

## PERMANENT LEARNING MAJOR DIMENSION TO ACHIEVE PERFORMANCE WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

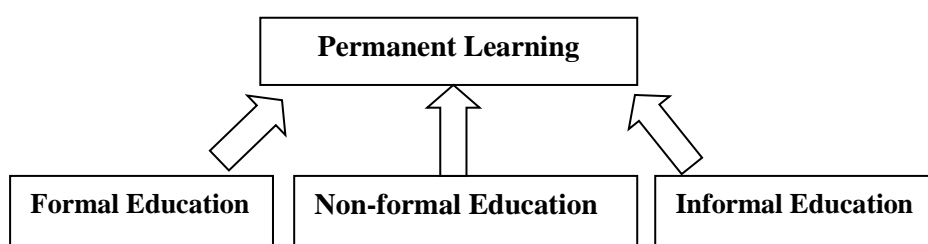
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**Abstract.** *Lifelong learning implies the person who learns in his or her own personal and professional development process. This study presents the most important results regarding the role and the importance of permanent learning for the achievement of performance within an organization. The data were collected following the application of a questionnaire on a representative sample of teaching staff in pre-university education in Dâmbovița County, teachers who carry out their activities in academic high schools, technological and vocational schools. They were used in outlining an overview on the implications of permanent learning and the manner it applies within an organization promoting modern educational values and concepts.*

**Keywords:** permanent education, permanent learning, performance, education system, non-formal education

### 1. Introduction

Lifelong learning takes various forms and occurs both inside and outside, traditional education and training systems. The strength of such programs is that they place individual responsibility at the core of the learning process. The same applies to non-formal education which can be found as training method in the activities of the European lifelong learning programs. Actually, these three concepts - formal, informal and non-formal – complete one another as part of the lifelong learning programs, as indicated by the figure below:



**Figure 1.** Dimensions learning

For our country, the goal of the lifelong learning is to increase the adults' attendance rate (age bracket 25 – 64) to 10%, by 2020. Although Romania

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implemented different programs using European funds, between 2007 and 2013, no significant progress was made in this domain. According to the National Institute of Statistics in Romania, the attendance percentage for the lifelong learning programs increased from 1.3% to only 1.8%, much under the average of the European Union.

The national objective of Romania in connection with lifelong learning is to increase attendance up to 10% by 2020. Nevertheless, the discrepancy between the current rate and the target for 2020 is significant and even higher compared to the European Union's target of 15%. Romania witnesses therefore one of the lowest average increases in the attendance rate and its performances are below the minimum progress required by the European Commission [7].

## 2. Materials and Methods

The investigative undertaking regarding the role of the permanent learning in relation to achieving performance within an organization has used a complex research strategy which combines quantitative and qualitative investigation methods. We will introduce below the set of the methods and techniques used in order to collect information as well as the purpose of their use.

### **The objectives of the research are:**

- to establish relevant domains for lifelong learning, for teaching staff;
- to identify cognitive, social and emotional competences, as well as competences specific to the position of the teacher in pre-university education;
- to identify teacher-oriented training programs, flexible in terms of program, content and credits granted;
- to specify the methods used in recognizing previous learning, including skills acquired in relation to European mobility programs.

The qualitative research regarding lifelong learning in pre-university education starts from the following **hypotheses**:

- Attendance rate in case of formal education is influenced by age, residence area, sex, qualification level.
  - The education and professional training providers offer programs and produce graduates who possess competences which fail to completely reflect the needs of the employers.
  - The deficit of information concerning quality of programs and training providers reduces the interest in training opportunities.
  - The investment in training is most times covered by the employee.
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### 3. Documentary Analysis

A study has been made of all laws, government ordinances, entire well-defined legal framework which support lifelong learning. A thorough analysis highlighted the role that ministries, national authorities, sectorial committees and national agencies play in the development of a comprehensive and flexible lifelong learning system. This has to be permanently correlated with the job market and adapted to the present requirements of the knowledge-based economy.

### 4. Establishing sample

The sample of teaching staff in pre-university, high school, education in Dâmbovița County on which the quantitative research has been conducted is made up of 292 teachers of 1212 in total. **The distribution of the sample by type of education establishment where teachers carry out their activity and their residence area is presented in the tables below:**

**Table 1.** Distribution of sample by education establishment

<i>Sample size</i>	<i>Type of education establishment</i>					
292	Academic		Technological		Vocational	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
	115	39	145	50	32	11

source: <http://statistici.insse.ro/>

According to data provided by the National Institute of Statistics for 2015, there are 1212 teachers working in 30 high schools in Dâmbovița County, distributed as follows: 482 in academic and high schools, 260 in vocational schools and 470 in technological high schools and colleges. In terms of their representation by sex, in Dâmbovița County there are 382 male teachers and the rest is represented by female teachers. The sample distribution by age criterion shows similes to seniority in education and is similar to distribution by age brackets in the total number of teachers in the county, as shown by table 2:

**Table 2.** Distribution of sample by age and seniority

<i>Age brackets (years)</i>	<i>Teachers interviewed</i>	<i>Seniority in education (years)</i>	<i>Teachers</i>
below 30	4.1	up to 5	5.47
31-40	33.23	6-10	8.90
41-50	41.78	11-20	39.38
over 50	20.89	over 20	46.25

A higher weight is taken by teachers in the urban area, who carry out their activities in technological high schools, academic schools and colleges, vocational high schools; most of these education establishments are based in cities and towns, as indicated in the table below:

**Table 3.** Distribution of sample by residence area

<i>Teachers/Residence area</i>	<i>Rural %</i>	<i>Urban %</i>
292	32.5	67.5

Most teachers interviewed (89.4%) reached a high degree of didactic maturity (level I – 60.3%, level II – 23.5%, doctorate 5.6%). In the selection of the teaching staff account has also been taken of their curriculum area: mathematics and sciences 25%, language and communication 25.68%, technologies 22.6%, arts and sport 7.53%, man and society 19.19%.

## 5. Results

In Romania, teaching staff as well as management, direction and control staff in pre-university education, participates every five years to improvement programs which ensure 90 transferable credits for the timeframe abovementioned. Table 4 shows the status of the persons interviewed in relation to formal and non-formal programs which ensured the credits required according to the legislation in force.

One may see that the attendance rate for the lifelong learning programs is distributed unequally. The access of teaching staff to formal education drops by age, from 83.33 % for the persons below 30 to 3.27% for the ones over 50. This is normal. The teaching staff completed their career option and didactical levels. There are only few who attend post-university or professional reorientation course at this age. The attendance rate for non-formal education grows from 58.33%, for persons below 30, to 63.11%, for the ones in the 41-50 age bracket, and drops down to 44.26%.

**Table 4.** Attendance rate for permanent learning programs

<i>Age</i>	<i>Number of teacher</i>	<i>Graduates of Lifelong learning program</i>	
		<i>Formal</i>	<i>Non-formal</i>
below 30	12	10	7
31-40	97	8	66
41-50	122	7	77
over 50	61	2	27

There were discrepancies with the people interviewed in terms of their residence area and gender. The attendance rates are lower in the rural areas (22.4%) and among men (14.3%). As for the long life learning forms, teachers responded as follows:

**Table 5.** Forms of permanent learning

<i>Lifelong learning</i>	<i>Forms</i>	<i>%</i>
	Professional certification/didactical levels	9.24
	Improvement in methods and psychopedagogy	39.38
	Improvement in specialty	53.76
	Didactic experiences from mobility programs	25.68
	Professional reorientation	3.42
	Job shadowing	6.16
	Others	5.13

Completion of the interviewed teachers' attendance to lifelong learning programs was different, as indicated in the table 6. We may see that, for the teachers interviewed, the priority was passing the examinations attesting their permanent teacher certification or their didactical levels and the attendance to courses of which objective was training in mathematics, economics, history, geography, Romanian language, physics, chemistry, biology. In order to develop their method-related and psychopedagogy skills, teaching staff chose courses on specialty didactics and methods on how to teach basic disciplines, mentoring, curricular authorisation and assessment. The desire to develop in the educational management area motivated participation to courses which would enable access to management, direction and control positions, implementation of educational policy actions within the organization. For the sample interviewed, learning with the help of IT skills outlines the evolution from initiation in the domain to use of education platforms utilized in the didactical undertaking.

**Table 6.** Lifelong learning program certification

<i>Type of document/Teachers interviewed</i>	<i>%</i>
Didactical level certificate/professional certification	9.24
Professional competence certificate	64.38
Continuous professional development attestation	17.8
Attendance attestations	5.13
Attendance diplomas	2.39
Others	10.3

Learning through job shadowing or participation in mobility programs impacting both professional and personal development contributes to widening and enriching the specialty culture and ensures completion of studies in a flexible manner, in line with the education interests of the teacher.

## 6. Discussions

Cognitive, social, emotional and position-specific competences are acquired throughout life. The teaching staffs interviewed completely agree to undertake new roles through initial and continuous professional development, roles involved by the new approach of the skill-based learning. The table below shows a hierarchy of the teacher's competences according to his or her job description:

**Table 7.** Competences of the teachers

<i>Competences of the teachers</i>	<i>%</i>
Scientific/in his/her specialty	80.47
Assessment	70.20
Relations	64.72
Decision-making	46.23
Methods and psychopedagogy	39.38
Training/permanent learning	33.21
Managerial	30.47

Lifelong learning is most times financed by the teaching staff, except programs conducted using European funds. The participation of the teaching staff to programs which ensure permanent learning in the past two years is shown in the table below:

**Table 8.** Participation to permanent learning programs in the past two years

<i>Number of teacher</i>	<i>Financing source</i>	
	<i>Own funds</i>	<i>Budget</i>
292	135	0

## Conclusions

Conclusion (1). Under the circumstances of permanent learning it is necessary to promote a culture of pedagogical learning to encourage the people involved in the

educational process to exchange good practices and learn from each other's experience, with the support of a team of experts in the field.

Conclusion (2). As for the lifelong learning programs and their impact on didactic career, it is required to develop the market of the training providers so that there is a productive competition in relation to their offers and, more importantly, a continuous adaptation to the economic and social changes. The universities have to meet halfway the needs of pre-university teaching staff, especially with student-oriented programs, flexible in terms of time allocated, content and credits granted.

Conclusion (3). Recognition of results of all learning forms is a preliminary condition in order to create an open lifelong learning system which will ensure simple transition between the sub-sectors of the education.

Conclusion (4). The motivation of the interviewed teaching staff to attend non-formal education programs is given by their desire to develop personally, to be in harmony with what is new and to be competitive in their profession, especially in the conditions of increasingly growing requirements of the employers. The rapid and profound changes which have occurred over the past years in the education system impose continuous learning among teachers, their adaptation to newness and change but also to the demands of the job market.

Conclusion (5). The frequency of participation among teachers in Dâmbovița County to continuous learning programs reaches high values. The teachers attend mandatory programs, conducted through the public sector, and also attractive courses offered by private providers, especially when they are covered by European funds. The intention of learning throughout life is closely followed by the desire to develop personally, to receive recognition of their own positions within the education establishment and to integrate into a modern high achiever education system.

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