

**Babeş-Bolyai University**  
**Faculty of Sociology and Social Work**

**THE EXAMINATION OF THE HUNGARIAN  
DENOMINATIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS IN PARTIUM AND  
THEIR ADDED VALUE, IN THE LIGHT OF THE SOCIAL  
MOBILITY**

PhD THESIS  
SUMMARY

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**Keywords: educational system, social mobility, added value, denominational schools, students' performance, social and cultural capital, equal opportunity**

### **1. Literature review of the examined topic**

The 1.chapter of the paper outlines the relationship between school and its social environment. It points out those problems examining the peculiarities of an educational system which are the big challenges of the XXI. Century: the insurance of the equal opportunity in the school and helping of the social mobility. This part presents a short analysis of the Romanian educational law, with a special consideration on the regulation of the denominational schools.

Ferge (1999) summarizes in general the research results that influence the students' study performance.

- The study results are related tightly to the social situation of the individual (family).
- With the progress of the studies the existing differences are continuously increasing (the disadvantage increases of those students who are disadvantaged).
- A secondary selection can be identified, which consists of, that the performance based class (which is socially defined) and the organisation of the school creates homogeneous classes according to their social strata where the developmental opportunities are different.
- The institution of school (its language, culture) is a lot closer to intellectual families, than to the untrained (skilled) families. Because of this the children belonging to the first group are more successful in the school.
- In terms of the social mobility it is more beneficial to have heterogeneous social groups/schools. This is being limited by the fact that schools have defined particular surroundings and area of attraction at their disposal. In the case of the parallel classes inside a school, in classes where they have higher study averages the proportion of those who will be intellectuals or doing intellectual work is higher.
- A contrast can be observed between the schools pedagogic-, culture giving- and social tasks. The cultural differences can't be dealt with downsizing, where the strong ones are being weakened in order to decrease the differences by this way.

Another important aspect from this period was that the resources invested in the education could be converted in the economic life. Of course the investment in the education can prove to be a successful investment (on a long term).

Ferge (1999) emphasizes that the social mobility which is realized through the school is in a tight context with the state of the economy and more, a well working economy is considered to be a prerequisite of the social mobility. In an opposite case the school can move only between the existing frameworks. Although the society needs highly trained people, it requires a serious financial investment to unfold the existing potential in everybody. The school can only do so much in a difficult economic situation that it selects the individuals who can be put in the service of the society with the smallest expenditure possible. Ferge distinguishes two groups: in one of them we can find those children on who the home environment has a stimulating effect, and besides the school's little expenditure their talents can develop; in the second group we have children who don't have a supporting environment, but they have individual talents at their disposal who can be more easily developed than the average. They are the so-called talented (gifted) children. Thus the economic factors inhibit the social mobility. There is a need for much more expenditures in order for the school to pay attention to all the children in a differentiated way (e.g. small children/educator proportion).

A democratic country's educational policy should be focused on guaranteeing the equal opportunity for its citizens. The practice indicates that the limited amount of resources are being concentrated, which favours a particular target group with governmental tools.

The 2.chapter examines the effects of the cultural capital and the social mobility onto the school performance. The family's material and cultural capital gets a central role in this. By social mobility we refer to the phenomenon when the individual or the family's social situation changes. The interpretation of the definition depends on what we understand by the concepts of social situation and respectively social stratification/layer's: level of education, material situation, occupation, residence, etc. In his research Róbert Péter (1990) examines the role of these factors in terms of the social status definition. In accordance with other authors from the literature he establishes that the level of education is the largest most important defining element of the mobility.

Rotariu (2004) considers that the problem of the social mobility - fundamentally and in its roots - is the problem of the social equality/inequality. A central role in this is played by the school and the equal opportunity given by the schools. According to Boudon (1974) the deficiency of equal opportunity in schools is being expressed by the fact that students

coming from different social categories are obtaining higher levels of education with different possibilities. The school in itself does not create social difference; it merely confirms the existing ones and reproduces them. Based on how this phenomenon works, he emphasizes that the school is positively discriminating the socialization of those students who are belonging to a higher level of social layer compared to which the school upbringing is in a complementary relation (similar values, similar languages, etc.), while students deriving from lower layers can be in a disadvantage due to the families background which they bring with them (Bourdieu, 2008).

Boudon regards the school as neutral; according to him the different social categories bring rational decisions in regard to school choice and further studies. They are weighing the pros and cons of learning. The obtained degree and the higher status which comes with it can be considered to be an advantage, while the time and money spent on it and the risk of failure can be a disadvantage. The different social categories are evaluating these factors in a different manner, and they come to a decision. Behind the social inequalities individual-life strategies reside.

Although the establishment of the life chances is linked to more mediatory mechanisms, it is important to examine the processes taking place in the school system. Although the school plays a mediating role in the social mobility, it influences the moving opportunities of the individual in the social hierarchy in a significant way (Gazsó, 1999). The school plays an important role in the creation of equal opportunities (it is responsible for how it strengthens in the beginning the differences of students deriving from different social categories, for how much it helps and supports the further studying, etc.) but it is necessary to see that even with identical educational level the equal opportunity and mobility would not be guaranteed. At the same time in the researches (Gazsó, 1999) it's starting to take shape the fact that the parents' educational level influences their children's future in a significant manner (e.g. their inclination for further studies) than their occupation.

The disfunction of the school system can be identified in the realisation of the equal opportunity, which is interpreted by some authors (e.g. Bourdieu) that the meritocracy is only a myth the school system legitimises the social differences.

The 3.chapter examines the relationship between the students' socio-cultural background and performance, in which the added value is a central concept. In the course of this

chapter we examine what kind of inferences can be deduced from international analyses in the Romanian educational system.

The family always played an outstanding and determining role when it comes to examining the school performance even though in the research the operationalisation of this effect is quite difficult. Summarizing Coleman's researches, Pusztai (2009) calls the attention for the importance of the family relationship. One side of this is the examination of the families' structure, the number of parents and children, and the type of the family (the nucleus of the family, multigenerational, one-parent family, newly structured). While examining the one-parent families he found that the absence of one of the parents have a negative effect on school performance, it ensures less control, uncertainty in fulfilling its own role which causes loss in the passing of the social capital. The absence of one of the parents means not just loss in the income but also reduces the quantity of time which can be spent on the child. Likewise it seems that the quantity-quality of the communication between the parent-child is a determining factor.

We also learn from the already quoted research of Coleman that a father has an important role in finding a job and in the aspect of starting a work, while for the mother the success in school is the dominant factor. According to him the number of siblings' influences the social capital in a negative way, because in plain economic approach the resources of the family (material, attention, time spent together, etc.) are divided. This does not take into consideration that the experience originating from the information and school experience acquired can stream between brothers.

The characteristics of a good educational system are that the students' performance can be made independent of its social background, his place of birth (province or city) and from the families cultural capital thus social mobility is achieved in the largest measure possible since like this the students' social differences can be reproduced in a smaller measure. Besides the questionnaires measuring the students' performance they've also used background questionnaires which are mapping the socio-economical background of the students. From this indices are being created and compared with the learning performance. The stronger the two relate the less typical the equal opportunity.

Due to the schools complicated and complex relationship and effect mechanisms it is difficult to compare the institutions to each other. First of all it is necessary to separate the concept of result from efficiency which the leaders of the institutions are confusing many times or are using them as synonyms. We refer to results when talking about the learning performance of a student or their personality development. Opposite to this the efficiency

examines the expenditure-output relationship. We may call an educational institution (or system) efficient, when the input (e.g. the learning performance) is achieved with the least possible expenditure or besides a given expenditure we try to maximize the emission (Báthory, 2008).

These are being quasi complemented by the concept of the added value, which is an indicator that examines the schools efficiency, based on its socio-cultural environment (for instance the parents' educational level, social capital, etc.). It can turn out that not the most efficient school is the "best" school. The efficiency means the school's gross performance. In the elite schools which can make their selection from a high number of students, are teaching students whose parents are highly qualified, who can help their children in the learning process, who can provide them a high level of cultural capital, and the students have high level of learning self-reliance. It is that here we find the smallest added value of the school, although its efficiency may be superior.

A school with a high added value means, that on the individuals level, he/she achieves better learning results, than his socio-cultural background would indicate (Neuwirth, 2005).

It, is necessary to begin by saying we reveal the denominational school's peculiarities on the level of the ideologies, that is do the characters of the denominational schools have some kind of specific interpretation on the school's functions and on the educational system. In terms of the identity of a community the common thinking is always community-forming. The denominational education is a collective term into which the institutions operated by the local church communities belong and they work based along differing pedagogic ideas within a certain denomination. The question arises what kind of similarities we can find in variegation. On the other hand, how does it appear in the public opinion the image which is transmitted by the key characters of the institutions and ideologies.

After the political transformation (the regime change) in Romania the "simple" educational system received an opportunity in order for the different groups to set up schools corresponding to their own world view. The organization of denominational school (again) included questions relating to their location (buildings) as well as addressing suitable teachers and the creation of a specific identity. This simultaneously meant turning back to the past and also corresponding to the present society's expectations. The role played by the churches in the past considering their role in education and charitable work were the best well known ones in the communities of the '90s. According to a research in 1991



three fourths of those who were asked, those who finished a university have heard of denominational schools were functioning before the political regime change, which the respondents considered to be with a tall prestige and they've ranked them among the best schools (Pusztai, 2011).

The reproduction of the social effect is smaller in the denominational schools. The reason for this can be difficult to identify, but the active religious practice and the family's climate have a role in this. The explanatory theories are constantly reaching back to the theories of the cultural capital, though the researchers are explaining it differently. On the one hand there is a determining role of the parents' occupation and their level of education, and on the other hand the school as a community also represents a network of community in which the cultural capital is divided, so in the families which are in a less beneficial situation we can sense an upwards suction effect. According to researches mostly the denominational schools can accomplish qualitative education and social equal opportunity (Pusztai, 2004).

The early research of the topic was typical in the Netherlands and the United States. The often quoted research of Coleman sheds light on the fact that it can be generally demonstrated, that there is a big social interest for the denominational schools, which produce higher results and they make the unprivileged ones catch up more efficiently.

Gabriella Pusztai sums up the results of characteristics which are typical for denominational schools: high test results, low level of drop-outs, successful entries in universities and a bigger chance to obtain a degree, bigger expected workplace incomes, stable work morale (Pusztai, 2009, p.65). The researchers from the Notre Dame University came to similar conclusions, who have summed up in an itemized way the benefits of catholic schools which are deductible from the literature until now (source: <http://ace.nd.edu/catholic-school-advantage>).

- In the Catholic schools smaller performance differences can be observed between the students.
- The students attending Catholic and other private schools reach higher educational performances, than students who have the same family background but are attending state owned schools.
- The Catholic schools reduce the performance differences which can be traced back to the social differences.
- Those who attended Catholic schools have a tendency of participating more often at voting than those who are attending state owned schools.

- Students from Catholic schools are more committed towards their community, and are more tolerant towards different views.

Researching the reasons and explanations Gabriella Pusztai (2009) mentions the following factors:

- The choosing

The social status of the families opting for denominational schools can be found between public and private schools. Most of the American researches found that minority families with low status are being overrepresented in denominational schools. In the modern social view a new explanation is associated, which does not focus on the lack of education, material situation of the parents, but on the structure of the family and on the dysfunction of the family. The researches also found that families belonging to the Catholic schools have bigger integrity, less number of divorces occur, and the quality of the contact between generations is better. The drop-out proportion is two times smaller for the one-parent families' children, than in a state school. While private schools are characterized by a low number of class members, the state schools have a high number of students; denominational schools are found between these two types of institution.

- Intensive involvement of students into extracurricular activities

Since the '80s researches point out a bigger emphasis is put on extracurricular activities in denominational schools, more children are involved. A part of these are vocational, scientific interest groups, where a small number and a tighter teacher-student relationship is in order, and another part of them are giving a possibility to develop informal contact between parents, teachers and students (e.g. sports, school days, spiritual days, etc.).

- Parental activity

The parents' participation in school activities is significantly more considerable in comparison to schools belonging to other sectors. The belonging to the denomination and religious practice help the parents' participation in the similar school programs. The parent association sets up individual programs and has a say in the issues of the schools.

- Closing the gap

It has become clear from the sector-specific performance measurements that the denominational schools produce better results in such a way that they are able to reduce the negative effects of the students' families' background. The examinations indicate that the performance is not even between the families with high status and those with lower status, in favour of the latter ones; because of this these schools have a rather closing up the gap characters.

- Control

One of the areas where the denominational schools stand out sharply is the discipline and control. There are a measurably smaller number of drop-outs, especially in the case of dysfunctional families. In the case of state owned and private schools we can see that they are extremely performance oriented in order for them to keep these children. The teachers interpret their role differently in the denominational schools, the interactions are frequent apart from the curriculum, and they can be also addressed outside the classes as well.

- Functional community

It is important for the performance and the community network, how the child and parent feel that they are a part of a community and how this forms their identity. The traditional schools are barely able to form a functional community because there are individual motives behind the school preference. In many cases the school community and the relationships attached to the place of residence of a school weaken each other. The communities of denominational schools get organised based on common values, the belonging to a church community insures the frequent and personal interaction, which keep these functional communities alive. The church community is such a network which already has a relationship with students before they are enrolled to the school and also after finishing school these contacts can be exploitable in the community, so this community precedes it and points beyond a school which enforces this.

Furthermore, some of the church networks are also connected and constitute serious social capital. For this to be really true regular religious practice is important.

- Selection

Examining the data of the researches a recurring question appears, namely who and based on what kind of method the denominational school is elected and reversely, what kind of conscious and involuntary selection mechanisms are functioning. According to specialists the school keeps the problematic children at a distance from itself and because of this the drop-outs proportion is smaller. A number of research points out that we cannot speak of selection based on social status, from this viewpoint the school is quite heterogeneous. The most important declared selection viewpoint is the belonging to a denomination, but the measurement and examination of this can put on different forms as far as admission based on theological subjects, like in denominational schools, the case of entering specific classes in Romania.

- The school's climate

This is one of the most obscurest and difficult to operationalize factor within researches. Inside an organization the term of climate is used in reference to the environmental effects than on one hand shape the individual, and on the other hand the individuals also contribute to its shaping, formulation. The students' performance, the school's inclination to innovation, the work atmosphere and the motivational system, etc. are all belonging to the school's climate (Bacskai, 2008).

The climate research is almost concurrent with the researches examining the school performance. In 1968 Litwin and Stringer pointed out that the values and norms play a considerable role in the school and the climate. In the '70s the research of the organizational culture started to spread in a wide circle and this influenced the researches on school as well. In a general sense, organizational culture can be interpreted as the jointly accepted, deeply embedded systems of norms, beliefs and behavioural patterns of the members. The researches show that only the schools management have an effect on the schools climate and those teachers who have taught in the same school for at least ten years. The school's leadership, the maintained good relationship between teachers have a positive effect on the students' learning performance. The climate research has also a big tradition in Europe, an outstanding personality of this being Helmut Fend, who perceives the school, as being full of potentially conflict situations, because the teachers and the management expect behavioural patterns from students, which are unpleasant for them. It is an organizational and school peculiarity how this conflict situation is resolved (Bacskai, 2008).

## **2. Methodology**

### **1. The testing of the hypotheses**

#### **I. The added value is bigger at those students who would pursue their studies further after finishing the school.**

All of the denominational schools in partium are theoretical ones (except the Kalazanczi has a class which besides training offers the opportunity to acquire the National Baccalaureate Exam) and thus these institutions are preparing students for the baccalaureate as well for studying further at a university. 92.3% of those who were asked would like to pass the baccalaureate exam and 51% of them would like to continue their studies at a university; the 4.11 chapter table no.40 analyses in detail the future plans of the students in each school.

Our assumption was that the pedagogic added value is the highest where the school's profile (theoretical high school) meets the student's vision. In order to demonstrate this we compared the pedagogic added value (PAV) with the future plans.

The added value alone proved to be positive in the case where the student would like to continue to study at a university, in all the other cases the PAV is negative. We have the smallest PAV in those cases where the students would like to start work after finishing high school or in cases where the continuation of their studies depends on the family's material situation ( $p=0,000$ ). This hypothesis has been demonstrated.

#### **II. The scholarship system within the denominational schools enhances the school's added value.**

In the 4.11 chapter we have seen in great detail that in each school in what kind of proportion students are being supported with scholarships (figure no. 63). The churches and school foundations which are backing up the denominational schools are giving an opportunity for them to favour a wider layer with scholarships. As a state institute, the student going here are eligible for the state scholarship, but these apply to a narrower layer. The High school money program gives the most considerable support for high school students, the target group of which the gross returns falling on a single head do not exceed the sum of 150 RON (net 125 RON-s) and this includes the permanent and agricultural incomes as well. In comparison it can be related, that in the examined school's 42 students (6%) are under this income level and from among these only 11 students receive social

scholarship (it is necessary to mention it here again, that the students were able to form a judgement on the family's average incomes very difficultly). 32.1% of the respondents are benefiting of some kind of scholarship, 12.4% in social scholarship, and 20% in study scholarship. Although we did not inquire about the scholarships source/type but these proportions are bigger at the target group receiving state scholarships. The scholarship presents an opportunity to positively affirm the good performances but it can also mean material help to low-income families in order for them to provide the students schooling expenses.

In terms of the scholarship a significant difference can be observed while examining the averages of the PAV ( $p=0,000$ ). It can be said, that the scholarship enhances the school's added value. We examined this in the case of each school, and the PAV has shown a positive and a significantly higher value if we only took into consideration those who received scholarships.

If we only examine those who receive study scholarships we receive the following results:

### Report

Standardized Residual

| Grade average | Mean      | N   | Std. Deviation |
|---------------|-----------|-----|----------------|
| no            | -,1302301 | 323 | ,98829862      |
| yes           | ,6558377  | 96  | ,73650583      |
| Total         | ,0498713  | 419 | ,99251749      |

**Table no 1. The PAV averages in the case of the study scholarships ( $p=0,000$ )**

The table above shows a considerable difference in the PAV averages in the case of those who receive a study scholarship. Between the two groups there is a difference of 0.7 points.

Thus the hypothesis can only be proven partially, because although the scholarship indeed affects the added value in a positive manner, but this is done primarily by the study scholarship and not in the case of the social scholarship.

### **III. The quality of the relationship between the teacher – student has a positive effect on the added value.**

The denominational schools are trying to educate in the spirit of personal/individual attention of which the central element is represented by the contact with the teachers. In the questionnaire we asked that in comparison to other schools how to they judge their own

teachers. Based on the results we can see, that where the relationship with their teachers is considered to be right, the PAV average is bigger, ( $p=0,014$ ).

From the questions concerning the relationship with the teachers we have created a new index. There were seven answer possibilities all together where the „yes” answers were indicating a good relation with the teachers. We have expected that the index will positively correlate with the PAV.

### Correlations

|                       |                     | Standardized Residual | teacher index |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Standardized Residual | Pearson Correlation | 1                     | ,139**        |
|                       | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                       | ,003          |
|                       | N                   | 458                   | 456           |
| teacher index         | Pearson Correlation | ,139**                | 1             |
|                       | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,003                  |               |
|                       | N                   | 456                   | 616           |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table no.2 The relation between the teacher index and the PAV**

In the table above it is visible that the correlation (0.139) is significant on the 0.01 level. It can be related, that the good relationship with the teachers affects the added value positively. Where the communication is working between the teacher and students (their can talk through their private life and vocational questions, issues) there the added value is positive.

Although the hypothesis has proven to be true, but when interpreting the results it is necessary to take into consideration that when we calculated the added value we took the study results as a starting point the grade was strongly “teacher pendant”. The yearly GPA (grade point average) also positively correlates with the relationship with teachers (0.214\*\*).

**IV. The most important point of view when choosing a school is the religious character of the school, so students belonging to different social strata can equally enter.**

We may emphasize three considerable factors when examining the reasons of the school choice: the religiousness, the level of standard and the parental effect. There is no difference among schools and there is no considerable difference between the single factors (each point of view is around 25%). We examined whether there is a difference of what is viewed to be most important when pledging themselves of opting for a denominational school in the case of parents who have a different income and educational level.

| Level of income per person |                | religious % | level of standard % | of parents % |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Under 175                  | Mean           | 32,1250     | 33,0208             | 29,3333      |
|                            | N              | 40          | 48                  | 48           |
|                            | Std. Deviation | 29,04213    | 42,90935            | 32,62053     |
| Between 175 and 1300       | Mean           | 23,0645     | 30,0694             | 24,6660      |
|                            | N              | 434         | 519                 | 521          |
|                            | Std. Deviation | 26,98439    | 28,34276            | 26,66862     |
| Above 1300                 | Mean           | 9,3448      | 36,7778             | 22,4889      |
|                            | N              | 29          | 45                  | 45           |
|                            | Std. Deviation | 15,71913    | 28,34759            | 26,12959     |

**Table no 3 : Relation between the school choice and the family's income**

The table above shows what kind of viewpoints influenced the decision of school choice in families with different levels of income. While in the case of families with low income the religious character and the level of standard are equally important, then in the case of families having high incomes the level of standard is outstanding (36.7% and the religion has a low measure of determinacy, altogether a 9.3%).



|  | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
|--|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| <b>religious</b> * Levels Between of income per person | 8739,862       | 2   | 4369,931    | 6,153 | ,002 |
| Within Groups  | 355105,120     | 500 | 710,210     |       |      |
| Total  | 363844,982     | 502 |             |       |      |
| <b>level of standard</b> * Levels of income per person | 2121,799       | 2   | 1060,899    | 1,201 | ,302 |
| Within Groups  | 538010,260     | 609 | 883,432     |       |      |
| Total  | 540132,059     | 611 |             |       |      |
| <b>parents</b> * Levels of income per person           | 1233,036       | 2   | 616,518     | ,837  | ,433 |
| Within Groups  | 449885,800     | 611 | 736,311     |       |      |
| Total  | 451118,836     | 613 |             |       |      |

**Table no 4:** The significance levels of the school choice and differences between income levels

The results indicate that the importance of the level of standard and the parents' importance in the decision making do not differ in the case of the families with different incomes. Significant difference ( $p = 0.002$ ) is in the case of the religion. As higher the income per person inside a family the less important the school's religious character when it comes to choosing ( $r=-0.152$ ,  $p=0.001$ ).

|                             |                     | religious | Levels of income per person |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| religious                   | Pearson Correlation | 1         | -,152**                     |
|                             | Sig. (2-tailed)     |           | ,001                        |
|                             | N                   | 503       | 503                         |
| Levels of income per person | Pearson Correlation | -,152**   | 1                           |
|                             | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,001      |                             |
|                             | N                   | 503       | 618                         |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table no 5:** The relationship between religiousness and income levels

We receive similar results if we examine the parents' educational level and the factors determining the decision. We can also state here as well, that the higher the mother's educational level, the smaller the role of religiousness ( $r=-0.103$ ,  $p=0.05$ ).

Examining the family background of the respondent students it can be related, that the differences between some schools are considerable, all institutions include a wide social strata of families. In the research we examined the material and cultural capital supply of students. From this we've found that 54.7% of the fathers don't have a high school degree and 15.4% have a university or a higher degree but there is a big difference in some of the institutions. Based on the level of income per person in every institution there are families with difficult and very good situations, the least being around 5%.

Based on the results we can state that in every institution similar viewpoints are defining in similar measure determining the school choice and these presuppose each other mutually. The religion is important, but not a particular viewpoint in choosing a school and is not even in the case of families having different incomes. This hypothesis proved to be true only partially.

a) **The school choice for families with high social status is the condition of a high level of standard.**

If we examine the decision related to school choice as income categories then we find a significant difference in the religiousness as an influencing factor. If we select the ones from the full sample with high income then using a double t-test we can see that the school's level of standard receives a much bigger emphasis in the decision, than its religious character ( $p=0.001$ ).

**Paired Samples Statistics**

|                          | Mean    | N  | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--------------------------|---------|----|----------------|-----------------|
| Pair 1 level of standard | 27,4138 | 29 | 23,74044       | 4,40849         |
| religious                | 9,3448  | 29 | 15,71913       | 2,91897         |

**Table 6: The average differences between the level of standard and religiousness**

For the children of the families with high income only for 9.34% the religiousness is important, while the level of standard almost three times more, 27.41%. If we examine the parents' educational level, the mother's higher qualifications appears to be determining,

here the level of standard (30.7%) is almost two times as determining, than the religiousness (15.8%) ( $p=0.000$ ).

It can be said, that the school's standard and its religious character are not identical in the case of families with high incomes. They opt for denominational institutes if they consider it to be one having a proper level of standard and the students' school achievement is seen as insured.

#### **IV. Conclusions and proposals**

It was one of the aims of the study that by analysing the law framework we could place the denominational school in the Romanian educational system. They function as being financed by the state, though the local churches chose their teachers and in the case of human theology classes they can personally select their students. The law views them as vocational schools similarly to the sport and artistic institutions. Based on the examination of the international literature it would be advisable for the denominational education to newly-redefine the law which could provide bigger autonomy for the local religious communities, for this we can find many foreign country examples.

The research presented those features that define the added value of the Hungarian denominational schools in the Partium region. It revealed the social-demographical characteristics of the students attending schools, in order to present an image of the school's social stratification. Based on the results it can be related that the denominational schools are heterogeneous. In terms of a denominational distribution in the Saint László catholic high school the proportion of reformed ones is 55.3%, opposite to this in the Hám János catholic high school the proportion is 8.8%. Although every institute functions in an urban environment, in the case of the Kalazanci and Saint Laszlo the rural proportion is higher. The research examines the denominational school's added value, but it is necessary to mention that a number of data indicates that there is a correlation between the school's classification, the students' learning performance, and the families' material situation and its cultural capital. Behind the macro-data's the processes which help the equal opportunities can be shown. The strengthening of the community building, the contact network can all help the students in order for them to opt for continuing their studies. In all institutions the added value is helped by a well working scholarship system. In the Reformed and the Lorantffy high schools more than 40% of the students have already received some kind of scholarship, which favour the ones being in difficult material

situation. Those obtaining the scholarship are producing similar learning performances than children belonging to families with high incomes.

It is necessary to give more attention towards building the social network between the parents and students in every institution. It is necessary to find those programs where the parents can engage in the schools activities and they can also get to know each other better. Based on the results this is a deficiency everywhere. Although the relationship with the teachers is considered to be a good one, students mostly turn to them only with questions related to learning.

In every institution students identify its individuality; this indicates that the institution has an identity. This helps in the conscious school choice for families and it is the first step towards a qualitative education. The compensator role of denominational schools can be manifested in the fact that families with low and high status are connected under the aegis of religiousness. The results indicate that this can only be accomplished if the school has a proper level of standard, because this is an important factor in the choice for families with high incomes, more than its religious character. All institutions have to find a middle way where they are able to provide catching up in a way that they are able to maintain high teaching standards.

When reaching the conclusions it is necessary to take into consideration that there is a horizontal and a vertical part for the examined problem. The horizontal one reports the presented dimensions, like the students and their families' cultural and material capital, contact of network, the atmosphere of the institution, the relationship with the teachers, and not to mention the compensator role of these institutions. There can be observed big differences between the examined institutions, whether if we look at the national ranking or whether we take into consideration the results revealed in this research. The differences may appear bigger than the similarities. The question arises of whether it is possible to interpret the results as a separate educational sector, or whether the denominational schools functioning as state schools are just as much heterogeneous as any other state school. The examined topic has a vertical axis, which tries to express the shift in time. Although they were founded in the same period, the delayed building restitutions slowed down their developmental rate.

The results of the research are relevant not just in the case of the denominational schools. It would be necessary to strive for the increasing of efficiency in all schools. One of the examined variables is restricted to the denominational schools; it is possible to build up a community in all institutions, to support the ones who are in a difficult situation with a

strong scholarship system, etc. It would be important to receive the fundamental message of this study, namely that we should not only focus on performance, but onto efficiency as well. Romania's educational system cannot present good results in the international comparisons, the talent care is weak, and the segregation is high. It would be high time to shape the law and the educational system in such a way that the personal attention should receive a bigger emphasis and let us not measure the school and its students against standards, but in the spirit of decentralization and subsidiarity to itself.

The study examined the denominational schools functioning in the Partium region only, and even in this narrow group it is hard to find the similarities. It is necessary to examine all institutions in their own environment and history because it is only possible to interpret their features in a wide social context. A certain part of the results revealed in the course of the research are valid for every denominational school because (again) their foundation can be traced around 1991 and in historical sizes all of them are considered to be young schools. Because of this the organizational cultures are more plastic, the structure of schools, the number of classes, and the starting of new educational cycles is typical for all institutions universally.

A further research of the questions which were brought up by this research would be important, to examine additional denominational institutions. This would make it possible to manifest uniform features which could not be brought to surface due to the narrowing down of the topic. We were not able to examine the similarities between denominations in the examined sample because of their small number. All of the examined institutions are under continuous change; it would be advisable to involve them under a longitudinal research and to examine the change of the features which were researched. A follow-up examination focusing on students would be able to characterize the added value on a long-term, where we could compare the parent's and the child's social and material status and we could also get a clearer image on how does the building of networks and communities work after the passing of the school years.

In conclusion the denominational schools play an important social role in Romania because they contribute to the creation of equal opportunity and in helping the social mobility. This is a social mission that does not address only a closed, religious layer but it is struggling to address everybody. Within this social work, there are still some weak points but the path on which they have to move is clearly delineated.

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