

**BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA**

**DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC POLICY**

**PhD thesis**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING OF ROMANIAN  
UNIVERSITIES REGARDING THE INSERTION ON  
THE LABOR MARKET OF STUDENTS AND  
GRADUATES**

**-SUMMARY-**

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## PhD thesis summary

**Keywords:** Employers, Communities of practice, Government, Insertion on the labor market, Methodology for evaluating the insertion process (M.E.P.I), Strategic planning, Online platform FirstJobRomânia.ro, Study programs, Students and graduates, Romania

### Thesis structure

The doctoral thesis addresses the issue of insertion of university students and graduates on the Romanian labor market. The thesis is divided into 6 chapters, preceded by an introduction presenting the context in which the present research is carried out. The introduction presents the context in which the labor market evolves both at European and national level, addressing the issue of insertion of young students and recent graduates from the perspective of the educational offer of Romanian universities. Thus, this research becomes relevant both for society, academia and business.

Each chapter is divided into subchapters detailing the important aspects briefly presented in order: universities and insertion on the labor market (chapter 1), basics of labor market planning (chapter 2), methodology (M.E.P.I) developed and research tools used to evaluate the process of insertion of graduates on the labor market (chapter 3), data collection and results obtained in research conducted applying methodology (M.E.P.I.) (Chapter 4), strategies addressing key identified problems (Chapter 5) and conclusions, limitations and possible future strategies (Chapter 6).

Thus, **Chapter 1** defines academic education systems and identifies the challenges they face in the world and in Romania. As a trainer of the senior workforce, having a significant influence on the personal and professional development of students and graduates and representing an important part of their progress in society, the mission of tertiary education institutions is to provide high-quality education and training. University study programs are grouped by fields of study and are led by a managerial and academic body. These represent the

level at which universities can fundamentally intervene in order to increase the quality of education. The challenges faced by universities in the world and in Romania are related to: the sudden shift to online learning, international competition due to globalization and student mobility and last but not least, the change in the global academic paradigm as a result of the recent pandemic crisis, technological changes and very specific performance indices. Thus, the Romanian state has a decisive role in addressing the transformation of the academic world in the post-pandemic period we are going through.

Chapter 1 also deals with the aspects regarding the insertion on the labor market of students and graduates of university studies in Romania. The insertion process is approached from the perspective of young graduates of the public tertiary education system in our country. These young people, despite completing a higher level training phase, face a number of challenges in their integration into the labour market, which make it difficult for them to access a job. The impact of unemployment on this important segment of the population raises big questions about increasing employability in the labour market. The determining aspects in the process of insertion of students and recent graduates on the Romanian labor market are highlighted at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 2 presents theoretical aspects of public and strategic management of organizations from the perspective of improving their performance. Through strategic planning, we want educational programs to be relevant, updated, adapted to market needs and concrete. Strategic management is defined as a continuous process with primary responsibility for the implementation of strategies by persons appointed to managerial positions. Strategies are the means by which planned goals are achieved. These concepts are to be applied throughout this doctoral thesis in order to increase the insertion of students and graduates on the Romanian labor market.

**Chapter 3** analyses the systemic components that relate to each other and directly influence the process of insertion into the labour market (government, universities, students and employers). In the first stage, the methods for monitoring higher education graduates developed

by the systems in the European states with the greatest longevity are described, namely DLHE Methodology in Great Britain, Quantitative Methodology in France and KOAB Methodology in Germany. Then, the current research method applied in Romania is described. Following the results of the analysis of the three research methodologies practiced at national level in the European Union and the current stage of development of the evaluation of the graduate insertion process in Romania, a new methodology (M.E.P.I.) is developed and presented in this chapter. The proposed methodology is a complex methodology composed of the Quadrant Graphic Method, called the SUEG Method, and the Triangulation Method, called the InterChest Method. Both methods were developed by the author but are refined in this thesis through the perspective of the present research. The methodology is detailed in this chapter. In conclusion, the usefulness of the proposed methodology is highlighted.

- InterChest method – allows collecting information on the insertion process, its strategic analysis and identifying critical aspects for the strategic planning of Romanian universities
- The SUEG method – allows the evaluation of the insertion process, focusing on improving the systemic components of the process.

**Chapter 4** details the research of the process of insertion of students and graduates on the Romanian labor market as a result of applying the newly developed M.E.P.I methodology. This chapter presents the results of the main systematic and practical analyses of the theoretical aspects stated during the opening chapters. Chapter 4 analyzes the existing situation regarding the insertion of students and recent graduates from state higher education on the Romanian labor market in a qualitative research. The approach from the perspective of universities and study programs to the analysis of the existing situation allows the identification of critical aspects in order to increase the level of insertion on the labor market of students / graduates. The practical purpose of this stage is to obtain information that can support the practical application of strategic planning in Romanian universities. Moreover, actions are identified to ensure basic resources and conditions for increasing the capacity of young people, with a direct

impact on the insertion on the labor market of students and recent graduates. Universities can support the prioritization of these actions in the short and long term. Chapter 4 demonstrates the Advanced Hypothesis at the quantitative research stage.

- **HYPOTHESIS:** Increasing the insertion of graduates from the academic environment on the Romanian labor market, expressed by the number of months from graduation to employment at the first job, can be achieved by improving study programs.

The quantitative research was conducted on a sample from Romania, according to the research methodology proposed in chapter 3. As a result of collecting data on a sample of 370 people from 3 universities, it resulted that increasing the insertion of graduates from the academic environment on the Romanian labor market, expressed by the number of months from graduation to employment at the first job, can be achieved by improving study programs through at least the following aspects: (1) development of specialized disciplines and practice, (2) increasing the reputation of the study program (eg international accreditation), (3) developing students' work skills (eg teamwork), respectively (4) intensifying career counseling activities.

Chapter 4 analyzes the monitoring of insertion in three case studies, Babeş-Bolyai University (U.B.B.), Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi (U.A.I.C.) and University of Bucharest (U.B.) in order to validate the results obtained through the proposed methodology. The results of this analysis were further used in the holistic development of the strategic planning concept, as well as in the validation of the methodology (M.E.P.I.). It resulted that the methodology (M.E.P.I.) developed is stable and that it can be used with national application, in order to improve the level of insertion on the labor market of students and recent graduates in a pilot project described in the next chapter.

**Chapter 5** emphasizes the directions of long-term strategic planning as an approach in order to achieve the general objective of the thesis that respond to major issues identified: the development of the system of diversification of partnerships between universities and employers. The facilitation of the insertion process, the development of communities of practice



and the evaluation of the performance of each component of the insertion system are embedded as actions in an online platform (FirstJobRomania.ro) of great utility. The background of the research implies, in the first phase, the development of a concept of assimilation through the online platform (FirstJobRomânia.ro) of data on the public educational sector, employers in the public and private sector, as well as students and graduates. It will facilitate the generation of information based on which solutions will be obtained to ensure a much higher and faster degree of employment for students and graduates.

The development of the insertion process evaluation methodology (M.E.P.I) is also an integral part of this platform. The developed methodology will allow evaluating and increasing the process of insertion of students and recent graduates on the labor market. This objective ensures that an overview of the existing situation and possibilities for improving employability in the labour market is established. Strategic planning in the public educational sector involves a well-defined methodology that will be the key to success for young people's access to the targeted system through which a clearly superior safety and training will be provided at the end of their studies.

*The main objective of this doctoral thesis is to increase the insertion of students, respectively graduates on the labor market by creating a platform (firstjobromania.ro) of interaction between at least 3 important university centers in Romania and employers, in order to diversify partnerships between universities and the business environment, through which the latter will be able to recruit and select students and graduates through direct collaboration with universities. The platform can be viewed directly on the firstjobromania.ro link, being currently in the working stage. The development of this platform will facilitate the access of the parties involved, without location restrictions, given that in the final stage, this project will involve 3 large university centers in the country and employers from different regions.*

In conclusion, through the FirstJobRomania.ro Platform, internships will be offered to students, adapted to the curricula of study programs, within communities of practice. At the same time, it will provide students with knowledge about higher education studies, such as

access to laws, study plans, regulations, internships in communities of practice, career counseling, access to the labor market, etc.

Finally, innovative directions of action will be established to increase the insertion of employed graduates immediately after completing their studies. The variable of interest that characterizes the process of insertion of recent graduates on the labor market is *the number of months from graduation to employment at the first job*.

**Chapter 6** elaborates the conclusions, limitations and future strategies of the research carried out within the framework of this doctoral thesis. The research hypothesis being demonstrated, the methodology can be improved and the results extrapolated to the entire statistical population. Last but not least, the popularity of the platform will allow drawing future research hypotheses.

Starting from the advanced research hypothesis in the opening of this research: *Increasing the insertion of graduates from the academic environment on the Romanian labor market expressed by the number of months from graduation to employment at the first job can be achieved by improving study programs*, the statistical analysis on the variable number of months from graduation to employment at the first job was performed and the correlation was tested this indicator with some aspects specific to the study program: studying specialized disciplines, practice, reputation, developing students' work skills, and advising them in their careers.

In conclusion, the research showed that between the number of months from graduation to employment at the first job and between specialized disciplines there is a relatively acceptable degree of association, the correlation being negative (-). This means that the number of months can be reduced by increasing the degree of study of specialized disciplines. At the same time, the correlation of the number of months from graduation to employment at the first job with studying practice resulted in an almost acceptable degree of association. Similarly, the correlation between the number of months from graduation to employment at the first job with the performance of the study program is a strongly negative one, which means that the number

of months may decrease if the academic reputation of the study program increases. Moreover, by intensifying the application of working methods such as group projects, the number of months from graduation to employment at the first job of graduates can decrease.

It follows that improving insertion on the labor market can be achieved by increasing the performance of study programs, by studying more intensively specialized disciplines, by developing group work methods, developing the concept of practice and thus increasing the reputation of study programs.

As limitations of the present research, it can be mentioned that the results obtained are not perfectly valid for the entire statistical population of graduates in Romania, given that the studied sample registered certain representativeness deficiencies. Taking into account the composition of the sample, the statistical results described and the results obtained are currently expressed as general conclusions, as valid directions of improvement in order to increase insertion into the labor market.

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