SCHOOL DROPOUT - WAYS OF REMEDY

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Abstract. The article addresses the notion of school dropout, highlighting its causality and the main scientific theories of school dropout from a pedagogical perspective. It also analyzes social policies for the prevention and control of school dropout.

Keywords: school dropout, causality, ecological theory, theory of methodological individualism, behavioral theory, biological perspective, social prevention policies.

ABANDONUL ȘCOLAR - MODALITĂȚI DE REMEDIERE

Rezumat. În articol se abordează noțiunea de abandon școlar, evidențiindu-se cauzele acestuia și principalele teorii științifice ale abandonului școlar din perspectivă pedagogică. De asemenea, se analizează politicile sociale de prevenție și control al abandonului școlar.

Cuvinte cheie: abandon școlar, cauzalitate, teoria ecologistă, teoria individualismului metodologic, teoria comportamentală, perspectiva biologică, politici sociale de prevenție.

Definition and causality

Certainly, school dropout is a form of manifestation of deviance in education, along with absenteeism and violence in the school environment. In other words, school deviance includes those behaviors that deviate from the rules governing student status-roles [21, p. 199]. Young people leave school, regardless of the level they have reached, before obtaining any qualification or professional training.

The causes of school dropout are extremely complex and often divided into several categories, as follows [15; 8; 6; 25]:

1) causes from the family environment: a low educational level of the parents, a tragedy that took place in the family, divided family, problems of violence and abuse, various tensions between family members, involvement of one or more family members in activities illegal, migration of one or both parents, faulty relationship between family and school;

2) individual causes: various health problems, relationship disorders with others, not adapting to the school environment, low motivation to go to class, manifesting an aggression towards colleagues, consumption of substances with hallucinogenic effect, consumption of alcoholic beverages, smoking, anxiety, copying tests, stealing objects belonging to classmates, low self-esteem, introversion, depression, school phobia;

3) causes determined by the community: the norm of early marriage of children (example: Roma ethnicity, but also in some rural areas), notorious and insecure areas;

4) causes of the school environment: lack of motivation and non-involvement of teachers, poor teacher-student relationship, student frustrations and inhibitions, conflicts and violence between classmates (example: bullying and mobbing), wrong school orientation of the student, very high grades small and repetition, very high school standards, the student's acute sense of failure, the student does not integrate into the classroom;

5) economic causes: economic difficulties, lack of a job of one or both parents, lack of supplies and clothes.

Undoubtedly, in order to achieve school success, a solid partnership is needed between the student's family and the school. Parents must give more importance to school, but also to ensure a family environment suitable for the cognitive, relational and social development of the child [8, p. 27–29].

Also, the interest of teachers should be emphasized, in order to encourage all students, without practicing any form of discrimination.

In other words, there are several explanatory theories of school dropout, divided as follows: 1) ecological perspective; 2) the theory of methodological individualism; 3) the perspective of behaviorism; 4) biological perspective.

The main theories regarding school dropout

Ecological perspective [5]: Ecopsychological theory explains human development, placing the child at the center of an ecosystem divided into four parts: a) microsystemic level (school, family, peer group); b) mesosystemic level (different interactions between microsystems); c) exosystemic level (microsystems, mesosystem and parent groups); d) macrosystemic level (cultural models). Each level exerts certain influences on the other systems, being closely related.

The theory of methodological individualism [7; 26; 14; 20; 3]: School failure is explained from the perspective of social subcultures in disadvantaged, marginalized environments. The benefits of schooling are underestimated, while illicit activities can bring many benefits. Social subculture negatively influences both the family and the individual in their decision making and behavior.

Behavioral Perspective [24; 2]: Negative behavior of individuals is strengthened through the roles played by environmental factors. Thus, the reward and punishment that come from one behavior are evaluated by the individual, strengthening his conviction to adopt one behavior to the detriment of another. The environment conditions and deconditions the individual, determining the takeover and imitation of behaviors and attitudes. Thus, deviant behavior patterns are accepted and reproduced by the individual.

Biological Perspective [19; 10]: Various hormonal and chemical reactions can influence the individual cognitively and emotionally-behaviorally. A higher amount of androgen hormones can determine the deviant behavior of the individual. Also, various anatomical stigmas can also influence the negative behavior of an individual.

There are two major attitudes towards school dropout, namely [17, pp. 451-471]:

1) the traditional school places the entire responsibility for the wrong decisions on the student, in the context of absenteeism and poor school results, using the term "Drop-out", with an individual educational and cultural significance;

2) students who drop out of school are seen as expelled from the education system, due to various traumatic experiences of school failure and negative emotions, being used the term "push-out". Here the responsibility for leaving school no longer belongs to the student, but to the education system.

Negative school experiences may cause some students to drop out of school, but not all students with such experiences choose to drop out [12, pp. 425-428]. A faulty student-family relationship, as well as between a student-teacher, can lead to the decision to leave the education system. On the other hand, positive school experiences encourage and motivate the student to move forward [27; 22; 21]. Undoubtedly, the school ranks the students, whether we are talking about the traditional school, or the theory of exclusion, in most education systems the problem of dropping out of school is manifested. Early school leaving is the result of the failure and inefficiency of educational systems to motivate and retain students throughout the educational process.

Social policies for prevention and control

There are many aspects that make school dropout a difficult problem to solve. Better teacher training is needed, both in their initial and in-service training. Increased attention is needed in working with students who have various family problems, social exclusion, insufficient income, etc. The state must also provide more funding through the Ministry of Education, in order to support both schools and teachers, but especially students who are at risk. The first specialist who comes in direct contact with the student is the teacher, who can identify and direct the child and his family to specialized services in order to provide support. The formal dimension of education, as well as ignoring the importance of working with students at risk, push them to leave school. There is a need for better integration of students at risk, as well as maintaining a close relationship with the family.

To address all these problems came the "Europe 2020 Strategy", which established that all Member States of the European Union (EU) to reduce dropout rates below the threshold of 10% by 2020. Thus, it was intended to facilitate access to education, reducing the number of students with poor academic results, as well as unmotivated absences. Also, "second chance" programs will be introduced for students who have

already left school. All EU Member States have had to develop prevention and control policies in order to reach the target of an average drop-out rate of less than 10%. It was wanted to eliminate the favorable factors that determine the early school leaving. In this sense, there were three main directions of action, as follows:

1) prevention, which consists of a set of actions designed to improve both access and equal participation in education of all children, regardless of background or financial situation; several specific programs for identifying and supporting students at risk of dropping out also need to be implemented;

2) combating, by streamlining the school network for reintegration into education of those who have already left school;

3) the development of the educational system, the appropriate endowment of the schools, the observance of the hygiene norms, the assurance of the qualitative standards of the educational services.

Romania has recognized the problem of school dropout and comes up with solutions to prevent and combat it, but we must start by encouraging the attendance of kindergarten, in order to adapt the child to the school curriculum and interactions with teachers and classmates [21; 9; 23].

In the direction of preventing and combating school dropout come several proposals, but it is imperative to first understand the causes of social, family, economic and individual nature. Subsequently, these causes can be transformed into opportunities and directions for action by social policies. It is necessary to implement a student-oriented psycho-pedagogical methodology, where the teacher actively stimulates the participation and involvement of each student in the educational process [1, p. 112]. Also, more learning styles need to be developed, so that the student can develop his cognitive function as much as possible. Students should be encouraged to put into practice the theories learned in class, thus taking the initiative in learning. The subject taught in a rigid, standardized manner, focused on storing information, will not be able to be applied in the future. Learning through various visual, graphic methods, in drawings and colors, can be one of the many alternatives [8; 5]. Another proposal for improving the current school system, but especially for preventing dropout, is related to the teacher who can teach the lessons in an interactive way with his students. Avoiding the teacher's monologue will bring the student from the passive situation of class attendance to an active situation, of participation and involvement in the lesson. Encouraging students to get involved in the learning process is one of the main solutions and makes the school a fun, active and conducive place for student development [12, p. 38–42]. Stimulating the student's imagination is crucial in the learning and development process, offering the chance to take the initiative in teaching classes. The teacher must constantly provide positive and constructive feedback designed to encourage and motivate student

participation [21; 3; 26]. Once these proposals are applied, the problem of school dropout in our country could experience significant decreases, precisely due to the school's orientation on student development and not only on teaching and memorization. At the same time, for students with very poor learning results, several study groups can be organized within the school, to answer the problems. It is necessary to orient each student individually, taking into account his inclinations and the results obtained. Orientation in various fields of education helps the young person to improve in a certain direction, thus focusing on performance and not only on the results favorable to the promotion of the year.

In other words, there are a number of directions for action to prevent and combat early school leaving in our country, and the first such direction is to eliminate the current rigid, classic school system [11; 4].

Furthermore, equal opportunities for all children to participate in education must be ensured. Teachers must benefit from continuous training, in which they can permanently develop and improve their working skills with students with various problems, whether personal, family, economic or social [4; 8]. The quality of educational services and inclusion in the system are some of the most important directions of action of social policies. Ethnic minorities must benefit from teaching in their mother tongue so that the school can meet the difficulties of adaptation and integration. A student who has adapted and managed to integrate into society, in school, will have a much lower risk of dropping out of school [18, p. 3–6]. The state must materially support students' performance and promote all forms of education. Violence in school must be eliminated as much as possible, being one of the causes of dropout [7; 21], and the relationship between the student's family and the school must be as close as possible. Ensuring the safety of the student inside the school is mandatory. Also, within each educational institution must work several specialists, such as social workers, psychotherapists and psychologists who have the role of identifying students with problems. Thus, it will be possible to intervene on these cases and a careful monitoring of the problem solving path will be made.

Encouraging the child's autonomy is essential even during school. On the other hand, given that the young person wants to leave school in order to obtain a job, having a full-time job and a stable monthly income, the idea of "temporary school dropout" must be accepted [11]. Family and society are important partners in determining the young person to return to education to complete his studies. Thus, "temporary school dropout" becomes a solution worth considering, in addition to the offer supported by the vocational school and offering financial support during the resumption of studies. In other words, the vocational school must have the full support of the state, but also of several companies to be involved in financing and organization, taking into account the demand of the labor market. It is necessary for the state to support these companies that

choose to get involved, through various tax facilities, tax exemptions. Training a skilled workforce is essential for the economic success of any country.

School dropout is not only a problem of the education system, but it is a social problem, an individual failure with negative effects for the economy and the family.

Preventing the risk of dropping out of school by identifying and supporting young people with problems is essential in reducing the rate of early school leaving [16, p. 527–531]. The full involvement of teachers is necessary because they are in direct contact with the student and his family. Early identification of the risk can prevent the young person from leaving school. The school itself must be responsible for preventing, motivating and helping students to integrate into the collective.

The school is good when it meets the demands of the labor market, the demands of the student and society. Romanian society has undergone a series of major changes in economic, social, educational, health and cultural, from 1989 to the present. Globalization, accession to the European Union and the evolution of the media have also massively influenced the traditional education system. Old teaching methods must now be replaced by new ways of motivating, capturing the student's attention and interest. In conclusion, society has changed, the priorities and prejudices of individuals have changed, consequently, the school system must adapt to new times and requirements. The school must provide, in addition to cognitive development, a stimulation of the spirit of innovation and initiative of young people, helping them to prepare to meet the demands of the labor market today and especially in the future.

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