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Domain: MANAGEMENT

***FOUNDING A MODEL STRATEGY OF DIVERSITY
MANAGEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
IN ROMANIA***

PhD THESIS ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Educational institutions in Romania are challenged with types and manifestations of diversity that occur among students, teachers, didactic-auxiliary and non-didactic staff, without them being able to manage them through appropriate actions. Creating, implementing and measuring the effects of an educational diversity management strategy may prove necessary.

Collaborative, flexible and non-hierarchical management is defined by accepting that individuals are different and creates an inclusive atmosphere, dedicated to capitalizing on diversity.

These managerial approaches focus on the contribution of human resources to the effectiveness of the development plan of the educational unit and capitalize on the unique individual and group traits to highlight both the uniqueness of the members and the diversity of all.

Identifying types of diversity, appropriate strategies and using management tools that ensure fairness in recruitment, promotion, reward and reward can emphasize equal employment opportunities, demonstrate social inclusion and capitalize on uniqueness and creativity in a pre-university educational institution from Romania.

Literature review

The specialty literature presents the conceptual definitions of diversity, the types of diversity and the causes that generate it in different organizations, the benefits and the meaning of diversity. The management of diversity is presented from the historical perspective, of the practices (actions) encountered in this field, the intersectionality of the types of diversity, the legitimacy, the economic and moral value of the management of diversity.

Five dimensions of diversity management can be identified:

1. Diversity as resource and conflict – a synthetic definition of diversity is that in which a number of differences between the members of a collective or a social unit. Several researchers (Harrison & Klein, 2007; Podsiadlowski et al., 2013; Shore et al., 2009; Alcazar et al., 2013) dissociate between the visible dimensions of diversity, such as age, race, gender, ethnicity and the most less visible, indirectly obvious to others, such as education level, financial or professional status, religion.

2. Diversity as an institutional reality, with advantages and disadvantages - Diversity within a group is generally presented as a solution, always associated with positive outcomes for the

organization. From the expressed point of view, researchers Cox & Blake (1991) consider diversity as a source of value, bringing added value to the organizational process. A critical analysis of all the effects of workplace diversity at both individual and team levels indicates that diversity has both positive and negative outcomes. Different studies (Kochan et al., 2003; Podsiadlowski et al., 2013) pointed out that the positive effect of workplace diversity was not conclusive.

3. Diversity and law-imposed politics – equal opportunity for all employees, affirmative action, institutional non-discrimination - Because diversity primarily reflects social differences in the workplace, the US is the first country to address such issues, with anti-discrimination legislation in 1964 in Title VII of the Bill of Rights Civil. Another perspective is called "affirmative action" (AA), which also goes by the name of Positive Discrimination, which aims to employ as many people as possible from different ethnic groups and historically disadvantaged social areas - such as women, ethnic minorities or religious. The European Union took measures in the anti-discrimination segment in 1997, with the Treaty of Amsterdam, which proposes a detailed list (checklist) for checking the stage of implementation of diversity management and a Diversity Chart.

4. The managerial discourse for diversity - In the mid-1990s, the first critical studies on diversity appeared, as a reaction to the multitude of programs of multinational corporations to apply and respect a series of inclusive principles, through a discourse on the valorization of the different skills generated by a workforce diversified. Therefore, organizational discourse tends to provide illegitimacy to various practices related to structural imbalance, both linguistically and practically.

5. Diversity as a social construct - The societal model regards diversity (differences between individuals) as a social manifestation, through social and economic relations of independence or lack of autonomy, of inadaptation to social groups or their acceptance, of the possibility of integration into the activity of an institution.

Diversity in Romanian society is presented from a historical, geographical, cultural-spiritual, social, economic and political point of view. At the same time, the synthesis of the specialized literature includes the types of educational diversity and the scientific substantiation of the research variables regarding diversity in educational institutions in Romania.

Research methodology
Research statement
The research starts from the perspective of pre-university education institutions on a set of organizational policies and procedures in which the main objective is the development of a diversity management model, and the secondary objectives are related to the identification of the existing managerial elements in pre-university education institutions in Romania, the description and their analysis.
Research aim
Creating a diversity management strategy model applicable in educational institutions in Romania.
General objective of research
Identification and analysis of the existing diversity in pre-university education institutions in Romania and the corresponding management.
Research questions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the representation that directors have about diversity in a pre-university educational institution from a socio-psycho-pedagogical point of view? 2. What are the types of diversity among education participants (students, teachers, teaching-auxiliary and non-teaching staff) in pre-university education in Romania? 3. What are the existing diversity management strategies among education participants (students, teachers, teaching-auxiliary and non-teaching staff) in pre-university educational institutions in Romania? 4. What set of organizational policies and procedures is applicable in the diversity management strategy provided in the institutional development plan of a pre-university school?
Research objectives
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying the types of diversity in Romanian educational institutions and the managerial challenges they entail. 2. Description of diversity management strategies according to the types of diversity present in pre-university education institutions. 3. The foundation of a diversity management strategy model, applicable to pre-university educational institutions in Romania.

Research secondary objectives

1. a. identifying the principals' representation of educational diversity from a socio-psychopedagogical perspective
- 1.b. identifying the types of diversity among students from pre-university educational institutions (primary, secondary and high school) in Romania
- 1.c. identifying the types of diversity among teachers in pre-university educational institutions (primary, secondary and high school) in Romania
- 1.d. identifying the managerial challenges generated in pre-university educational institutions (primary, secondary and high school) by the diversity of education participants
- 1.e. identification of the strategic elements of diversity management existing in pre-university educational institutions (primary, secondary and high school level)
2. a. identifying the relationship of association of the types of diversity identified with their corresponding management elements
2. b. identifying diversity management strategies in relation to the types of diversity
3. a. designing a diversity management strategy model;
3. b. validation of the proposed model with the help of experts in educational management
- 3.c. the development of the final model, in accordance with the conclusions of experts and the reality newly discovered through research.

Research hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 - Measuring the degree of diversity in Romanian schools significantly influences the implementation of a diversity management strategy, as part of the school's PDI/PAS for the next 4-5 years.

Hypothesis 2 - The implementation of a diversity management strategy, as part of the school's PDI/PAS for the next 4-5 years, is associated with the allocation of a fund from the school's budget in order to implement the strategy.

Hypothesis 3 - The management of diversity in schools is effective in terms of the types of diversity among students in pre-university educational institutions in Romania.

Hypothesis 4 - There is an association relationship between the types of diversity among employees in pre-university educational institutions in Romania and the effectiveness of diversity management.

Research methods
<p>Investigation by survey</p> <p>Discourse analysis</p> <p>Descriptive and statistical analysis of the association among the research variables</p> <p>Autoethnography</p>
Research instruments
<p>The survey (questionnaire)</p> <p>Syntagmatic and paradigmatic discourse analysis sheet</p> <p>Journal of autoethnographic research</p>
Research results
<p>a) In relation to the research objectives, the results analysis leads to the following conclusions:</p> <p>Defining educational diversity in Romania from a socio-psycho-pedagogical perspective as the totality of unique, individual, visible and invisible features that establish models of communication (spoken languages), relationships (ethnicities, religious denominations), learning (learning styles, educational requirements special) that require specific pedagogical approaches (individualized work) and managerial actions adapted according to the challenges or advantages that diversity generates.</p> <p>Identifying the types of diversity among students from pre-university educational institutions (primary, secondary and high school) in Romania as: "ethnic, cultural, linguistic, psycho-pedagogical, behavioral-ethical and financial diversity".</p> <p>Identifying the types of diversity among employees in pre-university educational institutions (primary, secondary and high school) in Romania as: "religious, linguistic, intellectual [IQ], behavioral and ethical, political-ideological diversity (membership of different political parties), ethnic, educational-professional (levels of study, personal development, different fields of study and interest, different teaching degrees), social (marital status, family - parenting styles, place of origin, geographical-racial, financial status (income and expenses) , life experience (military experience, legal record)."</p> <p>The challenges generated by diversity are largely encountered among managers and are, to varying degrees, interethnic conflicts, intercultural conflicts, violence (verbal, physical),</p>

bullying, school dropout, migration of students to other schools, personal behavior conflicts.

The advantages generated in pre-university educational institutions (primary, secondary and high school) by the diversity of the participants in education are: promoting tolerance, understanding and empathy due to exposure to different cultures, promoting tolerance, understanding and empathy, practicing social skills of communication, collaboration and solving conflicts due to exposure to different cultures, continuous interaction with people from different backgrounds and cultures discourages stereotypes and prejudices, continuous interaction with people from different backgrounds and cultures creates an inclusive and tolerant environment.

Identification of the strategic elements of diversity management existing in pre-university educational institutions (primary, secondary and high school level): Optional courses (CDS) in the mother tongue in the school, native speaker of the mother tongue in the school, missionary priest for the different religions, itinerant teacher/psycho-pedagogical advisor/ school mediator, free training courses with teachers who teach classes with special educational requirements, infrastructure adapted to different types of disabilities (ramps, Braille writing, audio signals), base of didactic materials adapted to different learning styles (audio support, objects of use kinesthetic, etc.), CDS of elements of culture and civilization of the minorities in the school, courses/activities of counseling and school and professional orientation, courses/activities of health education, courses/activities of financial-banking education, the "Second chance" program , the "School after school" program, projects with external or European funding, Romanian language courses for students who are native speakers of other languages and minority language courses for native Romanian speakers.

Identifying the relationship of association of the identified types of diversity with their corresponding management elements, as follows: the organization of specific events aimed at inclusion (for example, the German gastronomy evening), the provision in the educational offer of the school of optional courses with content specific to ethnic cultures and languages , organizing training and/or training courses for managing diversity (e.g. training courses for working with CES), supporting the creation of extracurricular clubs, focused on the interests of students and teachers (e.g. robotics club), community involvement in school events, promoting and implementing inclusive policies such as anti-bullying and equal opportunities.

b) **In relation to the research hypotheses, the results of the statistical analysis lead to the following conclusions:**

Research hypothesis 1 - *Measuring the degree of diversity in Romanian schools significantly influences the implementation of a diversity management strategy, as part of the school's Institutional Development Plan for the next 4-5 years.* - **was validated**, resulting, with a probability of 95%, that between the measurement of the degree of diversity in Romanian schools and the implementation of a diversity management strategy, as part of the school's PDI/PAS for the next 4-5 years, there is a significant connection.

Research hypothesis 2 - *The implementation of a diversity management strategy, as part of the school's PDI/PAS for the next 4-5 years, is associated with the allocation of a fund from the school budget in order to implement the strategy* - **was validated**, resulting in a 95% probability that an educational diversity management strategy is needed, made available free of charge to educational institutions in Romania.

Research hypothesis 3 - *The management of diversity in schools is effective in terms of the types of diversity among students in pre-university educational institutions in Romania* - **was not validated**, resulting statistically, with a probability of 95%, that there is no significant relationship between the types of diversity among students in pre-university educational institutions in Romania and the effectiveness of diversity management in schools.

Research hypothesis 4 - *There is a relationship of association between the types of diversity among employees in pre-university educational institutions in Romania and the efficiency of diversity management* - **was not validated**, with a probability of 95%, statistically there is no association between linguistic, ethnic diversity , political-ideological, religious, psycho-pedagogical, behavioral and ethical, social, geographical-racial, educational and professional among employees in pre-university education institutions in Romania and the effectiveness of diversity management in schools from a statistical point of view.

Following the validation of research hypotheses 1 and 2, **the conclusion is that the measurement of diversity in pre-university education units and a diversity management strategy made available free of charge to them are necessary.**

Following the invalidation of research hypotheses 3 and 4, **the conclusion is that an effective association is not created between the types of diversity manifested among**

students and employees in schools and a management strategy, either due to the lack of adequate knowledge of the reality, or due to the lack of a model of management of educational diversity.

Conceptual model of diversity management in preuniversity educational institutions in Romania (digital application)

The diversity management strategy model in pre-university educational institutions in Romania is a digital application that can be downloaded from the Play Store (google platform) for free or by scanning the QR code from the application logo (Figure V.1.) . There will be a version in Romanian and one in English, as all sections and information are of international interest. The application is accessible by scanning the QR code (Figure no. V.2.) or by accessing the website <http://www.edivers.eu/> .

Theoretical an practical contributions of the present research

a) Theoretical contributions

This doctoral research is the first work in Romania that addresses the concept and phenomenon of educational diversity, as well as the field of managerial actions to identify and manage diversity.

At the same time, the work represents a multidisciplinary study, which proposes a theoretical substantiation of the types of diversity and a practical substantiation of the actions that managers in pre-university educational institutions can undertake.

The paper proposes a theoretical synthesis of the specialized literature regarding diversity in general and educational diversity, thus exploring a field not addressed at all in Romania. Educational diversity in Romania has been defined from a socio-psycho-pedagogical perspective as the totality of unique, individual, visible and invisible features that establish models of communication (spoken languages), relationships (ethnicities, religious denominations), learning (learning styles, special educational requirements) that require specific pedagogical approaches (individualized work) and managerial actions adapted according to the challenges or advantages that diversity generates.

b) Practical contributions

A first practical contribution are research instruments that can also be used by other researchers:

a) the questionnaire for identifying the types of diversity in schools and the existing diversity management strategies;

b) the diversity discourse/metaphors analysis sheet, which synthesizes two types of analysis (syntagmatic and paradigmatic) and which can be used by other researchers to analyze other types of discourses or metaphors associated with other concepts.

The goal of the doctoral research was the foundation of a diversity management strategy model in Romanian pre-university educational institutions.

As a result of reviewing the specialized literature, the theoretical substantiation of the diversity management model was achieved, and following the development of the methodological approach, the identification of research variables, the collection and analysis of data, the obtaining of results and the formulation of conclusions, the practical substantiation of the model, which summarizes all the research variables correlated with the results and conclusions obtained from the research.

c) The researcher proposes the educational diversity management model, presented in Chapter VI of this paper (page 254), to be part of the Institutional Development Plan of each pre-university educational institution. This model is accessible in the form of a computer application and is downloaded accompanied by three annexes: the self-generating strategic plan, the legislative framework for the management of educational diversity and the scientific substantiation of the proposed model.

Research sustainability

The present research has the following dimensions of **sustainability – social, organizational, technological and ecological**. According to the assessment matrix of the sustainability of research projects and the application of criteria from the specialized literature, the research project is realistically sustainable.

Research ethics

The **four values** assumed by the researcher before the start of the research were respected: verifiability, responsibility, honesty and the validity of the knowledge proposed in the *Integrity*

Guide in scientific research - 2020 and the **twelve general principles and requirements** provided by the **European Charter of Researchers**.

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1. Ichim, A-A., Popa, M., *Ghid de bune practici - Strategia de management al diversității*, 2022, Editura Alfa Piatra-Neamț, ISBN :978-606-667-243-6, co-autoare;
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III. Prezentări în cadrul conferințelor internaționale

1. *Identifying the types of diversity in the Romanian pre-university educational institutions and the appropriate managerial strategies*, Congresul Internațional LUMEN, Iași, 26 noiembrie 2021 ([LUMEN EDU 2021 - Identifying the Types of Diversity in the Romanian Pre-university Educational \[...\] - YouTube](#))

2. Participare în calitate de moderator și cu prezentare live, online a lucrării *Strategic elements to manage diversity in the educational system - case study: CLIM*, la Congresul Internațional LUMEN, Iași, 22 – 26 noiembrie 2022 (<https://youtu.be/BvzZ-5kEEfI>; https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=1142531756636418; <https://education.lumenconference.com/lumen-edu-2021/oral-presentations-5th-lumen-edu-2021/>)

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