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Pedagogical Indoctrination in Romania. Perceptions of Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers

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Abstract: Formal education means, among other things, to influence learner's minds through ideologies and doctrines. The connection between ideology and teaching is often theorized through the concept of pedagogical indoctrination, but empirical data on this phenomenon are missing. Acknowledging the crucial importance of indoctrination in school, the major purpose of this study was to empirically explore teachers' and future teachers' perceptions about pedagogical indoctrination in Romanian education system. Starting from two theoretical models of school indoctrination, we elaborated a self-report questionnaire, describing three dimensions and 17 behaviours that reflect indoctrinative teaching situations. 260 subjects, 171 undergraduate pre-service teachers and 89 in-service teachers from the North-Eastern region of Romania participated in the study. The results indicate that both in-service teachers and pre-service teachers acknowledge the existence of indoctrination in schools, yet the phenomenon is not perceived as widespread. However, further statistical analyse reveal significant difference between pre-service and in-service teachers' perception about behavioural and dimensional indoctrinative teaching and learning. The age, the faculty profile and the residence add significant information about subjects' representation of indoctrinative teaching in Romanian school system. Theoretical and methodological implications are discussed.

Keywords: *indoctrination, indoctrinative teaching and learning behaviour, pre-service teacher, in-service teachers.*

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1. Introduction

Education has an ideological dimension that cannot be ignored. Many authors studied this dimension, with strong impact on the teaching process (Apple, 2018; Bartolomé, 2008; Hargreaves, 2001). The concept of indoctrination reflects the ideological dimension of schooling, referring also to ideology, education and science. Despite that, the concept of indoctrination is complex, especially in philosophy and sociology, the present study aims to empirically explore the indoctrination in teaching, one of multiple hypostasis of this concept.

Following the historical and chronological perspective, the notion of indoctrination embraced two major meanings. The first (chronological) meaning is related to the Latin root *docere*, which means to teach, and *doctrina*, also in Latin, as education, science, doctrine. So, the initial meaning of indoctrination is of pedagogical nature (Momanu, 2012) without any negative, pejorative, ideological or political connotation. Considering this meaning, any teaching and learning involve indoctrination, regardless their origin: formal education or other informational sources (family, peer groups). Indoctrination is therefore a fundamental process of transmitting knowledge, traditions and norms in a society. We cannot escape of indoctrination. Indoctrination in human learning experience is inevitable, regardless of the political regime and the level of economic development (Maccmillan, 1998; Harvey, 1997). Other concepts associated with this first sense of indoctrination are education, socialization, inculcation and enculturation. These concepts also refer to the immense influence of culture, and particularly of formal education on the individuals. As Emile Durkheim (1980) said, education consists of a methodical socialization of the young generation, implying subordination and discipline to the rules and traditions of society. Education also involves an intervention through the mentality of the community (Sălăvăstru, 1994).

The second meaning of the term is used starting from the 19th century and refers to a negative social phenomenon in which individual freedom is suppressed, because ideological control is manifested. Ideologies can be diverse: political, religious, economic, etc. This negative meaning is better known and more widespread today, compared to the first one. When a reference to indoctrination appears, we think about inoculating ideas through political and religious propaganda, or even worse, through brainwashing. Social psychology uses for the same content another construct: manipulation, when a certain social situation is created

intentionally to influence the reactions and behaviors of others (Ficeac, 1996). The major manipulations are represented by the influence of the whole culture on the individuals. Again, the school itself is used as a major manipulation tool by politics, by imposing a school curriculum translating the values of the social system, as Ficeac (1996) said.

Studying the meanings of the concept of indoctrination in several dictionaries, we will identify both perspectives mentioned above. For instant, Le Pettit Larousse (2006, p.375) characterize indoctrination in the neutral meaning of term: as opinions, beliefs and principles of a religious, literary, artistic or philosophical school. In Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), indoctrination is the process of repeating an idea to someone until he or she accepts it without criticism or question, therefore in the negative meaning of concept. In this controversial context, the conclusion offered by Momanu seems pertinent (2012): "indoctrination has a very complex and circumstantial meaning: its original meaning is pedagogical and positive; by shifting to the political ideology it acquired negative meanings. This term is mostly used with its negative significations and envisages two fundamental dimensions: the pedagogical dimension and the ideological one" (2012, p. 89).

Beyond the original meaning of the notion, closely related to education whatever the context is, we can draw a picture of indoctrination in pedagogical contexts exclusively. Thus, several authors provided definitions or criteria for recognizing indoctrinative teaching and learning. For Burbules & Berk (1999) indoctrination involves full and uncritical acceptance of ideas by students or using a teacher's power to manipulate them. Huttunen explained (2003):"the concept of indoctrination refers to unethical influencing in a teaching situation. Indoctrination means infiltrating (drilling, inculcating etc.) concepts, attitudes, beliefs and theories into a student's mind by passing her free and critical deliberation" (Huttunen, 2003, p. 1). in his influential work *Indoctrination and education* (1972) Ivan Snook identified four classes of criteria for recognizing indoctrination: the method of teaching, the content of teaching, the intention of teaching and the consequences of teaching. Relying only these general criteria may pose certain risks. For example, the same teaching method can be used either for indoctrinative aims, or to legitimate educative ones. Also, the absence of explicit intention does not save us from indoctrination, and axiological valid contents can be taught in authoritarian and dogmatic style.

Consulting the indoctrination literature, we found that much has been written about the subject, but there is little empirical research. There are many theoretical works of philosophy and sociology, but fewer in

Education Sciences. This is due, among other things, to the absence of the intentions and/or of the appropriate tools to measure indoctrination in formal education. However, Momanu (2005) conducted an exploratory empirical research on political and pedagogical indoctrination in Romania. She defined pedagogical indoctrination as encouraging the dogmatic, non-critical attitude towards knowledge, and political indoctrination as the use of education for political propaganda. The subjects of her study were 248 university students, and the instrument was the questionnaire with open-ended responses. Indoctrination was separated into five dimensions: critical spirit, authoritative transmission of ideas, formal and deontic authority, political control and political influence. Among the reported results she reports great scores on two dimensions of indoctrination, namely that education does not encourage critical thinking, and that ideas are imposed authoritatively. On the other hand, her results do not support political indoctrination in education.

Therefore, to compare perceptions on indoctrination, we need to have a tool to operationalize the theoretical construct of indoctrinative teaching. For this purpose, we set out to build and preliminary test a self-report scale of potentially indoctrinating behaviors of teachers. Using this preliminary tool, we aimed to discover the extent to which some forms of indoctrination are present in education, comparing teachers' with future teachers' perceptions on this phenomenon. Despite some concerns and warnings about the fragility of identification criteria for pedagogical indoctrination (Cucoş, 1996; Snook 1972; White, 1972), we intend to provide an empirical basis for theoretical construct of indoctrinative teaching. We believe that no other construct (ideology, manipulation, influence etc.) can replace the explicit use of the term *indoctrination* in empirical research. The study of teachers' perception is necessary because they are the initiators of authority relations in schools, in both forms, epistemic authority and deontic authority (Bochensky, 2006). On the other hand, the subject is relevant for the initial and continuous training of teachers, as agents of teaching and, perhaps of indoctrination through every day intentional or non-intentional behaviors.

2. Study objectives

The major purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions about pedagogical indoctrination in Romanian scholar system. A secondary purpose was to compare actual and future teachers' perceptions regarding

indoctrination in teaching. To better understand how the teachers perceive school indoctrination, we have proposed the following research questions:

1. What are the most encountered indoctrinative teaching and learning behaviours in subjects' responses?
2. How pre-service and in-service teachers differ in their representation of indoctrinative teaching and learning?

The research hypothesis derived from research aims are the following:

a. Both pre-service and in-service teachers will notice indoctrinative teaching and learning behaviours in schools.
b. Pre-service and in-service teachers have different pictures of indoctrinative teaching and learning situations encountered in Romanian educational system.
c. Younger subjects will report greater amount of indoctrinative teaching and learning behaviours in schools.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Participants

The research sample has 260 students – pre-service teachers and in-service teachers (171 students-teachers and 89 in-service teachers) from the North-Eastern region of Romania. The 171 pre-service teachers were undergraduate in their second and third year of college, with the mean age M=21.65, SD=4.83. The 89 in-service teachers' age is M=40.56 and SD=12.23. The pre-service teachers are enrolled at one of the largest state university in North-East of Romania that prepare teachers, and they belong both in Science and Humanities faculties profile. 163 subjects have urban residence, 97 subjects live in rural areas, 54 are male and 206 are female subjects.

3.2. Instrument and procedure

We have used in this study the method of the questionnaire-based inquiry. To reveal the aspects of indoctrination trough teaching we have elaborated a self-report questionnaire covering a number of presumably indoctrinative teaching and learning situations. We relied mainly the construction of the questionnaire's items on theoretical model of school indoctrination proposed by French philosopher Olivier Reboul (1977). Reboul was able to "slice" indoctrination in well-defined classroom teachers' behavior. Reboul's model was completed with some items suggested by Momanu (2005). Therefore, we have chosen to start this empirical research

using indoctrination situations theoretically depicted by Reboul and Momanu, because these two theoretical models are clear and systematic, easily to transpose into specific items of the questionnaire.

In his book *L'endoctrinement*, Reboul (1977, pp. 14-24) describes thirteen categories of pedagogical indoctrination situations that might arise into the teacher's classroom behavior. In our study we used twelve categories of indoctrinative teaching and learning behaviors proposed by Reboul, pooled in three main categories that conceptually organize this behaviors: curricular indoctrination, relational indoctrination and political indoctrination. Curricular indoctrination entails: 1) to teach a harmful doctrine; 2) to learn without understanding the essence; 3) to teach something as scientific when in reality it is nothing but a simple opinion or unchecked belief; 4) to teach starting from a doctrine considered to be unique; 5) to emphasize a specific value during the educational process while disfavoring others. Relational indoctrination entails: 6) to make use of "authority" in teaching; 7) to teach starting from preconceptions; 8) to impose a belief using violence; 9) to inculcate, through education, the hatred against everything opposing to a specific doctrine. Political indoctrination contains: 10) to use the education to support a partisan doctrine; 11) to teach only the positive aspects of a doctrine; 12) to counterfeit the facts in order to emphasize a certain doctrine; 13) to arbitrarily select parts of a curriculum. Each and all of these dimension except the last one (13 – to arbitrarily select parts of a curriculum – was dropped out after Cronbach's Alpha reliability tests) was transposed in individual items of the questionnaire.

The second theoretical frame was provided by Momanu (2005). Her model extends the repertoire of indoctrinative teaching situations with some elements characterizing the Romanian school system. Five supplementary categories of indoctrinative teaching situations was also included in the questionnaire, spread in the same three main categories presented above, as follow: relational indoctrination: 1) teachers are not available to express their personal ideas in teaching; curricular indoctrination: 2) forcing students to reproduce textually the taught content; 3) dictation of content during teaching; and political indoctrination: 4) attempts to influence student's political options and 5) the control of the (presumptive) political choices of students. Thus, the questionnaire has 17 items and three dimensions.

These dimensions of indoctrination in education presented by Reboul and Momanu are consistent with the criteria for determining indoctrination in teaching mentioned by Snook (1972). For example, curricular indoctrination could be associated with both content of teaching and intention of teaching criterion from Snook; relational indoctrination is

conceptually associated with strategies of teaching, therefore relate with methods of teaching criterion; political indoctrination could also be associated with the intention of teaching criterion of Snook (1972).

The instrument itself is composed of two sections. The first section contains socio-demographic data: gender, residence, age and faculty profile. The second section includes 17 items evaluating subject's perceptions of school indoctrination. In order to evaluate the three dimensions of indoctrination, the subjects had to rate each items on a Likert scale from 1 to 7, (1 very rarely–7 very frequently) the perceived incidence of these behaviors of teacher's activity in schools. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the whole scale was .93 and the dimensions of school indoctrination shows also a good internal consistency: relational indoctrination: .82; curricular indoctrination: .86 and political indoctrination: .75.

The questionnaire was particularly designed to meet the aims of our research. Approximately 280 questionnaires were completed in pencil and paper format, but those missing relevant biographic information or containing incomplete data were excluded from further analysis. Participation in the research was entirely voluntary and anonymity was guaranteed. Verbal informed consent has been obtained from all participants.

4. Results

First of all, we were interested if the subjects perceive the indoctrination in school as a frequent and wide spread phenomenon. The 260 subjects' report of global mean for pedagogical indoctrination situations is M=3,1 (SD=1.127). This global score reflects the acknowledgement of participants on the existence of indoctrination in school's practices, but this global mean is slightly under the middle of the response scale (3,5/7). Thus, indoctrinative teaching in school, although it is recognized, yet is not perceived as wide spread or problematic one.

The first research question was: What are the most encountered indoctrinative teaching behaviors in schools? To answer this question, we calculate mean and standard deviation on every item for the whole group of subjects. Then, the one simple t-tests with test value 3.5 (the middle of the response scale) shows us all the significant means. Few items (To make use of "authority" argument in teaching; To emphasize a specific value while disfavoring others and Requiring textual reproduction of taught content) shows non-significant deviations from the middle of the scale, but most of

the items indicate significant negative deviations from reference value. This results indicate the subjects do not perceive indoctrination reflected in this items as an acute problem in teaching. On the other hand, two items show significant positive deviations from mean: To learn without understanding the essence and Dictation of content during teaching (see Table 1). These pedagogical indoctrination behaviors, pertaining of curricular indoctrination dimensions, suggest that such an approach is wide encountered in schools.

Thus, in top five of the most indoctrinative behaviors in school are: Dictation of content during teaching (M=4,72); To learn without understanding the essence (M=4,18); During teaching, to emphasize a specific value while disfavoring others (M=3,70); To make use of "authority" argument in teaching (M=3,67) and Requiring textual reproduction of taught content (M=3,38). Four of this five items (exception is: To make use of "authority" argument in teaching) belongs from Curricular indoctrination dimension of school indoctrination. There is a similarity between our results and those of Momanu's research (2005), the hypostasis of curricular and relational indoctrination appearing widespread in both studies: dictation of tough content, valuing the literal reproduction of taught content, and using authority's argument in teaching. We observe that the perception of the pedagogical relationship is unfavorable: the authoritarian teacher relates to students through means such as dictating information, imposing his or her deontic authority, promoting the learning of content without understanding it and so on. The table 1 below reveal all these results.

Table 1: Items means, standard deviations and One sample t-test values on the whole group of subjects (Source: Authors own contribution)

Item number	Item content	Mean	Standard deviation	One simple T-test (test value=3.5, df=259)
1.	Teaching a harmful doctrine	2,64	1,433	-9.652**
2.	Using education to support a partisan doctrine	2,77	1,499	-7.822**
3.	To make use of "authority" argument in teaching	3,67	1,690	1.615
4.	To teach contents starting from prejudices	3,13	1,605	-3.749**
5.	To teach only facts favourable to a doctrine	3,20	1,614	-3.035*

6.	To teach starting from a doctrine considered to be unique	3,06	1,644	-4.338**
7.	To counterfeit the facts in order to emphasize a certain doctrine	2,46	1,487	-11.304**
8.	*To learn without understanding the essence*	*4,18*	*2,032*	*5.433***
9.	To present as scientific what is not	3,00	1,600	-5.078**
10.	During teaching, to emphasize a specific value while disfavouring others	3,70	1,670	1.931
11.	To inculcate hatred through education	2,48	1,619	-10.112**
12.	To impose a belief using violence	1,87	1,285	-20.466**
13.	Not willing to expose personal ideas in teaching	3,21	1,819	-2.556*
14.	Requiring textual reproduction of taught content	3,38	1,750	-1.099
15.	*Dictation of content during teaching*	*4,72*	*1,897*	*10.361***
16.	Control of (presumptive) student's political choices	2,73	1,622	-7.648**
17.	Attempts to influence student's political options	2,67	1,572	-8.562**

*Significant at $p<0.05$

**Significant at $p<0.01$.

The second research question was if pre-service and in-service teachers differ in their representation of pedagogical indoctrination situations. The subsequent hypothesis was: pre-service and in-service teachers will report different accounts about indoctrinative teaching situations (and dimensions) encountered in Romanian educational system. We tested this supposition through independent sample t-tests. The results confirmed that pre-service teachers considered that school indoctrinate significantly more than in-service teachers, both on global and for each of the dimensional school indoctrination (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Pre-service versus in-service teacher's perception of dimensional and global indoctrinative teaching (Source: Authors own contribution)

Dimension of indoctrination in school	Mean	SD	Independent sample t-test (df=258)
Curricular indoctrination	4,07	1,08	11.664**
	2,47	0,95	
Relational indoctrination	3,3	1,17	8.994**
	2,04	0.85	
Political indoctrination	3,1	1,04	7.706**
	2,1	0,89	
Global indoctrination	3,56	0,99	10.791**
	2,23	0.8	

**Significant at p<0.01

The in-service and pre-service teachers significantly differ regarding their age, and this is reflected also in their perception about indoctrinative teaching: the younger the participants, the more they consider that teaching have indoctrinative attributes (see the Table 3 below).

Table 3: Correlations between age and dimensional and global indoctrinative teaching (Source: Authors own contribution)

		Age	Global indoctrination	Curricular indoctrination	Political indoctrination
Global indoctrination	Sig. (2-tailed)	-.462**			
	N	.000			
		260			
Curricular indoctrination	Sig. (2-tailed)	-.517**	.954**		
	N	.000	.000		
		260	260		
Political indoctrination	Sig. (2-tailed)	-.314**	.873**	.734**	
	N	.000	.000	.000	
		260	260	260	
Relational indoctrination	Sig. (2-tailed)	-.401**	.935**	.849**	.747**
	N	.000	.000	.000	.000
		260	260	260	260

**. Pearson correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Considering student's academic profile (Sciences vs Humanities faculties) we found only a marginal statistically significant difference (t (168) =1,962, p=0,051) in *Relational indoctrination* dimension, pre-service teachers in

the Sciences faculties perceive more strongly the problem on the dimension of relational indoctrination compared to pre-service teachers in the Humanities.

Other interesting results from group comparison showed that even if there are no global gender differences between male and female subjects, the male more than female teachers (both categories belonging of in-service teacher category) considered that there it is global indoctrination in teaching, but also relational and curricular indoctrination (see Table 4 below).

Table 4: Male versus female in-service teacher's perceptions of indoctrinative teaching dimensions in school (Source: Authors own contribution)

Dimension of indoctrination in school	Mean	SD	Independent sample t-test (df=87)
Curricular indoctrination	2,97	1,13	2.828**
	2,32	0,84	
Relational indoctrination	2,45	1,08	2.656**
	1,91	0,72	
Political indoctrination	2,04	0,9	-.339
	2,12	0,89	
Global indoctrination	2,54	0,94	2.041*
	2,14	0,74	

*Significant at $p<0.05$

**Significant at $p<0.01$

Subjects residence is another variable that differentiate between subjects. The subjects from rural areas, regardless of their age, gender and faculty showed significantly greater sensitivity on global and to two of three dimension of indoctrinative teaching behaviours, as we can see in the table 5 below.

Table 5: Rural versus urban area subject's perceptions of indoctrinative teaching dimensions in school (Source: Authors own contribution)

Dimension of indoctrination in school	Mean	SD	Independent sample t-test (df=258)
Curricular indoctrination	3,8	1,18	2.719**
	3,36	1,32	
Relational indoctrination	3,01	1,19	1.439, p=.151
	2,78	1,24	
Political indoctrination	3,03	1,17	3.130**
	2,6	1,02	
Global indoctrination	3,34	1,1	2.640**
	2,96	1,1	

**Significant at p<0.01

5. Discussion

The top five of the most indoctrinative behaviors in Romanian school discovered by our research would be a possible explanation for the high rate of functional illiteracy in our country, with a percentage of 44%, according to PISA results (2018). Other results related to PISA testing in Romania proves the existence of defective teaching behaviors (Kiss et al. 2009) associated with some hypostases of curricular indoctrination. Other research also highlights the fact that the authoritarian teaching style is still present (Crețu, 2015), combined with the mechanical learning of some contents (Alexandrescu, 2009).

The study signals different perceptions between future teachers and inservice teachers on indoctrination. Respectively, for the former, the school is more indoctrinating than for the latter. A possible explanation is the double status, still students, of future teachers.

The study highlighted other significant differences depending on three variables: gender, profile and residential status. Differences for the profile of faculties (students of Sciences faculties perceive more strongly the relational indoctrination compared to pre-service teachers in the Humanities) could be motivated by the status of "scarecrow" that mathematics has, as a fundamental discipline of national exams (Colomeischi & Colomeischi, 2015).

The present study focuses on an extremely used concept, but very little empirically explored. Basically, we have not found in the international literature instruments to operationalize the concept of pedagogical indoctrination. Our contribution is primarily to this level: we have empirically explored a concept often presented only speculatively in sociological and philosophical analyzes. The tool we build is comprehensive, because it tries to cover all dimensions of indoctrination (curricular, relational, ideological). At the level of implications in terms of training trainers, knowing the hypostases of indoctrination we can improve teaching, separating desirable teaching behaviors from the least desirable. A minimum of training of future teachers on the indoctrinating potential of their actions is required.

6. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to operationalize the concept of indoctrination in school through *indoctrinative teaching* construct, and then to investigate how this construct is reflected in the perceptions of pre-service and in-service teachers. The first original contribution of the study is the pedagogical construct *indoctrinative teaching and learning*, operationalised trough questionnaire items and grouped in three distinct dimensions: *curricular indoctrination*, *relational indoctrination* and *political indoctrination* respectively.

The second original contribution is the development of a self-report scale on school indoctrination. Starting from two theoretical frames (Reboul,1997; Momanu, 2005) we developed the items of a questionnaire that measures behavioural indicators of indoctrination. The whole instrument and their three dimensions shows a good internal consistency. Finally, the third contribution is a complex picture that actual and future teacher have about indoctrination in Romanian schools in those days, because the instrument allowed us to calculate and compare various indicators of indoctrination in school, as reported by the subjects.

Obviously, it is difficult to observe all the issues of pedagogical indoctrination through an empirical research with only good internal consistence. Further studies should test the construct validity of questionnaire, through EFL analysis. Because we used a convenience sample and a self-report measure, these findings are not generalizable to the entire educational system and perceptions reported by the subjects should be interpreted with precaution.

However, some conclusions can be drawn. First of all, we found the highest means in curricular and relational indoctrination dimensions. A

number of aspects of curricular indoctrinative teaching behaviours are perceived more intensely. Secondly, we obtained statistically significant differences between pre-service and in-service teachers: the undergraduate pre-service teachers perceive indoctrination more acute, perhaps because they are still learners. Third, the profile, the age, the gender and the residence are important variables, because we obtained some statistically significant differences. The more unaware to indoctrination subject are in-service teachers, female, that live in urban area. On the other hand, the more sensitive subjects to indoctrination seem to be the young pre-service teachers (undergraduate) studying Sciences.

The results reveal us alarming facts: teachers still dictate the content of their discipline, value mot-à-mot reproduction of content taught, accept learning without understanding. If this indoctrinative teaching and learning behaviours are highly rated by the participants, the educational climate and pedagogical culture from schools looks bad. The initial and continuous training of teachers must explicitly address these issues, because the quality of learning and the competences that children will acquire depend on them. Future teachers should be more aware to their automatic, everyday apparently benign actions that, in fact, represent indoctrinative teaching and learning potentially harmful behaviours.

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