

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH, YOUTH AND SPORT
“BABES-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ
FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION SCIENCES
“Education, Development, Cognition” Doctoral School**

DOCTORAL THESIS

ABSTRACT

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**DOCTORAL STUDENT:
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2010

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**MANAGERIAL STRATEGIES OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IN
THE RURAL AREAS**

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ABSTRACT

KEY WORDS

Pre-university schooling, school, education, reform, rural areas, school as organization, management, leadership, educational management, school manager, status, role, abilities, attributions, managerial strategies, confidence, performance

The doctoral thesis entitled “**Managerial strategies of the school principal in the rural areas**”, resulting from an in-depth theoretical and practical investigation, is aimed at the problems arising from educational management in schools of the Romanian rural areas in an open-minded and anti-conservative spirit, in accordance with today’s movement of ideas. The genuine knowledge of the specialty literature, the experience and the expertise acquired over time, the inside perspective of the teacher as well as manager have allowed for the careful and relevant selection of the standpoints that match the approach of Romania’s current educational process.

Within the ample process of transformation that the contemporary society is undergoing, the school holds a key role which we attribute in full awareness to Romanian rural schools as well.

Structured along eight chapters, this thesis connects experience and practice with the theoretical and experimental data concerning the tremendously important issue of educational management in our rural schools.

Chapter I “Reform policies – Landmarks of education in Romanian rural areas” addresses the multiple transformations that the Romanian education system has undergone, alongside the economic, political and cultural evolution of the society.

Emphasizing the fact that Romania has felt the need for efficient changes in schools and education by initiating and unfolding an ample policy of reform that began only after 1997 and is still under way, this chapter underlines the reform policies and their significance for the Romanian pre-university education system.

Chapter II of the thesis, suggestively entitled “**The rural school – tradition and modernity**” presents the reality of the rural school in the Romanian village. The school, seen as an organization and organizational group is presented as a cognitive system where major long-term decisions are made to a greater extent than by isolated individuals. This is an organization model that carries out intellectual and cognitive tasks and which shapes a mental pattern that is linked to the features of the interaction between members of the school organization, processing information both within the group and the individual cognitive systems.

The rural school organization represents a type of social organization that is characterized by the following distinct elements: formal organization structure based on stability norms; its members are involved at a primary level (educator-educated relationship) and at a secondary level (level of interpersonal, hierarchy-based relations in the bureaucratic sense and, why not, in the political sense, “from the center”); the organization is limitedly engaged with other organizations that may be integrated in the system or are outside it.

“The organizational health” of the rural schooling institution is a current problem. This depends upon that school’s capacity to form and develop its own organizational

culture. The school's organizational may be defined as a philosophy embraced by all the members of the school's collectivity, on the basis of a common ideology founded on values, convictions, assumptions and norms. An organizational culture is formed within the school organization by jointly participating in its objectives and by consulting each member.

Chapter III **“Educational Management- art and science of education”** highlights the indestructible correlation between management seen as “art” – referring to the manager's personal qualities coupled with specific management abilities and management seen as “science” – based on theoretical accumulations expressed in laws, theories, principles, methods, etc. today, more and more specialists speak of applying in practice the theory of management universality, a theory that is applicable through the double professionalization of the manager, possible by having knowledge in the manager's field of activity, specific management knowledge and by developing his or her creative abilities within managerial activities.

Seen from this perspective, management is a specific profession which is based on a managerial culture that opens the possibility of becoming professional and of approaching the managerial theory and practice in an inter-disciplinary manner.

The theory and practice of management are now shaped at the level of the educational system. Understanding correctly the concept of educational management entails awareness of the actions that educational managers ought to carry out in order to attain their goals. Management studies show that one cannot speak of a clear and exhaustive inventory of managerial qualities but one can speak of the functions and functional domains where managers exert those functions and roles.

The school manager exerts managerial functions of sequential and consecutive action which are centered upon tasks: analysis-diagnosis; organization; project-making (planning and scheduling); implementing programs (operational management, control, sequential evaluation); final evaluations; centered upon the human dimension; organizing groups, making teams; functions of constant action throughout the managerial cycle; centered upon tasks: decision-making, circulation of information; centered upon the human dimension: motivating people, participation, personal development of team members; negotiation; preventing and resolving conflicts.

The manager's competences must be approached from two sides: the attributed competence (authority of the position) and the intrinsic competence per se given by specialty and management knowledge, by the qualities, skills and abilities that the manager must possess according to the job description. The double competence can be obtained through a process of continual and systematic professionalization and of developing his or her own capacities, abilities and knowledge.

Nowadays we see the professionalization of school management. The school manager is becoming a standardized profession whose occupation requires specialty studies that allow the acquisition of a status and social role. The roles that the school manager must carry out require a series of competences (of communication and relating, psycho-social, of utilizing information technology, of management and coordination, of evaluating, managing and administrating resources) which require emotional development, self-management with their own specific *capacities*.

In the fifth chapter **“The concept of management in the educational system”**, our attention is focused on the notion of leading/management and the particularities of

leading the Romanian educational system by outlining the existing difference between manager and leader. The theory of leadership at the level of the school unit is aimed at the part of activity through which the manager influences the behavior of teachers, students, parents, community and groups that they are in contact with, in order to amplify the prestige of the school and to obtain the desired results.

The sixth chapter “**Confidence in the school organization and in the manager of the rural school**” brings arguments for the introduction of the “confidence” construct into the specialty literature of educational management. Frequently defined as faith, expectation or a strong feeling in each individual; as an institutional phenomenon that develops in an institution or between different institutions; as an inter-personal transaction among individuals, at the inter-personal and group levels, “*confidence*” has entered the specialty literature of latter years, presenting the implications that it causes upon institutions and employees. This thing has happened less frequently in the research of education sciences, where the study of the confidence phenomenon in the school’s manager and staff must become an important element of work performance, a reality that shows the expansion of such research into this domain as well.

Organizational confidence is seen as a an *organizational control mechanism, an alternative to authority* (Bradach, J. L. & Eccles, R. G. , 1989) or *a starting point in solving the problems of a work group* (Malnight, T. W., 1989). Confidence can also be understood as *a way of surviving organizational crises* (Mishra, A.K., 1992) or as *an essential factor which allows for different manners of accepting risk, in any social system* (Luhman, N., 1988).

Confidence lies at the foundation of an organization (McAllister, D., 1995), as a critical pre-requisite for the development of the employees and institutions as well. An employee of the school who has confidence in their manager, respectively in the principal, will become more active in their work behavior (Costigan R., et al., 2006). This means an increase in assertiveness, in the initiative to resolve problems, in the energy for work or in creativity. The inter-personal confidence developed between the school manager and the employee will entail in: the performance of the employees, their satisfaction with the work done, their attachment or loyalty towards the organization (Caudron, S., 2002; Dirks K. T. et Ferrin, D., 2002; Staw, B.M., 1997). When the manager together with his/her employees develops a behavior based on confidence and trust, good performance and positive results will readily appear.

Confidence is a multi-factor feature that includes cognitive, affective and behavioral factors (the uni-dimensional model). Confidence and lack of confidence are two distinct notions that may vary separately (Lewicki, R.J., et al., 1998), even if they consist of the selfsame dimensions: cognitive, affective and behavioral. The two are seen as a continuum that reaches from low to high confidence levels.

Chapter VI “**Research concerning the managerial performance of rural schools in the Maramures area**” showcases our effort to investigate and define the existing situation within the educational reality of Maramures concerning the professional and managerial competences of the principals in the rural areas and their output according to the needs of the rural school, in order to meet these needs in parallel with the selection and recruitment process of the principals.

Our findings were aimed at collecting essential data for configuring the premises that underlie the quasi-experimental intervention. The study has contributed to finding the

starting data in order to specify content and subject lots as well as to the possibility of analyzing within the target group several aspects with a significant level of predictability for the success of our experimental program.

The investigations carried out in the findings stage revolve around three general objectives:

O1: identifying the dimensions that concur for the good performance of the principals of rural schools in the Maramures area; defining the concept of 'efficient manager' in order to identify the specifics of this type of manager.

O2: identifying the current level of the performance of rural school principals in order to single out the functional and dysfunctional aspects of management and to establish, respectively run an intervention program with these managers through a training and professional development activity which will result in an improvement of their managerial output.

O3: the correlation between job satisfaction and the managerial activity of the principals of rural schools in the Maramures area, with a view to identifying new ways of evaluating managerial performance with which one may obtain a motivated organizational behavior, a fact which will facilitate the procedure of selecting and recruiting the principals of the schools in the rural areas (in order to single out the functional and dysfunctional aspects of management).

The analysis of the three investigated objectives allows the observation of a concordance which exists between a good, effective rural school and an effective management obtained on the basis of a motivated organizational behavior and of an effective managerial style.

The investigations concluded in the observation stage have been organized on three main co-ordinates, in accordance with the general objectives we have proposed:

1. the identification and the analysis of the participative dimensions of the effectiveness of managerial work of the principals of rural schools within the Maramures area;

2. the identification of the actual level of work performance through the set up of a correlation between the knowledge at the moment of obtaining the position and the knowledge obtained after a training program for professional development envisaging a complex evaluation system, which comprises four different levels of investigation (within which each principal part of the pool is evaluated by more than one persons: experts within the Maramures County School Inspectorate, the representative of the Free Union of Secondary Education, the ARACIP representative, representatives of the teachers, of the students, of the parents, of the civil authorities);

3. the analysis of the correlation between satisfaction and performance in the managerial activity of the principals of rural schools within the Maramures area.

- I. The achieving of the first research objective started from the operation of the most important *conceptual aspects* which allowed us to offer a pertinent image of the *participative dimensions to the management work performance of the principals of rural schools within the Maramures area*. This operation was based on the analysis of aspects deemed relevant in the specialized literature and was completed with dimensions considered defining and which were obtained following informal discussions with principals of the target group, with the group of experts, with other factors part of our pool.

We wanted to gather this information in order to adapt the grid of general competences of the effective manager to the specific competences of the principals of rural schools, having as a goal the adaptation of our training and professional development program to the demands of the educational policy, to the realities and expectations specific to the area, the locality, the teachers, the pupils, the community, and last but not least, the individual needs of each principal of a rural school.

Synthesizing the aspects operated above there were identified the following specific objectives pursued in the needs analysis of the target group formed by principals of rural schools:

- I: 1. the diagnosis of the style and of the managerial strategy, respectively the appreciation of real management as it is perceived and practiced by principals in the rural areas, intending to offer the possibility of appreciating the real management existing in rural schools from Maramures, respectively: what do they do? How and what do principals of rural schools think? in various managerial situations;
2. the identification of the main types of difficulties encountered in the activity of rural school management;
3. the defining of the concept of „efficient manager” at the level of rural schools;
4. the evaluation of the decisional status of the principals within the management activities of the school;
5. the analysis of the opinions, perceptions and expectations of the experts, teachers, students, parents, unions, community, towards the importance of the activity of school management conducted by the principals of rural schools and the importance of this act for education and society.

II: the achieving of the second coordinate our research was based on in the ascertainment stage allowed the gathering of information regarding the theoretical mode in which the activity of school management is perceived at the level of rural education in Maramures County. From this perspective we envisaged both the *subjective aspects*, opinions of the experts, teachers, students, parents, unions, community concerning the school management activity performed by the principals of these schools, and *factual information*, represented by objective indexes of evaluation of their work performance levels.

Thus synthesizing the operated aspects, the realization of the second general objective allowed the identification of the following specific objectives:

1. the analysis of the quality of managerial strategies used by the principals of rural schools while accomplishing the task specific to the job description and the managerial contract concluded with the County School Inspectorate;
2. the progress realized by the principals following the activities of professional and managerial development they have attended (the difference of points obtained between T1 And T2 following the application of a test of general knowledge, similar to the one applied at T1 from the point of view of difficulty.)

III: The third stage of our research envisaged the establishing of a report between satisfaction and performance in the managerial activity of principals of rural schools, Maramures area, with the purpose of delineating the functional and dysfunctional aspects of the achieved managerial endeavors. In order to realize this general objective, the following specific objectives have been identified:

1. the definition of professional competence and performance referred to the principal of rural schools and the setting up of a competence profile for the principal and the vice-principal, applicable to the principals of rural schools;
2. the delineating of some professional standards for the position of school principal in the rural area in order to obtain a proper managerial and organizational behavior;
3. the delineating of a selection system for the personnel with managing attributions in rural school of Romania, extended to the level of the entire secondary school system, in view to better the managers' work performance, to increase the quality of the decision-making process and implicitly, to increase quality in education.

We will present, synthetically in what follows, the general hypothesis and the specific hypotheses of our research, as well as the results of our experimental approach.

General hypothesis: *Work performance is influenced by the macro- and micro-context in which the assessed subject operates.*

The general hypothesis allows its decrypting in the following secondary hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: *The perception of an effective leading style is related to an increased management performance and vice-versa.*

Hypothesis 2: *Work performance differs according to the historic-geographical zones.*

Hypothesis 3: *Following the implementation of the training and professional development program, the work performance of principals in rural schools will be better than the initial results obtained by these in the absence of any intervention.*

Hypothesis 4: *A high level of trust from the teachers' part in the school manager is associated with a higher level of work performance and vice-versa.*

Hypothesis 5: *A high level of satisfaction from the principals of rural schools is associated with a better work performance and vice-versa.*

From the point of view of research methodology, the present study is a quantitative study having a mixed plan, in which the dependent variable is related to one or more manipulated factors and with a classifying variable.

Table no. 1 : Research design

Classifying Variable / Manipulated Variable	Historic- Geographical Zones						Judicial Status	
	Z1	Z2	Z3	Z4	Z5	Z6	PJ	STR
Work Performance								
Trust in the manager								
Satisfaction with the work								
Managerial style								

The advantage of this type of design increases the sensitivity, experimentally observable, of the dependent variable towards the manipulated factor and offers information about the degree of generality of the obtained results.

The subjects of this research are divided in several categories: principals (N=60), experts (N=5), teachers (N=222), students (N=222), parents (N=222), public local authorities (N=60) and come from the rural areas of the Maramures county, which was divided into 6 historic-geographical zones.

Table no. 2: The distribution on zones of the participating schools

No	Zone	Type of school	No. of schools	Percentage of total number	
				PJ/STR	PJ + STR
1	Z 1	PJ	10	9%	16.2%
		STR	8	7,2%	
2	Z 2	PJ	10	9%	15.3%
		STR	7	6.3%	
3	Z 3	PJ	10	9%	18%
		STR	10	9%	
4	Z 4	PJ	10	9%	16.2%
		STR	8	7.2%	
5	Z 5	PJ	10	9%	17.1%
		STR	9	8.1%	
6	Z 6	PJ	10	9%	17.1%
		STR	9	8.1%	
TOTAL		PJ	120	54%	100%
		STR	102	46%	

Legend: PJ=school with judicial personality; STR= structure-type school, without judicial personality and subordinated to the PJ.

In the first part of the research, the study design entailed more variables, which were classified as follows:

- *Classifying variables*: historic- geographical zones, judicial status of schools, principals' age and gender, didactical position, length of service.
- *Independent variables*: trust in the manager, satisfaction with the work.
- *Dependent variables*: work performance of the principals of rural schools.

In the second part of our research, when our intervention was implemented, the variables upon which we intervened through training and professional development programs were: work performance and managerial competence, respectively the managerial style and the managerial strategy used by the principals of rural schools in Maramures County.

The main research method used within this study was the testing method. The used tests were: the Evaluation Scale with Behavioral Anchors (ESBA), the Questionnaire for public local authorities, the Questionnaire for parents – managerial act, the Questionnaire for students, the Questionnaire for experts, the Questionnaire for the diagnosis of the managerial style, the Questionnaire of evaluation of the trustworthy

character of the manager of rural schools, the Job Descriptive Index (JDI), the Guide of interview for teachers – work satisfaction.

In chapter VII “**The Organization and Unfolding of Pedagogic Research**” we realized an assessment study to point out the perception of the experts, teachers, students, parents, the representatives of the local community upon the organization and the unfolding of the managerial activity within rural schools and to identify the level of knowledge and managerial competences necessary for the act of managing the school. The study was followed by a formative experiment, accompanied by a posttest and a pretest, in order to measure the persistence in time of the obtained results. In the pretest stage the following were observed:

Testing Hypothesis 1: *The perception of an effective leading style is related to an increased management performance and vice-versa* led to the following conclusions:

1. At the level of Maramures County there is no such thing as an ideal managerial style, but a blending of eight managerial styles used more or less by each principal, in a more or less coherent and perceptible manner.

2. *The managerial effectiveness degree* represents a scientific dosage of the four effective styles (enterprising, realistic, participative, organizing – styles attributed to those who put into practice the rule of the four C - coherence, clarity, courage, consideration). A manager is effective if he obtained great scores of more than 22, for all the four effective styles, and the difference between them is not bigger than 10 points.

3. *The managerial effectiveness based on a clearly identified style* supposes a high score (between 22 and 36 points) and also differentiated (a distance of at least 5 points as regards the next style).

4. *The degree of „managerial effacement”* is given by the presence of at least one ineffective style (authoritarian, opportunist, demagogue, bureaucratic – styles attributed to those who constitute sources of ambiguity and conflict within the team or to those who are forced to use these styles). Comparing the managerial styles two by two (Organizing (I) – Authoritarian (V), Participative, (II) – Demagogue (VI), Enterprising, (III) – Bureaucratic (VII), Realistic, (IV) – Opportunist (VIII) we ascertained that the greater the difference between the two styles the less ambiguous a manager is.

Table no. 9.VII. : The managerial style as a whole in the participation zones

Zone	Effective Styles S(+)				Σ S(+)	Σ S(+) - Σ S(-)	Σ S(-)	Ineffective styles S(-)			
	I	II	III	IV				V	VI	VII	VIII
Z1	35	31	34	28.1	128.1	78.9	49.2	28	6.6	7.8	6.8
Z2	17.4	20	19.2	16.5	73.1	6.7	66.4	16.2	31.4	5.8	13
Z3	11.6	8.6	8.6	9.2	38	-72.9	110.9	27.3	28.6	25	30
Z4	17.2	15	14.1	14.8	61.1	-38.2	99.3	31.1	12.2	33.4	22.6
Z5	30.9	29.8	30.4	21	112.1	59.5	52.6	32.4	6.2	6.8	7.2
Z6	21.2	27.6	22.8	32.4	104	16.2	87.8	21	22.6	22.6	21.6
Total	22.22	22.00	21.52	20.20	85.94	13.94	72	20.27	17.93	16.90	16.90

Managerial efficiency was tested with the aid of the Evaluation Scale with Behavioural Anchors (ESBA), devised by us in order to asses and diagnose managerial performances of the principals of rural schools, respectively the levels of competence and of managerial training of principals of rural schools from Maramures County, as well as to pin down the main difficulties they are confronted with in their activity as school managers. ESBA was constructed on 8 scales: up-to-date knowledge in the field, efficient

communication, care for details, professional knowledge, realizations, relationship management with colleagues and hierarchical superiors, collaboration with school partners, planning and organizing, problem solving and perseverance. They have been obtained by summing up all the activities mentioned by those involved (students, teachers, parents, local authorities), as follows from table no. 3. This expectation sum practically defines the concept of “effective manager” of a rural school from the Maramures area. The seven components will be completed with the professional competence and the managerial style, thus obtaining the full-scale portrait of a school manager.

Table no. 3. : *Characteristic components of managerial efficiency*

Communication	Communication Information
Care to details	Discipline
	Asset protection
	Reward
	Representation
	Promotion
Orientation towards achievements	Administration (ensuring and improving of material conditions)
	Starting projects and curricular and extra-curricular activities
	Efficiency of the educational act
Relationship management	Guidance
	Support
	Mediation
Collaboration with school partners	Consulting and decision making; Starting partnerships
Organization and planning	Organization
	Planning
Problem solving and persevering	Financing

The identification of the managers’ actual work performance level was realized from the point of view of the four investigation levels. With the aid of descriptive statistics we have obtained an overview of the managerial act from the perspective of those involved (teachers, parents, students and local authorities), of the specialized evaluators (the five experts) and from the auto-evaluation realized by managers, implicitly from the analysis of managerial documents and the auto-evaluation sheets of the managers in the lot. After data interpretation we obtained the following:

Table no. 4. : Statistical Indexes

Number of values	Average	Standard deviation	Median	Module	Variation coefficient	Obliquity index	Arching index	Minimum	Maximum
2400	7.5792	1.01365	8	8	13.30%	-0.276	-0.749	5	9

In as far as managerial performance is concerned, the average obtained situates Maramures county, from the experts' point of view, in the upper zone of the average performance interval: $(7.57 \in [7 ; 7.9])$. Experts' evaluation (Level I) registers a minimum in grading, equal to five, and a maximum, equal to nine. From the point of view of grading frequency, the most granted grade is 8, with a share of 36.4% from the total, and the grade least awarded is 5, with a share of 1.25%. The total number of grades awarded by experts within the questionnaire with Behavioral Anchors they used (ESBA) is 2,400.

Table no. 5 : Statistical Indexes

Number of values	Average	Standard deviation	Median	Module	Variation coefficient	Obliquity index	Arching index	Minimum	Maximum
1182	7.0338	1.38441	7	7	19.6%	-0.077	0.116	2	9

The average value for the evaluation by teachers in Maramures County of the principals' performance levels is also situated in the average results interval: $7.03 \in [7; 7.9]$. Level II (teachers, parents, students and local authorities) register a grading interval which starts from a minimum equal to two and ends with a maximum equal to nine. The most frequent grade is 7, with a percentage of 28.04%, the grade with the least frequency being 2, with a percentage of 0.11%. The students' answers regarding the principal's activity and role are similar to those of the teachers.

Table no. 6 : Statistical Indexes

Number of values	Average	Standard deviation	Median	Module	Variation coefficient	Obliquity index	Arching index	Minimum	Maximum
2214	7.178	1.15884	7	8	16.1%	-0.46	-0.305	3	9

The parents' opinions register within a grading interval starting with the minimal grade three, having as a grading frequency 0.09%, this grade being awarded twice and the maximal grade, with a frequency of 10.48. The average value for the Maramures County for principals' evaluations by the parents is also situated in the interval of average results: $7.17 \in [7 ; 7.9]$.

Table no. 7 : Statistical Indexes

Number of values	Average	Standard deviation	Median	Module	Variation coefficient	Obliquity index	Arching index	Minimum	Maximum
480	7.3292	1.1613	7	8	15.8%	-0.384	-0.52	4	9

The representatives of local authorities register a grading interval between four and nine, four being the minimum grade, with a frequency of 0.42% (this grade being granted twice) and nine the maximum grade granted 78 times, with a frequency of 16.25%. The average value for the Maramures County for principals' evaluations by representatives of local authorities is also situated in the interval of average results: $7.32 \in [7 ; 7.9]$.

Table no. 8 : Statistical Indexes

Number of values	Average	Standard deviation	Median	Module	Variation coefficient	Obliquity index	Arching index	Minimum	Maximum
960	7.7708	1.05411	8	8	15.8%	-.432	-.890	5	9

Level III (principals' auto-evaluation) register a grading interval which starts with a minimum equal to 5 and ends with a maximum equal to 9. The most frequent grade is 8, with a percentage of 33.75%, and the grade least awarded is 5, with a percentage of 0.62%. The average value for the Maramures County for principals' auto-evaluation is situated in the upper interval of average results: $7.77 \in [7 ; 7.9]$.

Research results confirm this hypothesis.

The identification of the actual level of work performance of school principals, according to the judicial status of schools underlined the fact that managerial activity is more effective in schools with judicial personality as compared to the structure-type ones.

This aspect was underlined by **Hypothesis 2**: *Work performance differs according to the historic-geographical zones.*

Table no. 9 : Analysis of uni-factorial variation

	Square sum	Liberty degree	Square average	F	Sig.
Intergroups	4.555	5	.911	6.527	.000
Intragroups	7.538	54	.140		
Total	12.093	59			

The analysis of uni-factorial variation **showed** a significant difference between the averages of the six historic-geographical zones. The Anova table contains the result of test F whose value is 6.527 for a signification threshold $p=0.00$, which denotes the fact that the more remote the school is from the county administrative center the least efficient management, according to grades awarded by experts.

Research results confirm this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: *Following the implementation of the training and professional development program, the work performance of principals in rural schools will be better than the initial results obtained by these in the absence of any intervention.*

The analysis of the frequency of apparition as deficient of sides of management activity of rural schools allowed the identification of the most frequent problems we come across within the managerial activity: collaboration with partners, management, communication, problem solving and organization. On these aspects was built the intervention program conceived in order to improve them.

After applying the intervention program through a training and professional development activity, the assessment of results was realized by experts and teachers. Data analysis shows positive differences between the results obtained at the *pretest* and those obtained at the *posttest*.

Evaluation by experts

Table no. 10. : Statistical indexes

	Average	No of subjects	Standard deviation	Variation coefficient	Standard average error
Pretest (teachers)	7.5792	222	.45273	5.94%	.06147
Posttest (teachers)	7.9312	222	.38540	4.79%	.05960

The increase in managerial performance of the principals of rural Primary and Secondary Schools, following the intervention program through a training and professional development activity facilitated the obtaining of high results in the following fields of managerial competence: professional knowledge, organization, care to details - 8.3; problem solving, realization -8.2; communication-7.8; collaboration-7.2; management-7.1.

The chapter „**Data analysis, processing and interpretation**” allowed data comparison between the posttest and the retest. The registered differences on the basis of this comparison are significant for each component on its own. (every and each of the signification thresholds is situated under the value of 0.05). The minus sign in front of every t index suggests that in the case of the second testing there were registered higher scores, thus an increase in managerial performance. From the experts’ point of view (Table 11) the most significant growths were registered for communication (a 7.6% growth) and collaboration with partners (a 6.9% growth).

Table no. 11. : *The differences between the average results of the pre-test and the average results of the post-test from the experts' points of view*

Features	Values	Level of performance	Values of the pretest	Level of performance	Difference	Percentage
Communication	7.8	Average	7.2	average	0.6	7.6%
Cooperation	7.2	Average	6.7	low	0.5	6.9%
Focus on details	8.3	High	8	high	0.3	3.6%
Achievements	8.2	High	7.9	average	0.3	3.6%
Management	7.1	Average	6.8	low	0.3	3.6%
Problem solving	8.2	High	7.9	average	0.3	3.6%
Professional knowledge	8.3	High	8.1	high	0.2	2.4%
Organisation	8.3	High	8.1	high	0.2	2.4%
Final results	7.9	Average	7.6	average	0.3	3.6%

An increase of the managerial process has been observed with a maximum of growth of 7.6% for communication and a minimum of 2.4% for professional knowledge and organization. The managerial performance has increased up to 3.6%, due to the intervention plan. The same growth tendency is also observable in the case of the evaluation of the managerial process by teachers, a fact which has been observed when comparing the average results of the pre- and post- test evaluations for each component of performance. The evaluation done by experts has shown a significant increase of the managerial skills of the principals as compared to the increase observed as a result of the evaluation through questionnaires given to teachers.

The fact that the intervention program was focused on the improvement of only 4 of the total number of 8 components- but as a result there has been noticed progress of all eight components- suggests the existence of interdependence between the components of the managerial performance.

In order to measure the efficiency of the training- intervention program, the post-test results of the evolution of the management skills have been verified with the help of a re-test taken by teachers and experts within three months distance from the post-test.

Table no. 12. : *the difference of percentage between the managerial skills recorded after the post-test as compared to those observed after the re-test.*

Features	Posttest values	Level of performance	Retest values	Level of performance	Difference	Percentage
Communication	7.8	average	8.1	average	0.3	3.7%
Cooperation with school partners	7.1	average	7.3	average	0.2	2.73%
Organization and planning	7.2	average	7.4	average	0.2	2.7%
Management	8.2	average	8.4	average	0.02	2.38%
Professional knowledge	8.2	average	8.3	average	0.1	1.2%
Focus on details	8.3	low	6.83	low	8.4	1.19%

Task-based orientation	8.3	average	7.45	average	8.4	1.19%
Problem solving	8.3	average	8.3	average	0	0%
Final results	7.9	average	8.1	average	0.2	2.46%

The increase of the percentage remains valid three months after the training program is completed, and features like communication and cooperation with partners have high values whereas other features like task-based orientation or task-achievement decrease up to zero. A similar growth is observable while evaluating teachers.

Table no. 13. : *Statistic indexes*

	Average	No. of subjects	Standard deviation	Variation factor	Standard error of the average
Post-test (teachers)	7.2359	222	.91595	12.6%	.06147
Re-test (teachers)	7.3508	222	.88798	12.06%	.05960

Each and every dimension records a slight increase of values beginning with 0,04..

Hypothesis 4: School staff's high level of confidence in the school manager is associated with a higher level of success at work and vice versa.

In order to measure the level of confidence in the principals of schools situated in the rural area, „the Questionnaire on how trustworthy managers are” was used. To assess the principals' success at work we used not only the study of the yearly qualifications given to the members of the staff by the principals but also the evaluation of the teacher's success at work. The cross-evaluation method was also used. Therefore, in order to evaluate the teacher's progress we used 4 questions taken from „The questionnaire for pupils”, questions referring to the support, the clarity of the explanations and the level of attention paid to pupils.

Table no. 12. : *Spearman correlation between the teachers' performance and the principals' performance*

		Teachers' performance	Principals' performance
The Spearman Test	Teachers' performance	Ratio of correlation	1,000
		Threshold of significance	,372**
		No. of subjects	,000
	Principals' performance	Ratio of correlation	222
		Threshold of significance	222
		No of subjects	,372**
		1,000	,000
		222	222

** . Correlation index at a value of 0.01

Table no. 13. Spearman correlation between principals' performance and competence

		Principals' performance	Competence	
The Spearman Test	Principals' performance	Ratio of correlation	1,000	
		Threshold significance of	,290**	
		No. of subjects	222	
	Competence	Ratio of correlation	,290**	1,000
		Threshold significance of	,000	.
		No. of subjects	222	222
**. Significant correlation at the threshold of 0.01				

All things considered, the results of this research have confirmed hypothesis number 4.

Hypothesis 5: *A higher level of job satisfaction for principals from the rural areas is associated with a better performance in work and vice-versa.*

The results of the performance in work of principals were obtained following the experts' analysis through the „SEAC Questionnaire”

Table no.14. The Spearman Correlation between the scales of the questionnaire regarding the relationship between the principals' satisfaction in work and their performance in work

		Performance in work	Work in general	Current work	Current salary	Possibilities for promotion	The people I work with
Spearman's rho	Performance in work	1,000	,751**	,263*	,123	,619**	,728**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	,000	,042	,348	,000	,000
	N	60	60	60	60	60	60

The correlation ratio calculated for work in general, the current work, the possibilities for promotion and the people the principals work with are significant for a significance threshold below 0.01. It can be stated that these variables co-vary. The high levels of satisfaction with work in general, the satisfaction with the current work, with the work mates or the motivating possibilities for promotion will also trigger higher work performances.

In the re-test stage, at the level of the experimental group, a significant rise of the results from the post-test has been observed, a fact proven by the efficiency of the formative intervention through the application of the theoretical and practical knowledge into the managerial activity. The results of the research have confirmed this hypothesis, too. The validation of the secondary hypotheses has led implicitly to the validation of the main hypothesis.

Conclusions

The current research has met its stated aim through the results obtained. This fact enables us to act conscientiously in order to make the activity more efficient and to obtain managerial performances in the activity carried out by the school principals from the rural areas, by professionalizing the managerial position. According to this desideratum, the principal of school must pass through a process of managerial training and developing through which they will acquire a series of abilities that will permit them to reach the professional standards through the fulfilling of the managerial act in the best conditions possible. We also need to stress the fact that these standards can only be reached provided the Romanian educational system will set off from the idea according to which managers must be trained before beginning their duties.

In this sense it is imperative that we offer solutions to optimize the organization and the way in which the training of the school managers is carried out by conceiving competence frames with the managerial abilities that the principals at the pre-university level should have, through our proposal that the international framework of abilities necessary to a principal be introduced and ratified in the Romanian managerial theory and practice.

We also propose in this thesis that the selection and recruitment system of principals become more efficient by setting the stages for the scientifically grounded recruitment and selection programs which to include: the deciding on the requirements for the position of manager (specific and common depending on the type of school: kindergarten, primary school, secondary school); the drafting of a list of psycho-abilities and characteristics; the selecting of subjects, techniques, tests or the necessary devices; the conceiving of a battery of tests and the examining of a lot of managers with it; the setting up of the specific criteria of success nad managerial performance; the deciding on the degree of correspondence between tests, subjects, the achievements of the examined managers; the drafting of a battery of test and its approval at national level; the standardizing of the applying methodology; the organizing of the testing itself.

In this way we could eliminate the arguments regarding the „traditional criteria” used in the selection of the managers from the pre-university level, the ones that refer to the „purchasing” of the position, opportunism (rather I than X), the counter-selection (incompetent, poorly prepared, with problems, with a „past”=blackmail, etc), and thus the position of manager, respectively principal of schools would be occupied by well-prepared people, from all points of view: managerial, professional, and socio-moral.

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