

## **Poor Education System - The Cause of the Lack of Labor in the Industry**

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**Abstract:** The economic development depends very much on the quality of our children education because investing in education means investing in the future. To be able to stand out in a modern, competitive and technological world in which innovation and technologic evolution take place at fast pace, is not possible without a high quality education. In order to be competitive on the global market, the Romanian education needs better trainings for specialists an greater adaptability to the dynamic macro-economic trends. If during the centralized economy there was an educational system with a clear and precise purpose, namely - integration on the labour market immediately after completing studies - considering that Romania at that time was mainly an industry based country -, now the integration is much slower. The decline of the vocational and technical education system was manifested both by a decrease in prestige and by a lack of consistency in institutional practices, the cause being the numerous legislative changes. The major problem of this deficit comes from the lack of efficient mechanisms for correlating labour market requirements with the Romanian education and training system, vocational education being a tool in the strategy of attracting foreign investors. Thus, this article aims to provide a picture of the vocational and technical education system as well as a series of solutions that could ensure the operation of the system.

**Keywords:** *education; industry; labour market; vocational and technical education system.*

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## 1. Introduction

The key to a sustainable economic progress in the medium and long term is investing in people with highly qualified human capital. Ensuring the quality and quantity of human capital must be seen through the prism of the educational and training system of those who follow different forms of education and development of the skills required on the labor market, but also by identifying those inactive people fit for work and capitalizing on their potential.

In recent years, national concerns in the field of monitoring the insertion of graduates on the labor market have intensified but we cannot talk about the existence of a monitoring system for the insertion of graduates on the labor market, but rather the haste of different attempts to develop mechanisms both at institutional and local level for a determined or indefinite period.

According to the Country Report on Romania prepared by the European Commission in 2020, the main problems in the field of education are: low level of training in terms of basic skills, digital skills and non-technical skills. reduced participation in education and early care, a high rate of early school leaving, low relevance for the labor market of vocational education and training and higher education, the shortage of teachers, especially in rural areas, as well as the poor access to professional training (Ministry of European Funds, 2020).

This underlines the fact that Romania has particularly poor results, with a large number of children leaving school early and young people who are not employed and who do not follow any educational program of qualification or training in work. However, the cause of all these problems could also come from the system poor funding, Romania having the lowest allocation for education in the European Union. Funding is disproportionately on educational cycles, the smallest funding is for preschool and primary education and the largest funding goes to tertiary education. Currently, the network of state universities is oversized compared to the demand for participation in university study cycles. Higher education is not sufficiently aligned with the needs of the labor market.

Adapting education systems to the requirements and needs of the labor market are a real challenge at the national level. Thus, in order to be able to correctly identify the requirements, it is necessary to elaborate some analyses (Bulea, 2017) with the role of diagnosis in order to highlight the

current competence needs, as well as to carry out systematic studies with the role of prognosis in order to highlight the future needs (National Scientific Research Institute for Labor and Social Protection, 2018).

The Convergence Report of the European Commission published in May 2018, raises an alarm signal on the Romanian labor force which is in the presence of major risks such as: unfavorable demographic trends, the aging of the population, the existence of a limited internal mobility of the labor force, as well as the presence of the emigration phenomenon which represents a serious obstacle for a potential growth (Chivu et al., 2020).

According to the data, the dynamics of the labor market in the period 2014-2019 was a positive one, employment reaching a level of 70.9%, and the unemployment rate decreasing to 2.9% (NIS, n.d.). In the period preceding the crisis generated by the presence and spread of the SARS-VOC-2 virus, the labor market registered a shortage of labor, especially skilled employees, as a result of the decrease of the available labor resources on the background of a demographic decline and the migration of the population to other states in the European Union.

## 2. The vocational and technical system

Vocational and technical education faces a series of problems that make the system not have the expected results, respectively not to produce graduates sufficiently prepared for the requirements of the labor market. The existence of graduates who can quickly integrate socio-professionally after completing their studies involves the accumulation of theoretical and practical knowledge in accordance with the requirements of the labor market.

Thus, in a report on the main challenges of the vocational and technical education system in Romania, a set of five criteria was identified that describe the vocational **and technical education system**: quality assurance mechanisms, financing mechanisms, the adequacy of competencies to the requirements of the labor market, partnerships with social actors, social perception or the public image of vocational and technical education (Chirleşean, 2017).

- The functioning of the professional and technical system depends on the level of **financing**, therefore, the financing is made from two sources: one at the central level that ensures the payment of human resources, textbooks, transportation facilities and student scholarships, and the other at the local level which involves investments in infrastructure and utilities.

Funding is considered deficient in many vocational and technical schools which favors the lack of performance and school dropout.

- **The adequacy of competencies to the requirements** of the labor market is the most important result of the educational process carried out within the school units in the vocational and technical educational system. In order to have a good consistency between the labor market and the educational system it is necessary to have an anticipation of the labor market requirements, a monitoring of the insertion of graduates, an adaptation of the professional training standards and of the qualifications with permanent revision of school materials.

- **Partnerships with social actors**, without the existence of these solid partnerships, especially with partners in the economic environment, vocational and technical education cannot function effectively. The need for these partnerships requires that future manpower can learn directly from work. In the case of schools and universities, these partnerships refer to student internships but they should have a better defined role.

Entrepreneurs complain primarily that the competency structure of graduates does not correspond to that required by them, they place great emphasis on practical skills, teamwork and individual ability, time management, communication, telephone conversations, but do not exclude the importance of theoretical and technical knowledge such as digital skills (Damian et al., 2012). They raised the fact that these skills should be provided by education (Bulat, 2010).

- **The social perception or the public image** of the professional and technical education is strongly affected by the negative social perception related to this branch of the educational system. A totally erroneous perception because this branch itself represents the main labor force necessary for industrial activities. The school curriculum of this segment should be directed mainly to the industrial fields which are currently in a labor shortage.

Vocational and technical education has always been neglected in discussions of education policies, with more emphasis on general academic education and the role of schools in preparing students for university education (Racovițan & Chivu, 2019). The system of vocational and technical education is divided between vocational schools proper and technological high schools, however in the tertiary cycle, higher education with a technical profile is not differentiated from theoretical university education.

The key element of a good professional program is the quality of teachers. Due to the aging population there is a shortage of teachers for this field, to which we add the lack of industry experience of current teachers. Therefore, it would be beneficial to encourage the employment of teachers with experience in the industry, but also the presence of part-time work commitments with flexible hours of specialists from different sectors of the industry.

### **3. Measures to improve the professional and technical educational system**

The strategy on vocational education and training involves the development of an accessible, attractive and competitive system which provides quality vocational education and training services, so as to respond quickly to people requirements. In order to be able to meet these objectives, the following should be taken into account:

- Paying special attention to investment programs in the field of vocational education, so as to prevent the dropout rate, development of learning and effective teaching methods and techniques as well as the improvement of the quality of education and professional training in order to respond to the evolutions registered on the labor market;
- Adapting the content of the curriculum to the requirements of the labor market with the involvement, especially, of the business environment, as well as updating teaching materials to align with the technological changes;
- Introducing a greater number of practice hours both for students in technological high schools and for those in vocational schools;
- Introduction of updated or newly developed computer applications in schools for specialized subjects;
- The reduced financial motivation is one of the problems of the lack of qualified teachers for the specialized subjects. Therefore, attractive means of motivation are needed for teachers in vocational and technical education.

#### 4. Conclusions

The implementation of all mentioned measures will contribute to the modernization of educational and training systems, to the creation of strong links between education, training and the labor market as well as the creation of bridges between formal, non-formal and informal education, which will have the effect of validation learning outcomes.

The educational and training system will ensure an increased visibility of skills and a better use of these in the labor market, provided that the educational system permanently updates the offer of education and training to respond effectively to the needs of society.

The relationship between education and the workforce is reflected in an offer of educated people who support economic development.

The challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic call for significant changes in the foundation of educational and vocational training of the new workforce. Therefore it is necessary to adapting and identifying solutions to meet these challenges, so that the educational system is not affected.

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