
UNIVERSITY BABEȘ-BOLYAI CLUJ-NAPOCA

Faculty of Sociology and Social Work

Summary of Ph.D. Thesis

**School success among Hungarian pupils in Romania in the
perspective of the higher-educational talent care initiatives**

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School success among Hungarian pupils in Romania in the perspective of the higher-educational talent care initiatives

The purpose of the research

The main research topics of this thesis are set into context through the various chapters of the theoretical presentation. Departing from a wider perspective, the author presents the major aspects of the social and economical importance of the education. Gradually narrowing the topics, the author reflects on the peculiarities of the educational system in Transylvania and the relevance of the minority education in the context of Transylvania's ethnic Hungarian community. The author defines two major research purposes.

On one hand, the author analyzes the various factors which determine the performances in the mid-level education, both in terms of students and high schools. This is realized through an in-depth analysis of the high school graduation results in Romania in the period 2012-2014, which are available from a nationwide data basis.

The author identifies the main factors which influence the performances of the top high schools, including demographical, economical and socio-cultural aspects. He also carries out a survey based research among the high school graduates through a representative sample, focusing not only on the graduates' socio-economical status, but

also on the educational processes and talent-care initiatives which they have been involved in during their high-school studies.

An other key purpose of the research is to identify and analyze the various forms of talent care which can be observed on the level of the high schools and to evaluate the effects of these initiatives over the students' individual performances. The author also focuses on the assessment of the potential demand from the students' side for continuing participation in talent care initiatives during their university-level studies in case they opt for staying in Romania and studying at universities where the academic language is primarily Hungarian.

The structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured in chapters, except the introduction.

In **the introductive part** of the thesis the author presents some general ideas about the situation of the contemporary higher education systems after the remarkable expansion that went through in this social sphere. He also discusses on the specific traditions of multiculturalism which is specific for Transylvania and which, he suggests, is a social resource which could be materialized in terms of economic development.

He also adopts the ideas of economists Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, according to whom a key element of the economic and social development is the existence of integrative social institutions, what according to the authors means that everyone's got a guaranteed possibility to develop himself on a high level towards any professional direction he feels gifted and motivated in. However, this can only be guaranteed through the existence of competitive higher education, so the lack of the latter might cause serious structural obstacles referring to the mid and long term social and economic development.

The author also presents himself briefly, mentioning that his interest for a topic which integrates higher education and talent care origins from his personal experience

of having been member of a so called college for advanced studies in Hungary. He also reflects on the remarkable expansion of the minority higher education in Romania, suggesting that quantity is not the only proper indicator and if the quality of the universities is not synchronized with the high school graduates demands and with their future plans, the sustainability of the whole system can be questioned in the long run.

Therefore, he argues, having precise knowledge on one hand about the issues of competitiveness and quality, on the other hand on the high school graduates` preferences is vitally important as they can serve as reliable starting points for long term planning and for efficient resource allocations.

The first chapter is a gradually narrowing **theoretic approach** of the topic, departing from general ideas related to the importance of the education in various development and reproductive processes within any society. The topics become gradually more specific for the subject of the thesis, the Hungarian minority education in Romania. This chapter is further divided into secondary chapters.

The first subchapter of the first chapter within the theoretical part is a presentation of various theories regarding the role of the youth in the societies. The author presents the historical evolution of the concept of the youth and the major social turning points which made this social category more influent during the last centuries.

The second subchapter of the first chapter deals with the importance of the youth and education in the reproduction and development of the regional social and economic spheres. In this part the author refers to some researchers who claimed that the widely interpreted education as a form of collective investment is one of the most rewarding forms of investment (Becker, 1993.). An important aspect, which in the author`s opinion should be taken into consideration when deciding about the planning of the educational conditions of the youth is that there is a significant interdependence among the adult members of the society and the following generations.

On the one hand, the youth is the generation which is due to ensure the financial safety for the elderly after their retirement, and on the other hand, the cultural, political and social aspects which are dominant in any society are always shaped by those who are in their most active years. So, there is a double interest from the current adults` perspective to treat the issue as a highly important topic and this sort of considerations could lead the societies to see the shaping of the educational system as a form of collective investment into the improvement of future social and financial circumstances of the given society.

In the third subdivision of the first chapter the author focuses on the recent changes that have shaped the general aspects of the labor markets across Europe, remarking that even if the expansion of the tertiary sphere of the economy (which denominates the sector of the services) is widely expected to reach the Central-Eastern European region, there are still indicators which should make all of us foresee a long-term demand for engineers and specialized industrial workers, as candidates with such degrees already tend to be missing in the production spheres. However, the extension of the service-sector will bring with itself, according to the author, a large diversity in terms of jobs and careers.

The potential to become member of the social elite became gradually more and more a matter of skills and education in the post-modernized era (Kaelble, 1986.) but the author suggests that in the upcoming decades a high level of adaptation will be also required from the individuals aspiring to reach high social positions. In the same time, the author adds, it will become more and more usual to see large masses of people being employed in jobs which have few in common with the original university degree which they possess. The permanent technical revolution, the always changing needs of the globalized industries and services will result in quickly changing employment structures.

As for the connections between the regional labor market and the regional educational offer, the author suggests that the universities have the potential to carry out in-depth analysis on the future economic and social trends and therefore the academic sphere could have a strong voice in determining the regions economic

priorities and through this in influencing the labor market demands. However, in the short term, the universities should show a high level of adaptation to the given economic structures, because the significant regional economic activities are usually based either on traditional sectors or on natural-geographical resources which can not be ignored or alternated in the short run.

Regarding the synchronization of the higher educational offer and the regional labor demand, the author reflects on the negative aspects which have caused serious damage to the organic development of the economic structures in the region. He not only mentions the irrational collectivization methods of the communist regimes, but also highlights the destructive heritage of the centralized processes, in which local decision taking and local responsibility were pushed into the background while the budget limits have been a matter of political pressure or flexibility (Kornai, 1993.).

The author, specifically discussing the situation within Romania sets a comparison between the post 1990 owners and managers in Hungary and in Romania. He underlines that in Hungary the technocrats and specialized intellectuals could play a key role both in the economic governance of the country and on the level of the largest companies, so the dialogue between the scientific and the political sphere did exist, while in Romania the new economic structures presented less continuity, so the tradition of the dialogue between the two major spheres was missing, compared to Hungary.

This could have also resulted in a remarkably lower number of graduated economists among the most influential entrepreneurs Romania, as the new economic elite was not predominantly made up of former technocrats but from freshly born billionaires who could have found it more difficult to find the right tone with the representatives of the universities which are the key centers of labor force emission. The new Romanian economic elite could be characterized with a significant status-inconsistency -taking the term from Tamás Kolosi (Fábián, Kolosi, Róbert, 2000.) - and as their economic capital is often not synchronized with their other forms of capitals, it would rather difficult to carry out a nationwide discussions and long term planning about the synchronization of the future`s labor force demand and supply.

Turning back to the idea that the extension of the service sector is likely to play a key role in the region's development, the author suggests that the qualitative aspects of the human capital will be vitally important in the future, and the education, being the primary sphere of forming the human capital could be seen as one of the most influential sectors.

The lack of the synchronization between the educational system and the labor market demands could result in the immigration of significant masses of employees from other countries, despite the existing number of unemployed people in the region. So offering valuable knowledge and skills for the students, in accordance with the requirements they face during their career would vitally important both for the region's social stability and for the balance of the labor force..

The author suggests that in his views the most important comparative economic advantage the region can boast with is the cultural diversity and the border-zone which the region is situated in. Being in a cross-border area, connecting two countries, both members of the European Union and with a mixed population, with a large number of ethnic Hungarians who are fluent in Romanian too this could mean significant potential to attract investors who are interested in having businesses which are active in both countries benefitting from any piece of advantage which the two countries may offer in comparison with each other.

An inefficient educational system could however only train people who are unable to adapt to these circumstances so despite the favorable starting conditions the scenario of an economic stagnation can be possible due to poor quality educational emission. A radical fall in the ratio or the number of the ethnic Hungarians in the regions could also lead to the loss of this comparative advantage as the region would lose its multilingual character.

The author also reflects on the migration, as it's one of the most dominant and observable social phenomena which , as a long term process it shapes the demographic and labor force figures of Central-Eastern Europe. He adopts Hoerder's definition according to whom the term describes alternation of location with combined

with the individuals` purpose to settle down in the new location for a shorter or longer period of time (Hoerder, 2002.).

However, the author suggests that proper distinctions among the different forms of migration are rarely done in the press and in public discussion, as almost all kinds of migratory activities are seen as negative and harmful, while, he believes, the short term foreign experiences (which according to the applied definition is not even a form of migration) is highly favorable both for the young individuals and for the region`s economic potential as it helps to provide labor force trained through international learning and working experiences.

The author also underlines the alternation of the conditions of the migration and foreign exchanges either with working or studying purpose. The main factors which contributed to this alternation are the appearance of the low cost air carriers, the widespread online facilities for planning even a longer stay at a remote place and the legislative freedom which permits the citizens in the European Union the free movement between member states. After all, he suggests that the short term foreign stays and long term migratory tendencies need to be treated and seen as two completely different social phenomena.

The author discusses the potential influence of the expected wages on the decisions of the youth to leave or to stay in the country. He concludes that according to him, studying all available data and information, there is little chance for the youth in Romania to reach or even to get near the average salaries of the more prosperous countries of the European Union.

However, he believes that there are some less quantifiable and measurable, but yet influential factors which can make the youth prefer staying rather than leaving. These factors have either an emotive character or are related to the social capital which would be lost in the case of migration. These aspects can play an important role, even if such aspects seem unlikely to outweigh the effects of the high consumer prices combined with relatively low wages.

The author also suggests, that the migrating potential isn't by far equal neither in terms of the individuals nor in the terms of migration destinations. As for the latter, for the ethnic Hungarian youth from Romania the most obvious destination could be (and has been since 1990) Hungary, due to possibility of the complete cultural and linguistical integration.

However, the young persons who speak several foreign languages, own skills and knowledge which is highly demanded on the global labor force, could be the real winners of the globalization and of the possibility of the relatively free migration. As they are the most likely to be attracted with wages which are substantially higher than the ones available in their homeland, their situation may cause a dilemma for the local decision makers.

On the one hand, they can view these young persons as the ones who will surely leave the country as there are no competitive jobs and career possibilities for them, and there's also the risk that they might leave even right after the high school graduation. The decision makers and policy makers could see the struggle to make them stay impossible, trying to focus the financial and human resources on offering better studying conditions for the ones who remain.

The author suggests that as these persons are the ones who are likely to become the most productive employees who can create goods and service with a high level of added value, the policy makers should try everything to offer them career possibilities and studying possibilities which, combined with the emotive factors described above, could finally make them stay, limiting their foreign exchanges for short term gathering of experiences. Additionally, these young persons could also improve the motivation of the following generations, similarly to the effect-mechanism described by Ogbu-Gibson (Ogbu-Gibson, 1991.) who analyzed the transmission of the success-examples in intergenerational relations in afro-American communities. Letting them leave, in the author's opinion, would significantly damage the regions potential of development.

In the fourth subchapter of the first chapter the author writes about importance of education and youth from the perspective of the major social transformation within the Hungarian community in Romania. In the first part of this subchapter the author offers a brief overview on the scientific debate focusing on the relevance of the youth as social category. The real difference between the youth as separate category came to light in the perspective of the student movements of 1968.

That was the year when the students of the era showed that they are able to raise new political topics as they had denied their parents' conformism and belief in the consumers' society. The author adopts the argument that it is justified to treat the youth not only as an age group but as a specific and highly relevant social category. The authors, in accordance with Preson (Preston, 1997) believes that both the adaptation and the rejection of any cultural sample, be it conformist or non-conformist, from the side of the youth is a reaction to the value patterns of the larger society.

The author describes two major impacts over the Hungarian youth in Romania in terms of cultural patterns and socialization. On the one hand he emphasizes that the generation he examines in his paper was born in the years 1994-1996, which meant a transitional period in Romania, where some infamous aspects and elements of the former communist era, just like the lack of pluralism, the restriction on travel, the lack of goods in stores and etc were completely over, even if there have been observable several anomalies, which, according to Gross and Steinherr (Gross-Steinherr, 2004) are typical to the countries which have recently been involved in transitional processes.

So the socialization of this generation went through in a rather new set of circumstances in comparison with the former generations' circumstances. Notably, in this period the international TV channels and through these up to date media content was widely available for the youth in Romania, not only synchronizing their cultural taste with the global trends but also offering a new tool for the improvement of their knowledge regarding foreign languages. All these factors which would indicate the

appearance of a cosmopolitized Hungarian youth in Romania could be outweighed or limited by other factors.

In order to make the explanation more tangible, the author sets a comparison between the Hungarian youth from Romania and two relevant reference-groups, the Romanian youth of Romania and the youth from Hungary (with no substantial minority groups). In the case of Romania, the author underlines that there are indications which suggest that the Hungarian youth in Romania are less mobile both in terms of migration and professional exchanges than the ethnic Romanian youth. In his opinion this is partly a result of the lack of foreign language knowledge which the author proves with research data on national language knowledge from researches which have been carried out in various European countries.

All these, in his opinion may lead to a less open and less "cosmopolitizing" Hungarian youth in Romania, which is hardly able to take advantage of all the possibilities which the globalized era can offer to them. In comparison with the youth from Hungary, the authors think that the main difference is that even if in these age groups the primary socialization happened among similar circumstances as both countries were by then market based capitalist democracies, the socialization of the two youth-groups' parents generation (as the parents were key actors in their own socialization) was largely different, as in Romania there was a severe antidemocratical regime without freedom of speech and without elementary forms of market-economy, in Hungary there was a rather peculiar political and economic setting, as the ruling communist part has left some space for the liberal courses and market-economy initiatives (Romsics, 2010).

So the author believes that these attitudes of the parents, resulting from different socialization patterns in the '70s-'80s still have an effect on the younger generations and in this comparison the Hungarian youth from Romania may be not as well prepared for the challenges of the globalized conditions neither as are their Romanian counterparts (due to their considerably better disposal for mobility and language knowledge) nor as the youth from Hungary (through their more democratic

values which have been transmitted toward them in the frame of primary socialization from their parents` generation).

The author analyzes some relevant linguistic and quality related aspects of the higher education in the frame of the Hungarian higher education in Romania. He suggests that in theory the Hungarian as teaching language would not be vitally necessary in the training of future Hungarian elites in Romania, and brings in the example of some smaller nations, which shifted to English even in the domestic scientific communication and publishing (Phililipson, 2003). He also mentions that a large share of the members of the current Hungarian elites in Romania studied in Romanian, and even so many of them preserved their Hungarian identity.

However, he suggests that the Hungarian higher education in Romania needs to have Hungarian as teaching language, for two main reasons. On the one hand the Hungarian higher education in Romania is linked to Hungary`s higher education network at many points, not only in terms of financing (as both the Sapientia and Partium Christian University are financed from Hungary`s state budget) but also in terms of scientific cooperation, student and staff mobility. Rejecting Hungarian as teaching language these connections would be weakened, leading to a likely fall in quality.

On the other hand, referring back again to the issue of language knowledge, unlike some Scandinavian nations where the knowledge of the English language is extremely high among the population, so shifting the domestic language of science to English didn`t cause the exclusion of masses of researchers and students, among the Hungarian minority in Romania the level of the English knowledge is relatively low which makes the rejection of the mother tongue in the scientific communication impossible in the close future.

As for the issues regarding the quality of the Hungarian higher education in Romania, especially in terms of the elite-training and university-level talent care, the author underlines that a global tendency is that the elite universities reach an outstanding scientific level. In Hungary, for example, there`s an undergoing division

process which is likely to end up with some so called "research universities" and the rest of the institutions. In the United States the formation of the elite club of the universities was a long term process, based mainly on the competitiveness and financial stability of the universities (Hickeni, 2014), largely due to the donations of former students who are financially successful and are willing to support their alma maters financially, making the gap between the elite universities and rest of the institutions larger from generation to generation (Lerner, Schoar, Wang 2008).

The author believes that such a concentration of the best students and most outstanding researchers is less likely to happen in the case of the Hungarian universities in Romania. He suggests that the main obstacles are the relatively low standard of living of the Hungarians in Romania and the relatively high costs related of studying, not only the tuition fee, but housing, traveling too. This can mean, that gifted, well performing pupils with a modest family background can not and probably will not be able to allow themselves in the future either to study at the best universities, many times they have to choose institutions which are more accessible.

According to the author this means not only financial accessibility, but due to the lack of highways and high-speed railways considerable efforts are needed to make if someone travels within Transylvania on a regular basis. As long as the possibilities of further studying are seriously limited, mostly by financial issues, it is less likely that the most talented and motivated students would concentrate in one or two cities, it is more likely that there will be some outstanding students at every university.

He suggests that this is relevant, because in this case the talent care initiatives should not be carried out as a new structure for example in Cluj-Napoca (undoubtedly the city with the largest intellectual concentration of the region). A solution could be instead setting up and developing talent care structures in every city where there is Hungarian university level tuition and research activity. Even if with few resources and with a very limited number of students involved, these structures could offer valuable additional possibilities for self-development and talent care everywhere around Transylvania.

As for the issues related to the education as a mean of preserving the ethnical, cultural and regional identity, the author reminds that the preservation of the identity was the primary declared goal of the freshly founded Hungarian universities in Romania around the year 2000. He believes, that the real question is whether these universities will really be able to provide competitive knowledge for their students, but he underlines, that in his opinion the first criteria is a linguistic aspect.

More precisely, that the students should be fluent in both Hungarian and Romanian regardless of the degree programs they study at. He argues that the one of most important comparative advantages of the region could be its multicultural and multilinguistical character, a feature that can attract significant number of foreign investors and can contribute to the rise of living standards in the region. Better financial situation can significantly contribute to the fall of emigration ratio and to the consolidation of the ethnic and regional identities too.

In the fifth subchapter of the first chapter the author sets up a theoretical frame in which he analyses the education with an analogy taken from the economics, the theory of demand and supply. He argues that this approach has already been applied in various social sciences in order to offer a better understanding of the specific phenomena, since it was first used by the Austrian economist Schumpeter (1987) in his analysis about democratic political systems. The author describes the demand as the children and youth who become students and choose from the various institutions. As they are the key subject of his own research, in this theoretical approach the author dedicates attention to the description of the offer side of the education.

He analyzes the offer both in quantitative and qualitative approach. As for the quantitative aspects, he mentions that all the information belong here which we can have about a specific country's, in this case, Romania's schools and institutions which provide education as a service. On the level of the elementary and high schools with Hungarian as tuition language, he underlines that there are more and more cities and regions in which there are not enough ethnic Hungarian children which make possible

the existence of exclusive Hungarian high schools, and in many cases even on the level of the elementary education there are Hungarian classes within a mixed school.

As a conclusion, the number of the Hungarian schools correlates with the size of the Hungarian population of the city, and thus the most Hungarian schools can be found in Harghita county, while there`s a mainly Hungarian high school even in Bucharest, but there are also Romanian classes within it. He argues that even when it comes to choose a high school for the children, there are many regions in which the choice is very limited because of the relative small number of available Hungarian institutions or classes. On the level of the universities, in quantitative approach, he includes the number of various specializations in BA and MA programs, the number of institutions with Hungarian degree programs and the number of faculties, departments and other university units.

The author mentions, that there are two important conditions which can not appear in the quantitative approach but yet are important. If we take into account only the number of the schools and universities and reach to a final number, and calculate how many Hungarian classes or schools are available for the Hungarians in Romania, we may not take into consideration a specific problem of the region, the badly developed infrastructure. This can make it very hard or sometimes impossible for the pupils or university students to commute on a regular basis, and there are some mountainous isolated regions with relatively low percentage of Hungarian population where the access to the schools, even if these exist is rather difficult.

So any analysis should take into account whether the existing schools and classes are within an area of reach for the nearby living population. The lack of access can limit the possibilities for a significant number of Hungarian students to reach good quality education and to have the freedom of choice, the choice being rather what the possibilities make possible in some regions. The author suggests by this idea that if we want to get an idea whether there is enough educational offer in quantitative terms it is not enough to check the aggregate numbers, the regional and geographical distribution and the conditions of the regular commuting are also vitally important.

The author suggests that two relevant social phenomena which involve the Hungarians in Romania, the immigration and assimilation also influence the relevancy of the quantitative figures. He suggests, that if we take a hypothetical 5000 Hungarians children in a city, their need in the terms of educational offer is different in Harghita or Covasna country, where the ratio of assimilation is among the lowest in Romania, and it is probable that almost all of them would attend Hungarian education. In the ethnically peripheral regions, like Southern-Transylvania, it is likely that a large ratio of these children would opt for Romanian education, so not all of them would need Hungarian schools.

Likewise, in Western Romania, in Bihor and Satu Mare counties there is a phenomenon described by Szilágyi (2007) as the Hungarian high schools from neighboring regions of Hungary attract large numbers of Hungarian pupils from Romania. So, a hypothetical 5000 children can not express the real demand for Hungarian school capacity, without the relevant knowledge about the specific region both in terms of demography and social change.

Regarding the qualitative approach the author suggests that there can be several factors which remain hidden in the case of a quantitative approach but which factors can be responsible for the significant differences among the Hungarian schools in Romania. He believes that the talent care initiatives, the quality of the teaching staff, the prestige of the school within the community are all relevant factors. In addition, he suggests that the inner spirit of the schools is also an important contributing factor, and he divides the schools into two main categories.

He introduces the concept of "competitive" and "equalizing" school spirit. In his views the first characterizes schools in which the school performance is a top priority both for the teaching staff and for the pupils. He underlines that it is very important that in these schools every pupil can experience that within his peer groups, among the other pupils learning and school performance is also very important. So in such a social ambience the maximalization of the pupils' cultural capital is a collective priority.

Schools with “equalizing spirit” are in the author’s view schools where the priority is not maximalizing of the pupils’ human capital and the achievement of outstanding school performance, but creating an atmosphere which offers a chance for the less motivated and less performing pupils to catch up and to keep more or less the same level with the others. As in these schools learning and school achievements is not a priority shared within the pupils’ peer groups, the most motivated pupils might find less supportive attitudes from their friends and colleagues part than the ones in competitive schools. The author also believes that even if there are talent care initiatives in some schools which might be very efficient too, most of these initiatives are informal without any official records and so they are invisible from administrative point of view.

As for the quantitative aspects of the colleges and universities, the author underlines the fact that the number of the received degrees has been multiplied in the recent decades. Under such circumstances the labor market still needs information about the value of the diplomas and this leads to an informal but continuous ranking of the institutions and the appreciation and prestige of the diplomas they offer. The growing number of the diplomas causes the inflation of the average certificates, but as Bourdieu and Passeron (1966) described, the elite tries to monopolize the access to the best universities for their descendants with soft means, like the sophisticated language and behavior which are expected at these institutions and which are characteristic to the applicants with elite social background.

In the sixth subchapter of the first chapter the author presents some main sociological educational theories which are related to the school performances. He mentions the works of Boudon (1974), Bernstein (1970) and Lawton (1974) as references for the relationship between the pupils’ school performance and social background. He refers to the works of Ogbu, Gibson (1991) who suggested that this relationship is not only based on the transmission of cultural capital and knowledge but also in a way in which the parents with higher level of cultural capital can show positive examples for the youth, offering a proof that learning and gaining cultural capital can be a successful life strategy.

He also presents the theories of Gronlick, Slowiaczek (1994) who emphasized the importance of the direct parental influence, setting up an analogy in which the parents' efforts are seen as a form of investment or input, while the expected output is the pupils' excellence in school achievements. The author adds that in his views a major contribution belongs to the theorists Richmand and Bowen (1997) who identified four principal microspheres where the supportive attitude is a necessary precondition for the students to be motivated to achieve good school results (family, school, neighborhood, friends/peer groups). The author also refers to Mollenhauer (1974) who analyzed former researches in this topic and came to the conclusion that there are series of relevant researches proving the relationship between value-orientation and school performances.

The author presents Boudieu's (1978) views, who wrote that the existing formal educational structures set the preconditions of the school success. In the author's opinion this is similar to Durkheim's (1980) theory who believed that the primary task of the educational system is to train the people to be how the society needs them to be.

In the frame of a secondary subchapter the author refers to some sociological and educational research data and conclusions which have a specific relevance related to the situation of the Hungarian youth from Romania. First he refers to Kozma (2010) whose view was that the expansion, which has radically changed the situation of the higher education in Romania too, is a phenomenon which is defined rather by political reasons instead of demographical conditions. The author also presents Hrubos's (2014) view who believes that we can expect the intensification of the expansion even if there are some slow-downs at some points.

Then the author turns his attention to the researches which put the individual pupils' school performance in the center and mentions Iovu's (2014) conclusion who believes that in the case of the Romanian students the low level of self-confidence and the lack of supportive attitude from the teachers' and peer groups' side makes it more probable that these students will have a negative future image for themselves.

An other research, conducted by Vincze, Roth, Degi (2012) came to the same conclusion, but from a different aspect of the issue, concluding that the young adults who evaluate themselves positively, have more psychological resources and are less exposed to depression and stress.

The author dedicates special attention to the importance of reading, mentioning a research carried out by Wang, Davis, Bian (2006) which supported with evidence the relationship between the reading and the formation of cultural capital. In the terms of the Hungarian youth from Romania Gergely's (2013) research proved the relationship between the pupils' reading habits and the type and ethno-demographic characteristics of the settlement which they live in. The author refers to Magyari's (2013) conclusions who analyzed the main reasons for which Hungarian parents send their children to study in classes with Romanian teaching language. In Magyari's views these reasons or motivations are: the difficult access to Hungarian school; the belief that the education in Romanian offers a better quality; the belief that the Romanian education is a good way for the children to learn the Romanian language; the belief, that the Romanian education can help their children to achieve more during their lives; the realization of the fact that the child speaks Romanian well enough so it would not be a problem to continue his studies in Romania.

In the seventh subchapter of the first chapter the author presents some relevant theories about the concept of elites and minority elites and presents in meta-analytical perspective some recent international researches focusing on factors influencing the pupils' success in school performances. For the elites he applies the definition of Mills (1972) according to whom the elites are group of people with unproportionally powerful social influence in determining the most important issues in a society, but he also uses Bourdieu's (1970) definition according to whom the elites are the ones who possess the various forms of capital (social capital, financial capital, cultural capital) in the highest concentration.

He mentions Arrow's (1995) theory related to the elite forming functions of the elite universities and who considers their function of knowledge transmission secondary behind their socializing and elite reproducing functions. The author also turns attention

to the elite formation in the frame of the mid-level education, and mentions the research of Vrignaud, Bonora, Dreux (2005) who demonstrated the importance of the state coordination in the field of talent care in the French high schools. The author also presents the research conclusion of the Finnish researcher Savolainen (2009) whose case study about the Finnish educational system also provided convincing evidence about the efficiency of state controlled educational strategies. He also presents Wongsurawat's (2011) paper, who concluded that if a state can not offer quality education, the elites can turn towards high quality private education, like it happened in Thailand too.

The author underlined the fact that there are a large number of recently published papers which suggest the territorial concentration and territorial inequalities in the terms of the best school performances, the most convincing are according to him the findings of Neuwirth, Szemerszki (2009) and Florida, Mellander (2009). However, there are also some papers which did not confirm the existence of such significant concentration inequality, not only the already mentioned Savolainen in the case of Finland, but Geske, Grinfelds, Dzede, Zhang (2006) in Latvia didn't find evidence for such concentration and inequality either.

The author presents an other issue over which the recently published studies do not seem to agree. On the one hand, some studies find that the school performances are strongly determined by the pupils' social-economic status (SES), like Chiu, Xihua (2008) and McConney, Perry (2010). On the other hand, other researches like the ones of Akiba, LeTendre, Scribner (2007) and Lee, Zuze, Ross (2005) do not confirm these findings but suggest that the school performances rather correlate with educational, pedagogical and other factors which are more difficult to put under quantitative investigation.

In the second chapter the author presents **the methodological background of the research**. The author points out that he used the official data base of the Romanian Ministry of Education to find the results of the high school leaving exams for the period 2012-2014. He used this database for two purposes. On the one hand, he calculated the average performances of the schools to find the ten best performing

schools in terms of ratio of excellent students (the ones whose final mark was at least 9) and in terms of the ratio of the students who passed the exams. He also used this data base to find and to pick up respondents into his sample.

He contacted the persons mainly on the platform of social media site Facebook; in case he could not get in touch with them he contacted them by phone or via traditional mail. He received back a total number of 1147 questionnaires from which he formed his own research database. He analyzed the data with SPSS software. As some questions were related to each other, asking details about the socio-economical situation of the respondents or about the school activities he/she participates to or reading habits, the author created two statistical indicators, one for the socio-economical status (SES) and one for the accumulation of cultural capital. He presents in the paper in detail the way in which these indicators have been created.

The hypotheses of the research were the following:

1)The author supposed that the girls are more successful on the high school leaving exams, especially in the case of the pupils with excellent results (with final mark of at least 9).

2) The author supposed that the students living in urban areas are more successful than the ones living in rural areas, especially in the case of the pupils with excellent results (with final mark of at least 9).

3) The author supposed that the social-economical status (SES) indicator correlates significantly with the results of the school performances (high school leaving exam results).

4) The author supposed that the cultural capital indicator correlates significantly with the results of the school performances (high school leaving exam results).

The research questions were the following:

1) Does the majority of the pupils with excellent high school leaving exam results have information about the forms of higher-educational talent care, especially about the colleges of advanced studies?

2) Does the majority of the pupils with excellent high school leaving exam results show interest about participating during their university years at various talent care activities which are characteristic to the colleges of advanced studies?

In the third chapter the author presents the **results of his research**.

In terms of the most efficient high schools with Hungarian classes in Romania the author presents two top ten lists according to the ratio of excellence (students whose high school graduation exam mark is at least of 9) and ratio of passing the high school graduation exam. His major conclusion at this point is that on the one hand there are eight schools which figure on both lists, on the other hand there are no high schools on any of the lists which are in border-counties. In the author's view this supports the findings of Szilagyi (2007) and Márton (2012) who also emphasized the existence of the phenomenon that a significant number of high school students from the western border regions of Romania attend high school in Hungary, so the performance and added value of these pupils is missing from cumulative performance of these schools, and that could be the reason why they are not on these lists.

As for the survey research carried out on the sample formed from high school graduates from the period 2012-2014 the author checks two basic demographic characteristics of his sample, comparing them to other available data. As for the sample's distribution in terms of gender, according to the data received from the Ministry of Education in the period 2012-2014 there were 25134 pupils participating to the high school graduation exams, from whom 11631 (46.28%) males and 13503 (53.72%) females. In the author's sample the values are very similar, the share of

the males being 46.12% while the share of the females were 53.88%. In terms of the distribution on types of residence, in the author's sample the share of the pupils living in rural area is 50.5% while the share of the ones living in urban areas is 49.5%. He made a comparison with the samples used by the researcher Denes Kiss in an other research which also focused on the Hungarian pupils from Romania. It turned out that the distribution on the type of residence in the author's sample is very close to the sample used in the above mentioned research, where the share of those living in rural areas was 50.9% while the share of those from urban areas was 49.1%.

The author analyzes the correlations of various factors indicating the social-economic status and school performance. In the terms of the parents' level of education, similarly to the findings of Jimenez, Lockheed, Paugeo (1991) and Lockheed, Zhao (1993) both the fathers' ($X^2(6, N = 1138) = 218.66, p = .000.$) and the mothers' ($X^2(6, N = 1133) = 180.55, p = .000.$) level of education correlates significantly with the pupils' school performance (operationalized as it was checked whether the respondent had an excellent high school graduation result with average mark of at least 9).

The author analyzed the correlation between the subjective self-reported financial situation and high school graduation results. He found significant relationship between the high school graduation results and self-reported financial situation ($X^2(4, N = 1136) = 142.07, p = .000.$). This is in accordance with the findings of several international researches in this topic, especially with those of Chiu, Xihua (2008) who carried out a broad international comparative research including more than 40 countries to gather supporting evidence for their findings.

From a reverse point of view McConney, Perry (2010) found that the correlation is similarly strong in the sense that Australian pupils with low level of social-economic status (SES) are the most likely to suffer from school failures.

The author refers back to what he described in the theoretic part of the thesis, emphasizing that there are other recently conducted and published researches which

found that the school performance is mainly influenced by factors which are rather difficult to quantify, but which have to do with the pedagogical skills of the teachers, the talent care programs within the schools, motivation and peer group influences. The author analyzed the relationship between the high school graduation results and indicators which are related to the students' level of cultural capital and to activities which aim to develop the level of this type of capital.

The author analyzed the situation regarding the pupils' participation at talent care programs within the schools. As the girls seemed to be more successful at the high school graduation exams, he was curious to see whether this is reflected in the difference between the boys' and girls' patterns of participating. He found that there was no significant correlation between the gender and participation at talent care programs ($X^2(2, N = 1139) = 5.15, p = .076$).

Reflecting on a former research which demonstrated a correlation between the type of residence and school success (Neuwirth, Szemerszki 2009) the author checked if there's such a correlation within his sample. The statistic analysis didn't prove the existence of such a correlation in this case ($X^2(4, N = 1142) = 5.14, p = .273$).

As the author found that among the students with excellent high school graduation results there are much more pupils whose mothers have accomplished university level studies, he checked whether in this case the cultural capital of the mothers influence the children's participation. He found a significant correlation between the mothers' level of studies and the participation at talent care initiatives ($X^2(12, N = 1125) = 537.90, p = .000$).

Finally, he checked whether the participation at such talent care programs correlates with the high school graduation results, and the correlation turned out to be significant ($X^2(2, N = 1139) = 157.78, p = .000$). The author also analyzed the correlation between participation at private tuition and high school leaving exam results. The correlation was significant ($X^2(4, N = 1137) = 165.44, p = .000$), showing that private tuition does have an important impact. The correlation between learning

playing on musical instruments and high school graduation result also turned out to be significant ($X^2(2, N = 1138) = 112.53$ $p = .000$).

As for the reading habits, the correlation between the frequency of reading and high school graduation results proved to be significant, in accordance with the research carried out by Wang, Davis, Bian (2006) which supported with evidence the relationship between the reading and the formation of cultural capital.

The last factor related to the processes of gaining cultural capital which the author analyzed was the participation at national level of school contests. It turned out that there is a significant correlation between the frequency of participation on that level of these contests and between the high school graduation results, so it confirmed that the participation on national level (after having been qualified from the school and city level) of the school contests is an efficient selection process of the most performing pupils.

The verification of the hypothesizes

In the third subchapter of the third chapter the author checked whether his hypothesizes proved to be justified or false.

The first hypothesis, according to which the girls are most successful in terms of school results proved to be confirmed. It turned out that among the girls of the share of the pupils with excellent high school graduation results was almost twice as many than in the case of the boys.

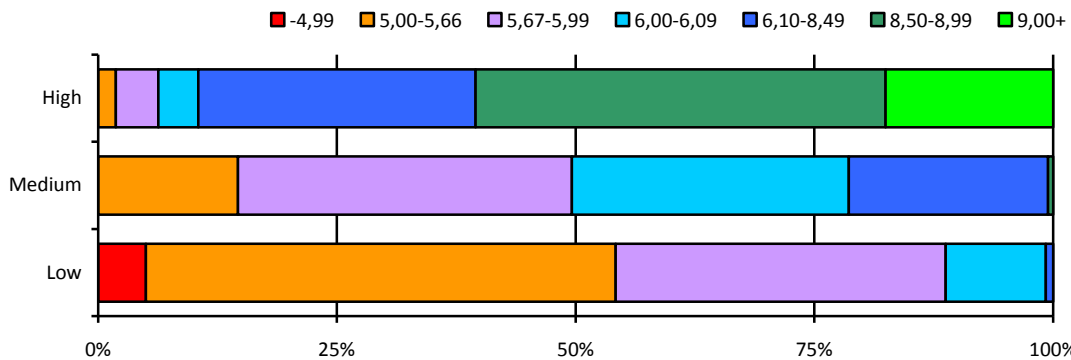
Sex	Result of high school graduation		Total	Level of significance
	Score <9	Score >9		
Female	573	45	618	p=0,025
	92,7	7,3	100,0	
Male	507	22	529	
	95,8	4,2	100,0	

The second hypothesis, supposing that the pupils living in urban areas are more successful at the high school graduation than the ones coming from rural areas proved to be only partly justified, as this seemed to be true only in the case of the students who passed the exams. Among them, those who reside in urban areas had an average of 7,594 while those living in rural region only had an average of 7,296 with very similar dispersions of 1,289 and 1,318. The difference proved to be significant ($p=0,006$).

The third hypothesis, according to which there is supposed to be a significant correlation between the social-economic status (SES) and high school graduation results proved to be justified. The extremely badly scoring pupils all came from families with low values of SES, while almost all the very well scoring students originate from families with high values of SES.

The indicators of the social-economic status show a high level of correlation with high school graduation results. +0,806 with the synthetic indicator (N=1112) and 0,793 with the factors' indicator (N=1147). The pupils with the weakest scores all come from families with low SES values while almost all the pupils with excellent results come from families with high SES scores.

The fourth hypothesis, in which the author supposed that there is a significant correlation between the cultural capital indicator and the high school graduation seemed to be justified as well, as the group of the best performing students was made up only by students with high values in terms of cultural capital indicator.



High school graduation results according to the general factors of the pupils' level of cultural capital

Answering the research questions

In the fourth subchapter of the third chapter the author has also answered the two research questions.

The first, dealing with the information the pupils have about the talent care programs in higher education showed that their majority (71%) doesn't know about the existing forms of talent care in the frame of higher education and there isn't significant correlation ($X^2(2, N = 1147) = .58$ $p = .749$.) between high school graduation results and level of awareness about these initiatives, so the best scoring students don't know substantially more about higher educational talent care possibilities than the ones whose scores were more modest.

The second research question focused on whether the pupils are interested in participating talent care initiatives, showed that the vast majority (96%) of them shows interest about participating at such initiative, and similarly to the former question the author didn't find significant difference between the best performing students and the others ($X^2(2, N = 1147) = .47$ $p = .790$.).

In the fourth subchapter the author presents the conclusions of the thesis. Related to the performance of the school with Hungarian classes in Romania he underlines the importance of the fact that according to other researches (Szilagyi, 2007; Marton, 2012) there is a significant number of high school aged pupils in Western Romania who are enrolled into high schools in Hungary. This is reflected in

the fact that this is the only region with significant Hungarian minority population in Romania which is not represented on any of the two lists.

As for the pupils' individual characteristics, the author draws the conclusion that the social economic factors play a key role in determining school performances.

The relevance of the social factors appeared and was obvious and significant both when it came to analyzing the single factors such as parents' level of education or the self-reported subjective financial situation, or the possession of various goods and when it came to the analyzing this aspect through the own edited SES indicator.

When the author analyzed the single factors of cultural capital and their correlation with school performances, the relationship was also strong and significant. The participation at private classes and learning on instruments were both significantly correlated to the school performances, but such elements of the cultural capital like reading habits or participating at talent care activities within the school were also correlated with the high school graduation results. It was also pointed out, that the mothers' cultural level correlates with the children's participation in talent cares activities within the schools, which strongly correlates with high school graduation results. This indicates, that twenty five years after the Romanian revolution among the Hungarians from Romania there seems to be an elite group, that is status-consistent (the way Kolosi introduced the term into the scientific thinking (Kolosi, 1984) meaning that possesses high concentration of both financial and cultural capital.

All these suggest that those elite reproduction patterns, which were theoretically described by Davis (1951) and Bernstein (1975) seem to function in the case of the Hungarian community in Romania too. In the author's opinion not having any other collective indicator, we should accept that the high school graduation results are objective and proper indicators of the future chances of the pupils to end up in influential and well paid social positions.

If so, seeing that among the best scoring students the ones with elite family background (in terms of cultural and financial capital) are largely overrepresented, we can affirm that currently the Romanian minority education system can only partly

fulfill its mission to serve as a mobility channel for the ones with a modest family background. However it is important in the author's view that in terms of talent care initiatives in the frame of higher education there aren't significant differences neither in terms of awareness nor in terms of interest.

There's no significant gap between the best scoring pupils and the rest, which means, that if the less performing ones keep on being interested and will not be disadvantaged in terms of possessing information about such initiatives, they might have a chance to be enrolled in some forms of talent care programs during their university studies. If such programs become widespread and will give chance to catch up even for those who didn't perform remarkably well, than these talent care initiatives can be the last accessible structures within the educational system which can function as proper mobility channels.

As for the **limits of the research**, the author pointed out that the three years period he studied is not long enough to let him affirm that what he found is a tendency, therefore he believes that it would necessary to repeat the research periodically on a similar sample. He believes that is also be useful as it would make it visible how the various types of schools react on the mid and long term to the situation created by the changes of the structure of the high school graduation exam.

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