

## ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE PERFORMANCES BETWEEN POSITIVE ACTION AND SUBJECTIVISM

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### ABSTRACT

*The assessment of the human resource performances represents a positive, mainly constructive action, which is oriented towards accomplishment of the organisational objectives. This is many times a difficult task that entails repercussions on the employee. This research presents the most important results on the assessment of the teaching staff in Dambovita County, assessment which underlies one's annual scores and career evolution. The data were obtained following the questionnaire used on a representative sample of teachers in the pre-university education in the county. These teachers carry out their activity in academic, technology and vocational high schools. These data were used to outline the overview on the impact of the annual assessment of teachers in relation to their professional growth and performance-related motivation.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Assessment, Human Resources, Organisation, Performance, Subjectivism*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The experts' opinions on the importance of assessing employees' performances highlight a practical side, which relates to how assessment is conducted, and a philosophical side, which is oriented on the reasons of such assessment. These two aspects are closely linked and may not be approached separately. The assessment of the employees' performances is a motivated managerial action (Kamalian et al., 2010), carried out on an ongoing basis. It is extremely important to both the organisation and the individual (Myers, 1992). Most of the time, employees perceive their performance as having an emotional, psychological implication (Noe et al., 2007). They relate to themselves, on the one hand, and to the other employees, on the other hand. The assessment of an employee's performances may sometimes have a negative influence, as there are certain managers who consider that the performance variations are entirely connected to the employee and refuse to accept that there may be assessment or control errors. In terms of work performance, some specialists believe that people are identical (Deming, 2000) and that the assessment errors and deficient findings make the difference between them and the assessment systems applied. The employees' assessment was initially based on common sense and intuition; at present, the organisations have turned the formality of the staff assessment into a very important activity at management level. According to other specialists, the assessment of the employee's performances becomes an activity which generates inconveniences, layoffs and salary reductions (Deep & Sussman, 1996). In this respect, the employees contest the managers' decisions whenever the results of their performances are not in line with their desires. In order to eliminate such situations, a solution may be to create some deontological codes of organisational culture, codes that should be embraced by both employees and managers.

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## 2. RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

The organisations consider the performance of the human resources to be the equivalent of the results obtained by the employees with a view to achieving their goals (Byremo, 2015). All assessments are based on procedures which are popularised a long time ahead of the assessment itself. As an ongoing, coherent and self-guided process, the assessment of the employees' performances consists of several stages such as: setting objectives, assessment policies, timeframe and the team in charge of this approach. Starting from researches conducted across Europe (Popescu & Surcel, 2017) some teachers do not believe that poor, constant performance may have negative results on the organisation and lead to dismissals (Ireland, Austria, Slovenia, Norway and Turkey). On the contrary, the teachers from Bulgaria and Lithuania consider that the results at work may have an impact on the entire image of the organisation (PPMI, 2017). In Belgium (Flemish community) and Slovakia, over 30% of the teaching staff considers that the teachers in their school may be dismissed on account of their poor performance (OECD, 2014).

Teachers in pre-university schools and establishments in Romania are assessed on an annual basis, for their entire activity throughout the school year, within each pre-university school or establishment. This assessment has two components: self-assessment; assessment according to the job description and the assessment sheet. The for annual assessment methodology applied to teaching staff in pre-university schools and establishments regulates the assessment procedure, sets the norms to assess individual professional performances and to implement assessment criteria and assessment instruments (MEN, 2014).

It provides the framework necessary to have a unitary, objective and transparent assessment of the teaching staff and ensures a motivational system which should determine better individual professional performances (OECD, 2017).

### 2.1 Materials and methods

The investigative approach on the assessment of human resources within an organisation has used a complex research strategy which combines both quantitative and qualitative investigation methods. We will enumerate below the set of methods and techniques used to collect information and the relating objective.

### 2.2 The objectives of the study were:

- Identify perception of teachers with regard to annual assessment of teaching performances
- Set the role of the leader in assessing teachers' results
- Combine methods and sources of information for a higher degree of objectivism connected to internal and external assessments.

The quantitative research – assessment of pre-university teachers' performances – starts from the following **hypotheses**:

- H1 – Teaching staff from pre-university education, high schools, are permanently focused on obtaining results which should ensure their annual score "*Very good*"
- H2 – It is important that leaders should provide feed-back after an annual assessment
- H3 – There is a close connection between the personal characteristics of teachers and the assessment criteria.

### 2.3 Documentary Analysis

The current economic and social environment, the permanent transformations to which school organisations are being subjected, determine strategic and operational changes; therefore, school becomes a leading actor in the life of the community. We studied the methodology used to annually assess the activities of the teachers in pre-university education, the procedure used to annually

assess their activities, the norms used to assess the individual professional performances and to implement the assessment criteria and the assessment instruments.

## 2.4 Selecting the Sample

The sample of teachers from the pre-university education, high school, from Dâmbovița County, involved in the quantitative research, is made of 303 persons of 1,403 in total. The distribution of the questionnaires applied on the teaching staff from the high schools in Dâmbovița County is:

**Table 1. Distribution of questionnaire by types of high schools**

Total	No of questionnaires	Academic high schools	Technology high schools	National high schools	Vocational high schools
1,403	303	62	131	87	23

*Source: authors' contribution*

The questionnaires according to types of high schools were distributed by keeping the proportions of the teachers who teach in these organisations.

The analysis of the research sample shows a majority of **female** teachers (75.91%), compared to **male** teachers (24.09%).

The distribution of the sample in line with the **age** criterion, seniority in education and years served within the organisation for the teachers interviewed is presented below:

**Table 2. Sample distribution by age**

	Age	Percent
1	below 30	7.92%
2	31-40	40.92%
3	41-50	33.33%
4	51-60	14.85%
5	over 60	2.97%

*Source: authors' contribution*

The analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of the teachers interviewed indicates respondents between 31 and 40 (40.92% of total); by contrast, the teachers below 30 (2.97%) are represented to the lowest extent; this tendency is the same for all types of high schools under analysis.

**Table 3. Sample distribution by seniority in education**

	Years	Percent
1	below 5	8.58%
2	6-10	13.53%
3	11-20	46.20%
4	over 20	31.68%

*Source: authors' contribution*

In terms of seniority in education, the analysis of the sample researched indicates teaching staff with a seniority ranging from 11 to 20 years, to the detriment of the teaching staff with seniority below 5 years (8.58%).

**Table 4. Sample distribution by seniority within the teachers' school organisation**

	<b>Years</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1	below 5	30.36%
2	6-10	28.38%
3	11-20	27.39%
4	over 20	13.86%

*Source: authors' contribution*

With regard to the seniority within the organisation where teachers conduct their main activities, one may see that the seniority of most respondents (30.36%) is below 5, compared to the teachers whose seniority within the organisation exceeds 20 years. We may identify the fluctuation of the teaching staff towards organisations which should ensure their personal and professional growth. A higher weight is represented by the teachers in the urban areas (75.25%), who carry out their activity as shown in the Table below:

**Table 5. Sample distribution by area of residence**

<b>Areas</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>
	75.25%	24.75%

*Source: authors' contribution*

Most teachers interviewed have reached a high level of teaching maturity (first level of qualification – 53.14%, second level of qualification – 21.45%, PhD – 2.97%).

In addition, the selection of the teaching staff took account of the teachers' curricular area, as indicated in the Table below:

**Table 6. Distribution of teachers by curricular area**

	<b>Curricular area</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1	Language and Communication	25.74%
2	Mathematics and Sciences	25.74%
3	Human an society	19.80%
4	Arts and sports	8.91%
5	Technologies	19.80%

*Source: authors' contribution*

The respondents' analysis in terms of their curricular area proves that the Mathematics and Sciences teachers (25.74%) as well as the Language and Communication teachers (25.74%) are best represented, to the detriment of the arts and sports teachers (8.91%). This is easy to understand if one takes into consideration the high school curriculum, the number of hours allocated by types of high schools, lines of study, qualifications, year of studies.

In relation to the status of the teachers interviewed, tenure teachers have the precedence (83.50%) over the unskilled substitute teachers (0.66%).

### 3. DISCUSSION

To evaluate teachers in the pre-university education, high school, the school leadership uses assessment instruments to set the annual score in distinct stages. This score enables teachers to become members of committees, work groups or to have salary benefits.

The teachers are internally assessed by leaders, heads of departments and board members. When the former receives the score "very good" based on an internal assessment, they are entitled to public recognition, financial bonuses and career promotion. The score "unsatisfactory" entails no

implications of financial nature, but the teacher is counselled/guided by the head of the department in order to improve his/her performances.

Nevertheless, the assessment of the teaching staff is most times a formal activity, with no impact on the quality of teaching, as shown in the table below:

**Table 7. Annual assessment of teaching staff**

Type of high school	Respondents' opinion on assessment activity					Total
	Very good	Good	Poor	Very poor	Inexistent	
Technology high school	15	32	32	24	28	131
	11.5%	24.4%	24.4%	18.3%	21.4%	100.0%
Academic high schools	9	19	14	11	9	62
	14.5%	30.6%	22.6%	17.7%	14.5%	100.0%
Vocational high schools	0	9	7	6	1	23
	0.0%	39.1%	30.4%	26.1%	4.3%	100.0%
National high schools	13	17	25	15	17	87
	14.9%	19.5%	28.7%	17.2%	19.5%	100.0%
Total	37	77	78	56	55	303
	12.2%	25.4%	25.7%	18.5%	18.2%	100.0%

*Source:* authors' contribution following quantitative research

37.6% of respondents consider teachers' annual assessment to be good and very good whereas the remaining interviewees believe that this is formal and lacks motivation.

In Romania, the performances of the teaching staff are assessed according to the following criteria: attendance, expert knowledge, compliance with the curriculum, teaching methods, setting assignments in class, assessment of pupils, teacher-pupil interaction, pupils' results in school, pupils' contribution to class, contribution to the development of the institution and the teacher-parent interaction. In addition to these criteria, account is taken of the responsibilities taken within school, contribution to preparing textbooks, guides and regulations as well as self-development activities.

However, the assessments are not always precise, as they are often carried out informally and fail to consider the objective indicators relation to the learning progress and the socio-emotional progress of the pupils.

The 2017 SABER researches (systemic approach to improve education, initiated by Human Development Network, department within the World Bank) showed that the assessments are more efficacious if they combine several methods and sources of information such as pupils' results in school, observation in classroom and information in the questionnaires filled in by pupils, as shown in the table below:

**Table 8. Teaching staff assessment criteria**

	Romania	Bulgaria	Georgia	Serbia	Singapore
Expert knowledge	X		X	X	X
Teaching methods	X	X		X	X
Pupil assessment methods	X			X	X
Pupils' results in school	X			X	

*Source:* SABER data – Teaching staff

Although all four criteria are included in the assessment sheets used nationwide, they are rarely used to improve the instructive-educative process and the pupils' results in school.

In terms of the leaders' involvement in the assessment activity, the respondents had different opinions, depending on the assessment fields, performance criteria and relating scores, as presented in the below:

**Table 9. Providing feed-back on professional activity**

Type high school	Feed-back activity				Total
	Very important	Important	Low importance	Insignificant	
Technology high school	41 31.3%	67 51.1%	21 16.0%	2 1.5%	131 100.0%
Academic high schools	23 37.1%	37 59.7%	2 3.2%	0 0.0%	62 100.0%
Vocational high schools	4 17.4%	14 60.9%	4 17.4%	1 0.0%	23 100.0%
National high schools	29 33.3%	39 44.8%	15 17.2%	4 4.3%	87 100.0%
Total	97 32.0%	157 51.8%	42 13.9%	7 4.6%	303 100.0%

*Source:* authors' contribution following quantitative research

83.8% consider that the leaders' involvement and their feed-back on the professional activity of the teachers interviewed are important measures with an impact on the later professional growth of the teacher. 13.9% of the respondents consider this aspect to be of low importance, irrelevant for the teacher's later growth. H2 – The importance of the leaders' feed-back following an annual assessment has been confirmed (32.0%, respectively 51.8% of total, it is very important, respectively important, that management should provide feed-back on the professional activity of the teacher).

This has a special impact on the teacher's future professional growth, especially in terms of identifying aspects which should be improved and attending lifelong training programmes.

The quality of teaching is a priority to each and every teacher involved in the complex approach of lifelong education. If we correlate the teachers' performance with some results of their pupils (degree of passing official examinations, results in national examinations, graduation averages, results in Olympics and competitions), we may rightly state that pupils are starting to have good and very good results in relation to all indicators which also concern the teachers' assessment.

The leader's involvement in the assessment activity should consider both the organisation and the teacher. This was indicated by the interviewed in the table below:

As demonstrated by the responses provided by the interviewees, the combination of the organisation interests and the teacher's own interests is closely related to the career performance of the teacher. As expressed by 77.9% of the respondents, the leadership is the entity responsible for this aspect. The percentage (19.1%) of the respondents who believe that this is not so important is higher in vocational high schools.

**Table 10. Combining teacher's interests and interests of the organisation**

Types of high schools	Feed-back activity				Total
	Very important	Important	Low importance	Insignificant	
Technology high school	36 27.5%	65 49.6%	26 19.8%	0 0.0%	131 100.0%
Academic high schools	23 37.1%	26 41.9%	12 19.4%	0 0.0%	62 100.0%
Vocational high schools	0 0.0%	15 65.2%	8 34.8%	0 0.0%	23 100.0%
National high schools	30 34.5%	41 47.1%	12 13.8%	2 2.3%	87 100.0%
Total	89 29.4%	147 48.5%	58 19.1%	2 0.7%	303 100.0%

Source: authors' contribution following quantitative research

In terms of the performance descriptors presented in the *Self-Assessment Sheet* for the teaching staff, we may emphasize the following:

- According to 57.1% of the respondents, preparation of the innovative teaching materials such as: school textbooks, auxiliary teaching materials, guides, other educational materials, represent an important activity for the teacher and should be included in the assessment grid. 6.3% of the teachers interviewed consider this to be a secondary activity, whereas 3.6% of the teachers see it as an insignificant activity. At present, it is extremely difficult for teachers to contribute to the preparation of the teaching materials. The only possibility for teachers to get involved is through open educational resources set up within county school inspectorates, on the basis of a unitary content-related structure, organised by education levels/grades and curricula/subjects.
- The extracurricular activities are deemed to be a very important activity for the teacher's assessment to 58.1% of the respondents (21.1% - fundamental, 37% - very important). Approximately 11% of the interviewees (7.9% - secondary, 4% insignificant) do not consider this activity to be an essential assessment criterion.
- Slightly over 72% (fundamental – 36.3%, very important – 36.3%) believe that the results obtained by the pupils in national examinations are an important criterion in assessing the teacher.
- 70.9% of the respondents (35.1% - fundamental, 35.8% - very important) consider that the results of the pupils in competitions/Olympics/school contests are an important criterion in assessing the teacher's activity; this aspect is also valued in the assessment grids in relation to the teachers' access to national committees/experts' bodies/methodologists/leadership.
- 67,3% of the respondents (25.4% - fundamental, 41.9% - very important) consider that the activity of the teachers who encourage involvement in class and outside class of pupils from disadvantaged environments (preschoolers or pupils with special learning needs integrated in the mass education, children from single-parent families, children in foster care, children from poor communities, isolated communities, parents working abroad, home schooling children or children trained in hospitals, children with AIDS, etc) should also be an important assessment criterion. However, slightly over 11% of the respondents consider this to be a secondary activity.

- The teachers' perception in relation to teaching children with special learning needs is similar – 65.7% (24.4% - fundamental, 40.3% - very important) consider that this should be an important assessment criterion whereas working with children exposed to school dropout is considered important to 68.4% (28.1% - fundamental, 40.3% - very important).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The teachers interviewed consider that the assessment fields, the performance criteria and the score relating to each and every field set in the Assessment sheet are relevant. Nevertheless, more than half of the respondents see this measurement of the teacher's annual performance as a formal action, with no impact on the employee's motivation, his/her position and status within the school. Most of them state that the score Very good following self-assessment is not difficult to obtain and that the motivation of the teaching staff towards better career performance would be significantly higher providing that the assessment had implications at individual level (in terms of salary and work relations) and at institutional level (one's own strategy to grow professionally within the education establishment). H1 – The hypothesis according to which teaching staff in pre-university education, high schools, are permanently focused on obtaining results which should ensure their annual score "Very good" is validated. According to the empirical research, slightly over 72% of the respondents (36.3% fundamental, respectively 36.3% very important) believe that the teachers in pre-university education, high school, are constantly concerned with obtaining the maximum annual score. This enables the teacher to have access to leadership positions, specialty committees, to be granted increments (merit increase) and also to be appointed methodologists within county school inspectorates or experts of auditing bodies.

We present in the table below the correlation between assessment based on relevant, objective, unanimously accepted criteria, as means to improve career professionalisation, and the personal characteristics of the teachers interviewed.

**Table 11. Correlation between personal characteristics and assessment criteria accepted**

Teaching staff assessment		Assessment by relevant, objective and unanimously accepted criteria	Type of education institutions	Seniority in education	Qualification level	Curriculum	Age	Gender	Status	Residence environment
Assessment by relevant, objective and unanimously accepted criteria	Pearson's correlation	1	-0.078	0.048	0.016	-0.07	-0.05	.129(*)	-	0.002
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.178	0.4	0.777	0.226	0.387	0.025	0.031	0.978
	N	303	303	303	303	303	303	303	303	303

*Source:* authors' contribution following quantitative research

The analysis of the data in the table highlights the following aspects: the causal variable – assessment according to relevant, objective and unanimously accepted criteria, and the resulting variable - **status of the teacher**, are barely connected. In the first case, we can observe a positive association, while in the other case a negative one; in relation to these connections, the probability to guarantee the results is within acceptable limits, according to Sig's values; the assessment based on relevant, objective and unanimously accepted criteria has **no** (positive or negative) **influence** on the other variables; this is also supported by Sig's high values. H3 – There is a close connection between the personal characteristics of teachers and the assessment criteria. This hypothesis is not confirmed because, as indicated above, there are no illustrative statistical relationships between teachers' personal characteristics such as: type of educational institution, seniority in education, qualification level, curriculum area, age and residence environment, and the assessment conducted

by relevant criteria (which should provide a fair, standardised and genuine evaluation of the activity performed by a teacher throughout an academic year).

Despite the fact that the teaching staff assessment process is conducted on a constant basis, the promotion opportunities are limited in Romania. In fact, if a teacher is scored "Very good", he/she is eligible to run only for a position of school leader or school inspector. If we take into consideration the achievements of the teachers who teach the pupils with the worst school results, the situation looks even worse. Such achievements are seldom recognised and the teachers are almost never given promotion opportunities.

To keep their teaching status, teaching staff in Romania are subjected to assessments; yet, this approach is limited to filling in some sheets and does not include provision of experts' feed-back.

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