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DOCTORAL THESIS

**CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN THE
TRANSITION FROM THE UPPER KINDERGARTEN
GROUP TO THE PREPARATORY GRADE**

-SUMMARY-

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Key terms:

Early education, transition (from the upper kindergarten group to the preparatory grade), continuity / discontinuity / complementarity (between pre-school and primary school), school adaptation / inadaptation, educational partnership.

The work entitled "Continuity and discontinuity in the transition from the upper kindergarten group to the preparatory grade" aims at the comparative and detailed analysis of some significant aspects specific to teaching and interactive learning, aiming at optimizing the school performance, following the transition from the upper kindergarten group to the preparatory grade, and finally to the first grade.

In order to ensure a coherent scientific structure, we organized the content of the paper in two parts. The first part is the theoretical foundation, and the second part presents the experimental endeavour. Each chapter has further specific chapters and subdivisions detailing the theoretical or practical approaches.

The first part of the thesis, *Theoretical foundation*, exposes a synthetic presentation of the theoretical framework, circumscribed to the theme announced by the title. The objective of elaborating this part is to prepare the construction of the theoretical-explanatory basis of the experimental endeavour. This way, the theoretical foundation, and the practical steps make up a coherent unit, being presented in the first four chapters.

In Chapter I (**Perspectives and trends in contemporary early education**) we intended to highlight, through theoretical explanations, the pedagogical premises of pre-school and primary school in a diachronic approach, and we have detailed models of early education in Europe. At the same time, we have integrated the theme of the legislative, structural and functional framework of school education in Romania.

The theoretical approach continues in Chapter II (**The complementarity of pre-school and primary school cycles in the context of the Romanian educational system reform**) with the presentation of some considerations regarding the terminological

delimitation, the dynamics of the curricular reform in the pre-school and primary cycle in Romania regarding the curricular elements of continuity and of discontinuity in the transition from the upper kindergarten group to the preparatory grade, as well as of the complementary elements between pre-school and primary school cycles. In this chapter there are also presented forms of playful learning at the interference of pre-school and primary school cycles.

In Chapter III, we addressed the issue of school inadaptation in the case of upper kindergarten group children and pupils in the preparatory grade, the causes of the difficulties of school inadaptation, consequences in the school evolution of the presence of adaptation problems at the level of the pupils in the preparatory grade.

Chapter IV (**The partnership between kindergarten and family, and school - family respectively, in the context of the actual education**) presents the main catalysing factors of the educational partnership with the family in making the school-family connection more efficient, the role of the school in facilitating the pupil's adaptation to the school regime, and strategies of involving the family in education, as well as organizational forms of kindergarten/ school-family partnerships activities.

Part II of the thesis presents the investigative steps of the paper. The experimental endeavour focuses on pedagogical intervention in order to optimize the curricular continuity between the upper kindergarten group and the preparatory grade. The aspects related to the elements of continuity and discontinuity specific to the implementation of the preparatory class in the primary school system were emphasized. In order to identify the positive and negative aspects of this implementation, we made an X-ray of the way in which some schools in Suceava County ensured that the didactic activities specific to the preparatory grade were carried out in good conditions.

The transition from the kindergarten to the preparatory grade, then to the first grade, must follow the principle of continuity between the levels of education and reach the basic level of performance in the basic skills training that defines the pupils' training profiles after the old and the new didactic project. Thus, the psycho-pedagogical and didactical comparative analysis between the previous level of competencies of children (recorded at the end of the pre-school cycle) and the competencies demonstrated at the end of the first semester of the preparatory grade and the first grade directed the conception of our work, indicating the positive and negative aspects of the transition from kindergarten to school by going through the new route of the preparatory grade.

An important moment in our research is to establish the purpose and objectives to be pursued. The complexity of the problem lies in the fact that, like many other phenomena in the sphere of pedagogical sciences, the ones we deal with are not easily quantifiable and measurable, and most of the measurements are indirect.

As a goal in the research we initiated, we proposed the first course of action: to identify the contribution of the elements of continuity between pre-school and primary school in the formative influence over school children, and to create a learning context favourable to learning. The achievement of this goal would be highlighted by indicators such as: improving school results and developing specific competencies for pupils in the preparatory grade and the first grade at the disciplines selected for the analysis: *Mathematics and Environmental Exploration*, respectively *Communication in Romanian*.

The second course of action in the research is the identification of factors of early inadaptation and the application of ameliorative measures.

Taking into account that the pre-school and the lower-secondary school periods are very important in the future development of the individual, we have formulated the following **general hypothesis**: the implementation of an intervention program, harmonizing the curricular and methodological approach by the kindergarten teachers from the upper kindergarten groups and the teachers from the preparatory grades, focusing on professional development activities, the inclusion of playful activities in the curriculum and programs for the development of kindergarten/ school-family partnerships, facilitates the transition from the upper kindergarten group to the preparatory grade, highlighted by higher school and behavioural performance at the students' level.

Relying on the general hypothesis, the following subsidiary hypotheses were outlined:

a) Developing and implementing a training program for kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers (focusing on debates, lectures, case studies, training programs, etc.) contributes to optimizing the transition from kindergarten to the preparatory grade.

b) The introduction of a set of ludic activities in the intervention program contributes to the improvement of behavioural performance of pre-schoolers in the upper kindergarten group (longitudinally monitored, including during the preparatory grade or first grade, at the disciplines selected for analysis: *Mathematics and Environmental Exploration*, *Communication in the Romanian language*).

c) The systematic cultivation and development of school-family partnerships contributes to the diminishing/ disappearing of inadaptation phenomena, so that the pre-

schooler/ pupil will respond positively to the requirements of the educational environment, distinguishing himself through superior school performance and behaviour.

We put the following types of research variables at the heart of our pedagogical research:

a) *the independent variable* - the intervention program, the harmonization of the curricular and methodological approach by the kindergarten teachers from the upper kindergarten groups and the primary school teachers from the preparatory grades, which includes three components: professional development activities; a set of ludic activities; a program to develop kindergarten/ school-family partnerships.

b) *dependent variables*:

- school performance and behavioural performance of pupils – as an indicator of the diminishing/ disappearing phenomena of school inadaptation – as an effect of the implementation of the three components of the intervention program;

- indicators of professional development of teachers;

- indicators regarding the informative and formative contribution of the ludic activities introduced in the instructive-educational program;

- indicators of the optimization of school/ kindergarten - family partnerships.

Our research is an experimental type because it involves the existence of a didactic scenario consisting in the conducting of directed educational actions, whose results are studied and interpreted scientifically to quantify their effectiveness, using quantitative investigations, and determining certain variables related to the investigated phenomena.

Since educational influences are not measurable, being materialized in acts of conscience and conduct, impossible to capture in exact patterns, school performance and behavioural performance become indicators of the reduction and disappearance of school inadaptation phenomena.

The analysis of the effects of independent variables on the dependent variables leads to the achievement of the predetermined purpose of the experiment, that of confirming or negating the hypothesis of the research. Depending on the degree of achievement of the predetermined goal, in our logical variable the complementary purpose of the research identifies, that of suggesting other questions and other hypotheses regarding the sequential aspects that will have the force to influence the elements of the educational process and to provide a new educational perspective to it.

The system of research methods and tools:

1. the method of the psycho-pedagogical experiment;
2. the method of observation;
3. the survey questionnaire method;
4. the interview survey method;
5. the method of research of curricular documents and other school documents;
6. Brief Early Skills & Support Index (BESSI) screening tool.

The group of participants in our research consisted of several categories of subjects, which are presented in the following table:

Subject category	Total number	Role
Specialists in education	13	1 inspector for the pre-school education 2 inspectors for the primary education 5 methodist teachers for the pre-school education 5 methodist teachers for primary education
Kindergarten teachers	40	Kindergarten teachers at the upper kindergarten group
Teachers	40	20 teachers for the preparatory grade 20 teachers for the first grade
Parents	37	Parents of the children in the preparatory grade
Pre-schoolers/ pupils	100	50 pre-schoolers from 2 upper kindergarten groups who went to 2 preparatory grades (in the same formula) – the experimental sample ; 50 pre-schoolers from another 2 upper kindergarten groups who went to 2 preparatory grades (in the same formula) – the control sample
Participants administering BESSI in	1384	22 primary school teachers 20 kindergarten teachers 298 pre-schoolers from upper kindergarten group (144 from rural areas, 154 from urban areas) 373 pupils in the preparatory grade (210 from rural areas, 163 from urban areas) 671 parents of the children taken under study

The pre-experimental stage included the following activities:

- Interview with specialists in education
- Analysis of curricular documents specific to pre-school and primary education

- Questionnaires for primary school teachers, kindergarten teachers, and parents concerning organizing and carrying out activities specific to the preparatory grade and the transition from kindergarten to school

- Observing upper kindergarten group pre-schoolers and pupils in the preparatory grade, in terms of social/ emotional skills demonstrated in group/ class activities

- Initial testing of pre-schoolers and pupils in the field of communication and mathematics/ sciences.

Following the detailed presentation of the results of the pre-experimental stage, we have an illustration of how the specialists in education, the primary school teachers and kindergarten teachers, and even the parents surveyed by us, perceive and highlight the main aspects of kindergarten-school continuity, sometimes from a critical perspective which brings into attention the risks of showing a fragmentation in the process of transition from pre-school to primary school. In addition, the evaluation of pre-school children to the end of the upper kindergarten group and of the pupils in the preparatory grade, after passing a relatively limited school curriculum (about half a semester) demonstrates that their level of maturity may be the cause of adaptation problems, but also by other factors, independent of their degree of development.

It is clear that difficulties of harmonious school integration still exist despite the assurance of both the pre-school training level and the organizational, curricular, material, etc. conditions, but also positive aspects due to the introduction of the preparatory grade in schools.

The data obtained in the pre-experimental stage were used in the design of the experimental endeavour, combining the opinions of the ones investigated with their own opinions regarding the real strategies of intervention in the didactic act and in the informal plan, which could contribute to the optimization of the transition from kindergarten to school.

We then next presented in our paper the experiment carried out in order to optimize the transition from kindergarten to school, starting from the conclusions of the study, by proposing a formative program for kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers from the preparatory grade; developing and implementing a family partnership program designed to raise awareness of family involvement in the child's educational process; organizing didactic activities focused on Mind Lab techniques and lateral thinking. In its entirety, the present paper actually contributes to optimizing the transition from kindergarten to school and

to ensuring higher school performance as a result of a socio-emotional adaptation of school children to the school system.

The formative stage of the research consisted in developing an educational intervention program and experimenting it on the sample of subjects selected in the previous stage.

The formative intervention program targeted the following three main lines of work:

1. Elaborating a training program project on the harmonization of the curricular and methodological endeavour in the kindergarten/ school for kindergarten teachers from the upper kindergarten groups and for the primary school teachers at the preparatory grade (*The prevention of school inadaptation. Private aspects of school/ pre-school practice in relation to the school-family partnership*)

2. The systematic development of school-family partnerships (through meetings with parents, lectures on various educational themes, counselling of parents).

3. Developing a program of formal, non-formal and informal activities suitable for pupils in the preparatory grade in order to optimize the transition from kindergarten to school (proposal of ludic activities based on the Mind Lab model, and ludic activities using lateral thinking techniques).

The post-experimental step comprises the following activities:

- Completing the observation protocol, on the same topics as in the pre-experimental stage, in the lessons with the pupils of the first grade (the subjects of the experimental sample);

- Administration of final tests for *Communication in Romanian/ Mathematics and exploration of the environment* for the subjects of the experimental and control sample.

- Applying and interpreting the knowledge tool for young children, BESSI.

- Analysis of the results obtained from the experimental intervention.

Although the BESSI sample was not applied in the pre-experimental stage (not available at the time), its administration during the research brought up a series of relevant data for Romanian education and for realizing a real continuity between the programs on track in the kindergarten and in the school. Some of the data obtained largely explained the role of the family in the development and formation of children, and the results of the partnership with the family were best observed by analysing the data from the BESSI sample.

Our research can be considered as the image of a new social spectrum that forces the change of didactic strategies according to the identified social circumstances, and in order to achieve the established goals according to the general and the specific hypotheses of the experiment, we started from the following steps:

a) the knowledge and description of the school inadaptation process, as well as the causes that lead to its occurrence;

b) analysing the relationship between the lack of motivation and the school performance of pupils with learning difficulties, consisting in identifying development vulnerabilities of young children in the educational process;

c) radiography of the existing family relationships, as well as the discovery of economic difficulties considered by us risk educational factors;

d) designing intervention programs for pupils with adaptation problems in order to be fully integrated into the educational process and, implicitly, to improve their school performance.

As we have already mentioned, during our research our attention has been focused on three convergent directions: the professional training of teachers, the systematic introduction in the activity of small primary grades (preparatory and first grade) of the ludic elements that harmoniously combine relaxation with the socio-cognitive development of the pupils (avoiding the steep passage from kindergarten to school) and the kindergarten/ school-family partnership, the family being perceived as a mediator between the school and the child, as well as a facilitator of the child's formative course.

Engaging the teachers in pursuing professional development activities is always a constructive endeavour. In the context of our research, we have appreciated that training programs can also contribute to optimizing the transition from kindergarten to school by preventing and overcoming the difficulties caused by the lack of a curricular unit at the two levels of education. The call to the professional experience of some education experts may be a reference for teachers who do not know well what is happening at other levels of education (which precede or succeed the level at which they work), and who need a unitary organization of the curriculum.

Our research has demonstrated the need for a unitary action performed by kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers to facilitate school adaptation of children and their success in learning, the results of children demonstrating this aspect.

On the other hand, motivating the parents to enter in real partnerships with the school, having readiness to take important decisions about educating their children, about the institution they entrust their children to, is the attribute of the school that increases the community's trust in the school institution and empowering parents with their educational role. Work is difficult due to the fact that in the vast majority of communities, the educational partnership is not an element of the organizational culture of the community. Therefore, in the realization of the school-family partnership, it is necessary, implicitly, to guide the parents through the school. It is not possible to have a school-family partnership without parental education, as we cannot remember the parents' education without their collaboration with the school.

Regarding the relationship between school and family from the perspective of its role in preventing school inadaptation, in the case of the pupils in the preparatory grade and the first grade, the experiment has validated the following aspects:

- During parents' meetings we can set up the basis of an effective educational partnership, after which they can move into a secondary plan;
- In school-family relationships, first and foremost, the trust of the poor and satisfyingly educating families must be won;
- In the case of pupils with symptoms of adaptation/ inadaptation, the educator, aware of the internal (biopsychological) and external schooling factors, must focus on external socio-familial factors and diversify the partnership activities with the family or modify work strategies to take the pupil out of a dangerous area, that of school inadaptation, school failure, school dropout, etc.

From the research undertaken we must highlight the factor school-family communication as a support element for the partnership. Research data show the need for *more open communication* between parents and teachers, so that this school-parents cooperation becomes a natural reality.

School-family relationships do not lack dynamism, but they are a complex phenomenon that can be changed by factors related to the pupil, due to the family's educative level. The partnership activities implemented ensure the teacher's determination to continue working together. Through an effective partnership, the ratio between the parents' level of aspiration and the pupil's potential can be adjusted, with an effect on increasing the parents' involvement in education. Activities with parents require planned judicious action, which can increase parents' trust in the institution, resulting in a successful transition to schooling.

For the success of school partnerships that aim to prevent the inadaptation of young pupils, a well-rounded strategy is needed that includes diversified activities, carried out in a warm, friendly environment. It is the first step toward gaining parents' confidence in education. They will also become partners in the education of their own children. Their interest in school will be felt in the unconditional support they will provide the child in his effort to meet the demands of the educational environment.

The mentality that only school has to deal with children's education - the teacher knows best the way to go - will gradually disappear and crystallize the idea that the teacher needs help and support from parents to increase the quality of education for the purpose of abolishing discontinuity in the transition from kindergarten to school.

Looking from another point of view, the way educative activities take place, especially in the first primary grades, can lead to a smoother transition from the kindergarten to the school system. That is why we have proposed game-focused activities in which the pupil brings together the ludic factor and cognitive learning in a much more agreeable way.

Symptoms of a possible inadaptation state are the child's indifference and passivity in the school preparation process, placing him in the category of unteachable, unstudious pupils. The state of inadaptation intensifies when the teacher expresses repeatedly his/ her mistrust in the child's ability to evolve in the field of knowledge. Instead, the child is aware of what the professor has said about his/ her ability to evolve in the field of knowledge, and gives answers appropriate to his/ her state of dissatisfaction, resulting in weaker results. On the other hand, the attitude of overestimating the real capacity of the child by the teacher, which presupposes the existence of an intellectual plurality, which in reality does not exist, puts the pupil in the position of managing the differences between the professor's exigencies and the nervous resistance of the assessed child, which manifests itself either by rejecting the oversized requirement or by circumventing it. It is the moment when there may be disagreements between the two actors of the teaching act, the teacher and the child, about the real causes that explain school success or failure. As a consequence of this conflicting state, the teacher motivates otherwise the student's failure, and the reason invoked by the teacher is rejected by the student, along with other measures taken by the teacher against him. In addition, the conflict situation becomes more acute if the teacher repeats these practices, and the student exhibits an inner strength that amplifies the feeling of injustice that blocks the communication between him and the teacher.

Through the new interactive methods, children rely on each other in the accumulation of knowledge, sharing their thoughts; they learn to express themselves freely, acquiring important skills. The didactic activities planned and carried out in a creative and free manner have led to active, participatory learning, encouraging initiative, the creativity of schoolchildren, intrinsic motivation, ensuring their creative participation, capturing their interest and engaging them affectively and behaviourally. The elements of logic and creativity in the games and learning activities realized through the Mind Lab techniques and the principles of lateral thinking have ensured the involvement of their own resources in finding solutions, in solving the tasks, increasing the capacity for investigation.

At the level of the experimental group, as a result of our intervention, there was an increase in school performance and in the scores of indicators regarding the socio-emotional and cognitive behaviour of students. Thus, following the interpretation of the results obtained, the comparative analysis of the results, we noticed to what extent an improvement was made in the cognitive, social and emotional behaviour of the schoolchildren. At the end of this experiment, we found that the new methods and techniques have positively influenced the quantity and quality of the pre-schoolers' knowledge, the formation and consolidation of intellectual skills and abilities, the correct solving of problems, their perspicacity and their creative potential, which implicitly led to an increase of the school performance, the development of intellectual processes in close correlation with the socio-emotional development, in a word the optimal preparation for their school work.

The data obtained from the evaluation tests/ tests applied successively in the ameliorative and the final stage confirm the hypothesis of the paper, namely: the implementation of an intervention program, harmonizing the curricular and methodological endeavour of the kindergarten teachers from the upper kindergarten groups and the primary school teachers from the preparatory grades, focusing on professional development activities, the inclusion of ludic activities in the curriculum and programs for the development of kindergarten/ school-family partnerships, facilitates the transition from the upper kindergarten group to the preparatory grade, highlighted by higher school and behavioural performance at the students' level.

Following the results obtained through the qualitative and quantitative analyses, but also in the context of the theoretical foundation, currently supported by the theories on the transition from kindergarten to school, we can conclude the following final aspects:

* At the level of primary school teachers, the elements that contribute substantially to increasing the efficiency of the process of adapting to school include the preoccupations with the ability to design, guide and carry out the teaching-educational process as a continuity of the activity carried out in the kindergarten;

* The steps to prevent and overcome the discontinuity elements in the transition from kindergarten to school must involve directly and consciously the partnership with the family;

* Increasing student-student interaction by engaging in collaborative learning activities, exploring elements in nature, stimulating the sharing of opinions, are factors that can influence the intellectual activity of students and can support socio-emotional development that converges towards good school adaptation;

* The teacher involvement in professional development activities can help to optimize the transition from kindergarten to school by preventing and overcoming the difficulties caused by the lack of a curricular unit at the two levels of education;

* Carrying out collaborative activities with students in non-formal frameworks, contributes to a good teacher-student, pupil-student knowledge and to the formation of inter-relational skills, effective in the process of school adaptation.

The extended bibliography, used as a source of information in the elaboration of the thesis, is presented at the end, together with annexes. The latter include the questionnaires used in the various stages of the research, applied in the context of the proposed activities, the evaluation tests on the areas/ subjects proposed for analysis, as well as the collaboration protocols between the family and the schools involved, observation sheets, completed by the participating teachers.

The theoretical and practical contribution of the paper

One of our contributions consisted in developing a training program for kindergarten teachers from upper kindergarten groups and primary school teachers from preparatory grades, which could harmonize the curricular approaches from the two levels of education, so it is possible to avoid any discontinuity elements that allow for the phenomenon of school inadaptation. Although this program remained at the project stage (due to administrative difficulties in the implementation), however, a number of common activities were carried out with the two categories of teachers (methodical meetings, debates,

professional discussions, etc.), which allowed awareness of the main points of convergence or inconsistencies between the curricular contents and the working methods in the kindergarten and school, which allowed me to set new benchmarks in future didactic activity.

We have found that, despite the positive aspects of the transition from the upper kindergarten group to the preparatory grade, it still proves necessary to program and apply good practice intervention measures. Thus, we drew some portrayal features of didactic excellence, results of our collaboration with the kindergarten teachers and primary school teachers from the group of participants, practices consisting in a set of expected methods and didactic strategies, which once applied can contribute to the increase of school performance in the pupils in the preparatory grade with atypical manifestations in development and with elements of school inadaptation.

On the other hand, we considered that an important educational issue today, placed secondly in the classical education process, is the identification of some forms of active collaboration that can contribute to the consolidation of the school-family partnership, which is decisive in the prevention of students from failing to adapt to current school requirements. This collaboration within a real and not in a formal partnership, can result in the positive performance of the student in all his actions to meet the demands imposed by the current educational environment. The close link between family and school should take into account the age and individual characteristics of the students in the preparatory grade.

According to our research, the process of children adapting from the upper kindergarten group to the requirements of the preparatory grade was carried out in good conditions, the role of parents in this educational process being appreciated as consistent. Therefore, by applying a variety of ways to initiate a real partnership with the family, I appreciate that I have been able to strengthen the role of the family through a closer and permanent relationship equally done from family to school, and from school to family. Therefore, the premise that the introduction of an intermediary in the school-student relationships – the involvement of the family in the school activity – as a mediator, can lead to the prevention of school inadaptation, is confirmed.

Thirdly, in the context of the formative experiment, we considered it important to address other learning methods and techniques closer to the concept of play and freedom (characteristic of the young schooler), so that we can increase his school performance, in parallel to a socio-emotional optimal development. So, through the formative content, the present paper has the character of deepening the methodology of using as many of the modern

and traditional methods, techniques and procedures that we applied in the activities with the pupils of the preparatory grades, thus seeking to meet the needs of modern education. I focused especially on activities built on the application of lateral thinking techniques and logical games (specific to the Mind Lab method), which involved the implication of creative thinking and communication skills, with which the child will work throughout his or her work.

One of the contributions made by this work is the adaptation and administration of the BESSI sample to the Romanian population. For the purpose of today's research, we used the Early Skills Support Index (BESSI, Hughes & White, 2015) to evaluate kindergarten children and pupils in the preparatory grade, both by parents and teachers. The tool evaluates family factors supporting schooling, and after a brief assessment of the children, those who need a more in-depth assessment of schooling or an intervention able to facilitate their schooling can be identified.

Limits of the research

Although I tried to deepen the problem of transition from kindergarten to school with its peculiarities, in order to make it more efficient, during the research there were various difficulties, which subscribe objectively within the limits of the research.

Of these, I would first of all recall the selection of a relatively small group of subjects, since, desiring to monitor their longitudinal course from kindergarten to school, I did not have a larger number of subjects at hand, the number of kindergartens and schools in Vatra Dornei being reduced.

Another limit was the lack of certainty of the respondents' objectivity to the investigative tools used in the course. In order to diminish the negative effects, the request to fill in the questionnaires by the kindergarten teachers or primary school teachers was done institutionally, referring to the management of the educational institutions (by letters addressed to the managers), and the action to complete these working tools was done independently. In addition, inappropriate filling of the questionnaire has made data processing difficult. We found that some respondents were tempted to present the situation that favours them or their own school (even if to prevent these limits, the respondents were informed that

the answers given are confidential, and that the innovative responses will be included in the corpus of the current works, mentioning the source). Obtaining the data was made difficult, some questionnaires have been returned for an objective refill. Also, data processing and the corroboration of information was done in a very short time with regard to the amount of information received.

Another limit I considered was the impossibility of administering the BESSI test in the two stages of research, the pre-experimental and the experimental research, because we only had access to it while we were already working at the formative stage. Thus, it was only possible to validate this sample on the Romanian population, with the chance to be used in future research.

The fact that the training program proposed to the teachers from the upper kindergarten groups and the preparatory grades remained only at the project stage (not being able to implement it properly) can be considered as another limit of the research.

Future directions of research

In line with the conclusions outlined above, a series of educational suggestions can be formulated regarding the transition from kindergarten to school, with the aim of directing the work of teachers to identify new possibilities for formative intervention that lead to an easy school adaptation:

- the acquisition by teachers of permanently updated information on the curriculum in the kindergarten and school, as well as the ways to ensure their logical continuity;
- promoting a set of curricular content that focuses not only on the training of students' cognitive abilities, but also on socio-emotional ones;
- training the functions of students' thinking and social skills through learning activities and games based on the techniques of lateral thinking and the Mind Lab method;
- the systematic inclusion of extracurricular activities carried out together with parents in all educational and formative activities, in order to increase the psycho-emotional congruence between pupils and to develop competencies that ensure good school adaptation.

Consequently, through the theoretical considerations presented in this paper and by the experimental intervention at the level of the classes involved in the research, some of the relevant aspects of the transition from kindergarten to school, with specific elements of continuity and discontinuity, could be highlighted and verified.