planning documents with the requirements of the employers.

I have structured this paper into seven chapters,each of them dealing in a different way with the theoretical and practical aspects of the curriculum,European politics in the field of education,and vocational and technical education landmarks in the Romanian educational context.

The research-action has in view the coordinates of professional insertion of the vocational and technical education graduates of the Economic College Nasaud,B-N district and it ends up with the sketching of the School action planning,personalized document in accordance with the local characteristics.

In fulfilling this thesis,in its theoretical approach,I have studied a large bibliography out of which I synthetized the most relevant elements to sustain the thesis”The Correlation of Vocational and Technical Curriculum with the local Development Needs”,which may represent a theoretical basis for future research.

Chapter I, entitled European politics in education,which handles the problem of education in European context.

The educational quality evaluation implies a systematic process of critical analysis of the school staff, schools or local authorities performances,which may lead to valuable judgements concerning the education standards offered and/or reccomendations for improving

quality. The priorities followed through a sustained cooperation in the field of education and professional training are:

The consolidation of the European dimension in the field of education and professional training, so that Europe should be identified as a world reference point for those who learn;

Increasing transparency in the field of education and vocational training;

The consolidation of policies, systems and methods that support information, consultation and orientation;

The research of the transparency promotion comparability, transferability and recognition of competences and/or qualification modalities;

The increase of the support towards the competence development and the sectorial level qualifications;

The elaboration of a common set of principles having in view the validation of non-formal and informal learning;

Promoting cooperation in the field of assuring quality in education and vocational training;

The learning needs of the teachers and trainers;

The cooperation in the field of education and vocational training is based on the following principles:

Cooperation will be based on 2010 European objectives.

Education and professional training is in the centre of the Lisbon agenda objectives to develop and create work places and they represent essential elements for continuing to apply it in the perspective of the year 2020.

CHAPTER II presents “Dimensions of Romanian educational system from a European frame perspective”. We can remark that the final goals of the Romanian educational system are comparable with those of the European educational systems judging from the perspective of equal chances in education, promoting both stability and social changes, training for adult and active life, for free time, family and community, motivation for going on with learning in a changing world. The fundamental instrument in fulfilling these goals is the curriculum. The changes in the curriculum are determined by the high level of goal complexity in the compulsory education, being oriented both to the balanced formation of European -key- competences and formation for learning the entire life. The goals contents and European

compulsory education structure are directly correlated with learning the entire life. In conclusion, having in view the perspective of the new requirements of comprehensive education in the European area, marked by the increase of the compulsory education duration, the Romanian school has adopted a new curriculum approach which means structural modifications and goals of the educational systems viewing the acquirement of the key-European-competences by the students, necessary to adapt to a society and economy based on knowledge

CHAPTER III. named “Vocational and technical education brings in the foreground the main characteristics of vocational and technical education in Romania”.

The going on of the complex process of modernization of the initial forming system, in progress on the latest years, with the financial help of U.E. through the Phare programs and through the programmes financed from structural funds, is focalized on:

The correlation of the educational offer with the work market requirements;

The support and use of the partnership among the school, economic agents and local community;

The implementation of programmes concerning the transition from school to active life, modernizing the school infrastructure;

The increase of human resource quality in the school units;

The fulfillment of systematic studies of prospectation and prognosis of the work market, in partnership with the abilitated institutions;

The development of monitoring systems of graduates', insertion.

The major objective of strategic planning of IPT consists in the increase of vocational and technical education contribution to a rapid and efficient transition to a competitive economy based on innovation and knowledge participative and inclusive. The prognosis of IPT offer in correlation with a forceable requirement of the work force and the transition from school to active life are strategic elements for an appropriate planning.

To assure a vocational training offer through IPT relevant in what concerns the forceable needs of the work market, the National Centre of Vocational and Technical Education Development has elaborated, with the help of more institutions and experts, a strategic planning model of the professional forming offer through IPT.

CHAPTER IV. Regional districtual local and school level planning of the vocational and technical education presents the strategic planning of the vocational training offer through vocational and technical education IPT has a national character and is realized according to the objectives, Romania is subjected too as a member of the European Union.

The correlation of offer and requirement has its origin in the introduction of the planning frame of education in Romania, organized on four decisional levels, which has been extended lately so that it should include the superior education institutions, too. In what the evaluation of the work market needs is concerned, the anticipation of their evolutions on four decisional levels (national, regional, districtal and local) there have been significant results in the last five years. "Planning "has the meaning of territorial distribution of qualification regarding their delivery by the IPT schools.

The Regional Action Planning for Vocational and Technical Education Development (PRAI) represents a document of early anticipation of work force requirement and a planning of educational and vocational training offer through vocational and technical education in the perspective of 2013. The time limit 2013 has been chosen to insure the accordance with the planning perspective of national development (The National Development Planning) and of regional development (The Regional Development Planning). PRAI are strategic planning documents at each region development level, which follow the establishment of integrated measures of education and vocational training in the context of regional development. In accordance with the economical development needs' and the social cohesion, in the perspective of 2013.

The utilized data refer to a set of significant indicators to underline the training requirements, indicators in accordance to U.E statistics (EUROSTAT), used in all the planning document of IPT elaborated in the other regions (Anexa 3)

The Local Action Planning for Vocational and Technical Education (PLAI) comprises:

The analysis of the districtal context from the point of view of the development needs and a demographic evolutions and previsions for the work market and economic needs;

The analysis of the vocational and technical education system capacity to respond to the identified needs through the districtal context diagnosis;

The priorities targets and actions to develop the vocational and technical education at district level.

Having in view these reasons, a prospective planning, in terms of prognosis, of the IPT offer is necessary in accordance to the forceable requirement of the work force and integrated in a coherent strategy to develop the IPT capacity of continual adaptation to the changing needs and promoting the necessary measures for and efficient transition from school to active live.

The school action planning is elaborated at each school unit level targeting the increase of the correlation between the vocational and technical education and social requirement at the level of school action area and to offer a framework for the implementation of the quality



system. The school action planning is part of the quality assuring system, it is a means of communication between the school and its main partners, reflecting the school level of performance.

The Research-Action, presented in chapter V, entitled “Research-Action in the field of linking the research and technological curriculum with the needs of local development”, which is presented in this section under the form of a case study which initiates topic components identified at a level of three activity areas: the regional area (North-West region), districtual area (Bistrita Nasaud district) and local area (Nasaud).

The districtual school Inspectorates elaborate the project of the school planning at a districtual level based on schools proposals annually. During this process, the schools fulfill the consultation of the economic and social partners to base their decisions on the information from the work market, the major directions of actions being comprised in PAS.

The monitoring process of the school planning at districtual level is distributed to the next planning level, namely the original one, through the regional consort. The offer relevance of vocational training for the work market is evaluated through the analysis of the socio-professional insertion of the graduates. Having in view that we are talking about the socio-professional insertion process of the young graduates from a vocational highschool, progressive route, banqueting organizer profile, shop assistant and technician in commercial activities, we must take into account the importance of the characteristics and of the local/regional economy dynamics, to analyse this process, so we may start the analysis by underlining the specific of the regional work market, specific which will be viewed in interpreting the results of the research.

“THE CORRELATION OF THE VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL CURRICULUM WITH THE NEEDS OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT” must be realistic, it must represent a complex, comprehensive and multi-factorial action. It is the result of negotiation with the local authorities who know the social-economical situation of the district, town, who have an image about the future development of the area and can estimate which the needs of the world market and the interests of the economic agents will be, so that an optimal integration of young people in society can be realized.

Having in view the complexity of the theme under discussion, the present research cuts out zonal, districtual and local characteristics and indicators appropriate to elaborate a PAS capable of making the correlation between the curriculum and the the development of efficiency in the vocational and technical education.

In the investigative approach ,referring to the continual professional training ,I have used a complex research strategy ,combining the quantitative and qualitative methods of investigation.

Specific methods have been thus utilized in the preliminary step of research projection and preparation (the social documents and official statistics analysis),methods of gathering research data :questionnaire based research and a telephone based interview,focused group(staff),systematic social-logical observation,questionnaire ,the interview,methods of data interpreting presented under the form of tables which permit the optimal concentration of information.

I have numbered the tables with Arabic numbers,in the order in which they appear in the research report.

The structure circle was used to show the proportion of items ,considering as a whole the variable 100% of the surface.

The diagrams have been used to interpret data (comparison among the types of graduates,text books and programmes,numeric structure,and professional categories of the human resource group) .

The questionnaire was applied to the Economic College Nasaud graduates enlisted in the evidence of Bistrita-Nasaud AJOFM and the economic agents as partners.

The feeling in of a questionnaire took about fifteen minutes.The data have been interpreted with the help of diagrams.The telephonic questionnaire has been requested for a part of the subjects .research centred on the professional insertion of the Economic College Nasaud graduates,banqueting organizer profile,technician in commercial activities and shop assistant ,in Nasaud,was fulfilled in July-December 2011,submitting a specific questionnaire to a number of 200 subjects,on the basis of simple aleatory samples ,in a sample rhythm ,on the basis of a questionnaire and telephonic interview.

“Data registration,analysis and interpretation”is the title of Chapter VI of the paper,where official and curriculum documents have been used( text books and programmes ) for all the grades of the compulsory education which study subjects of vocational and technical education.All the curriculum documents have been studied-methodologies,methodological line,notes,regulations,instructions,guides,text books,criteria specifications.All the normative documents elaborated by the Ministry of National Education as well as those elaborated by the Bistrita Nasaud district Inspectorate and the district Council ,the local Council of Nasaud,the Nasaud townhall have been also studied ,referring to vocational and technical education on a national ,zonal and local level,have also been studied.Refferring to

the highschool education network from the district and Nasaud town, the research managed to cover almost all the specialities, each of them being represented by terminal grades and different specialisations. The highschool education is represented especially by vocational profiles, considering that those students have in view both continuing their studies and professional insertion, immediately after graduating from highschool.

The educational requirement of the investigated subject was approached from more perspectives, such as the reasons for their option, for a profile /speciality followed, their options regarding going on with education and training, the way in which these intentions have come true.

The option of going on with the studies was expressed by 15.5 % of the 2009 promotion, by 9.5 % of the 2010 promotion and by 13% of the 2011 promotion. First element followed referred to the relationship between their knowledge and skills assimilated in school and those required in practicing their profession, to the representations which the would be graduates have concerning this relationship. The graduates were asked in this respect, to appreciate on a 3-steps-scale-much sufficient little – the amount of which the practical and theoretical knowledge assimilated during education will be useful for their future activity. It was reported, thus that half of the students interviewed consider that the school effort targeting their vocational training is sufficient, that the whole complex of information, knowledge, offered and developed skills will satisfy the requirements of the respective job in a sufficient way. And this, more than that, the subjects suggest a greater accent of their practical training for a better professional training (almost 18% of the subjects) and the speciality subjects (15% of the total group, with insignificant differences between the 3 categories of subjects). It is noted thus that at least in the opinion of those investigated, improvements are still necessary: either the increase of the group of subjects and activities mentioned in the planning frame of education or the improvement of the teaching act quality, implicitly of the staff activity and of the contents and conditions of the practical training development.

The subjects also mention the necessity of performing the practical training in institutions/companies. In this respect, the regulations in this field have in view to ensure this conditions for graduating years. A reduced proportion of the subjects consider that highschool doesn't offer enough knowledge for their professional integration. Along with the aspects that refer to the curriculum, the subjects suggest the development of the number of attributions which the school has to assume to facilitate their professional insertion. Among this actions, in the order of the proposal frequency, appear :

Signing up contracts between the school and companies,concerning their employment and developing practical activities in this companies;

Coming back to the system of distributing or recommendations given by the school for them to be hired;

Offering information concerning the world market (job offers at a local and global level,based on specialities ,lists of jobs and employment places, etc)through consulting the General Work Directions and Social Protection,Commerce Companies etc,the development of the orientation activity concerning their career at the school level;

The collaboration of the school with employment companies and the General Directions of Work and Social Protection,concerning the graduates employment;

School advertising at the level of profile companies having in view the facility of the professional insertion of the graduates;

Offering information concerning the practical ways of searching for a job and a preparation of the students for an interview to be hired etc;

In conclusion,the present study elaborates a diagnostic analysis of vocational and technical education ,trying to optimize the educational process through adopting a personalized plan of institutional development.

The school action planning constitutes a necessary and vital instrument to adapt to social changes,as well as aliniating similar ,national and international schools.From the perspective,of strategic planning ,the goal of PAS is to enrich the correlation between the vocational and technical education offer,and the needs of socio-economic development at the level of school action area.The school action planning(PAS) as a instrument of planning the IPT offer ,comprises:

The analysis of the local context ;

The analysis of the school unit capacity to answer the forming needs at a local community level;

The priorities,targets and actions concerning the adaptation of the educational offer;

The role of PAS is to contribute to the increase of IPT quality,including the social professional rate of incertion of the graduates.

PRAI,PLAI and PAS are anually revised and actualized using the unitary methodological support offered by the Book elaborated in this respect.

Chapter VII,named “Research conclusions”concludes that the educational requirement of the investigated subjects was approached from more perspectives,such as:the motives of their

options for the profile/specialization chosen ,the options concerning the continuation of education and training,the way in which this intentions have been fulfilled.

The option of going on with the studies was expressed by 15.5 % of the 2009 promotion,by 9.4 % of the 2010 promotion and by the 13% of the 2011 promotion.

In validating the work hypotheses we remark a priority dimension of the curriculum used by the Economoc College Nasaud,a vocational highscholl where the students specialize having in view a job as a banqueting organizer ,shop assistant and commerce technician,progressive route.

In fulfilling the research,the hypothesis we started from states that the value of the educational training of the candidates is more important for the employers who express a more favorable opinion referring to the quality of the local highschool education system.

The motivation of the initial forming programmes study is in a close link with the professional development as well as the active implication of the economic agents and of the school in the professional training of the students.A professional training of the students in similar conditions with those of the future work place is ensured having in mind a better transition to their jobs.

Through the adaptation of the curriculum to the specific activities of the economical agents ,respecting the school curriculum,the student is named responsible of his own training.

The practical work stages led to the correlation of the educational and professional training services of the young people,offered by the school to the requirements and pretentions of the work market at a national and European level.At the same time,the rate of professional insertion has raised and thus we conclude that the graduates who followed the practical stages and the technological subjects of the compulsory curriculum for vocational and technical education,present a high rate of insertion.

In the course of the research it is stated that if there is a positive stimulative organizational climate ,this will constitute the support for fulfilling the needs of auto-realization,auto-motivation,and professional insertion of the subject.

The solutions for the needs of the young people in what concerns their inclusion in the work market are the responsibility of the central or local authorities or the individual implication and action.The central authorities are considered responsible in finding and implementing solutions in what concerns legal modifications (the reform of the educational system,the correlation of the educational curriculum with the requirements of the work market) ,founding vocational schools ,making the practical stage compulsory,economic development actions,(especially in the context of the economic and financial crisis),offering facilities to

economic agents to create new jobs for young people. At a local level, the addressing of the identified needs of the young people, may be realized through measures such as: information campaigns, opening consiliation centres ,organizing courses of (re)calification, signing up public-private partnerships (among schools ,universities and companies/ONGs) and developing programmes with European funds.

The analysis of the focus-groups showed that although lacking trust in the capacity of the local administration to act in order to solve problems, the young people still have hopes in what concerns the possible measures which the local authorities could take, both for enriching the work offer and the stopiing of the migration. The young graduates also admit that they have used the knowledge acquired in schools to a great extent. On the basis of the performed analysis our study presents a series of solutions of enriching the young people's insertion of the work market. These have in view ,on the one hand, a better professional training, and, on the other hand, a better flexibility of the world market.

The specialists consider that the transition of the young people from school to work has become longer and more difficult at present than it was a few decades ago(OECD). Today ,few of the young people who leave the education system manage to rapidly integrate on the work market and to secure their freshly won position. To make the quality of the economic education better and for a more rapid insertion on the work market, we can underline the following prioritary areas of training in the economic field:

The fulfillment of the economic education from the first school years to form basic capacities and abilities of an economic nature;

The integration in the education curriculum of basic economic education elements for any field of activity;

The correlation of the economic formal and informal education programs;

Issuing economic education programs meant for the adults;

The permanent adaptation of the educational programs to the changes at an international and national level;

The development of research centres inside the economic profile highschoools-exercise companies;

The implication of the private companies in educational activity through training stages, scholarships;

Developing new skills. In what the limits of the study and the main aspects which can be subjected to enrichment , we can indicate 3 action directions:

The sub-themes included need to be analysed deeply and continually ,so that a deep discussion of the theme should be realized,both at the level of the speciality literature studied,and the applicative practical level (empiric);due to the multi-disciplinary approach and the space limit,each of the sub-topics of the present papers need to be studied deeply.For example,the analysis of the employer's needs may concentrate on the factors that are due to the cultural values of the companies,their strategic objectives,the risk factors of the extern area.

The enlargement of the group.Taking into consideration the difficulties encountered in obtaining answers from the hiring companies,the group wich was subjected to the empirical research is not the probabilistic one,which attracts the impossibility of the result generalization for all the vocational profile highschoools in Romania.

The extended character of the approached toppics made the fulfillment of the graduate and employer needs analysis difficult in fields of activity and specific categories of jobs.In this respect,the research covered only the differentiations of the employer needs in what concerns the steps and selection criteria for large cathegories of jobs such as contability,administrative,financial,technic,juridic,leadership and execution.

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