

# Impulses for Substantiating a Combative Management able to Overcome the Present Controverses within the Educational Organizations

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## Abstract

*We are witnessing a disturbance in the management of organizations in the context of the present pandemic, a condition that produces many transformations, which instigates acceptance in order to ensure a favorable evolution.*

*A state of helplessness puts to the test the organizational structures that lose speed in the entrepreneurial dynamics of quality management. We participate in a real phenomenon of diversification of the forms of social reorganization of the built organizations, aiming at changing the personality or the individual attitudes of the staff which is much more difficult to achieve.*

*From the perspective of approaching the gravitational center of educational organizations, the study generates impulses to ensure at least a theoretical foundation capable of highlighting the most valuable element, human resources. Using methodologies such as analysis, comparison and interpretation of globally observed data, the study examines the benefits of suggestions and models for changing mindsets, practices and organizational structures.*

**Key words:** the gravitational center of organizations, organizational adaptation, form of balance, metaphorical approach, optimal socio-professional attitude

**J.E.L. classification:** I2, J5, M5

## 1. Introduction

The driving force of contemporary society, education, has a major role in the evolution. The identification of the problems of the management of the educational organizations in Romania in the current context, taking into account the human requirements aims to offer quickly some directions to the change management that can find answers to the problems of the future society. The fact that change designates progress is a certainty. Being an intentional and systematic action in order to produce changes from a cognitive, affective and shareholder point of view, the predominantly qualitative dimension must be highlighted.

Specialized national institutions as well as international professional organizations have concluded that starting with the second half of the twentieth century 3 characteristic types of educational reforms can be identified.

From government initiatives, in the '70s, reforms were carried out that focused on improving school performance, aiming at the quality of the educational act. The aim was to optimize the teaching-learning-research process and therefore, those targeted were students and teachers.

The issue of educational reforms was approached in the '90s from a different perspective, that of the relationship between society and education, taking into account the public expectations of schools. Thus, the quality in education was brought to the forefront, aiming at an improvement of both the educational structures and practices.

The next wave of educational reforms emerged at the beginning of the 21st century, when the education quality consisted in highlighting the responsibility to meet the future needs of the individual who will develop in an era of globalization and computerization.

Inside the European Community's concerns is quality assurance, seen as an essential and necessary component of all areas of activity. The concept of quality was introduced in 1993 but the European Commission considers that it is not possible to speak of a European quality standard, being appreciated differently, depending on the area.

Analyzing the documents of the UNESCO General Conference, some characteristics of the quality concept of education can be revealed, such as: emphasizing the values of solidarity and democratic citizenship, focusing strategies on the development of educators, developing quality standards, human rights education, encouraging the exchange of pupils and students, the exchange of good practices and information.

The school and society are entities whose relationship converges in the direction of achieving educational progress in the sense that education is a specific human action and the school has the role of preparing man for integration into social life. In the social context marked by profound transformations, values are substantially changed, interpersonal relationships are profoundly resized and the complexity of human activity requires new skills for the individual, especially since social distancing is required for objective reasons.

It is important that the role of the school is reconsidered at the social level, being imperative to adapt to social dynamics. One can speak of a relationship of double conditioning between social change and educational change, a qualitative relationship established between the requirements of society and the objectives of the school. The individual's ability to respond convincingly to external challenges has its starting point in the way the school connects its development strategies and the mission of the needs demanded at the social level. Without an understanding of the logic of social transformations, the school cannot restructure its educational offer because its performance needs to be socially validated. It should be emphasized that social influences are not always beneficial, the school having the task of operating a selection of them, without being limited to a passive and expectant behavior.

The school operates in accordance with its own logic of evolution, advancing only the changes that are in accordance with its own development needs. The school makes the leap towards prospecting the future, determining it as long as the quality of education conditions the social quality.

Education, through its prospective capacity, requires the school to be anchored to the requirements of the future. Thus, the changes that are produced in education must meet predictable organizational or social requirements that are not formulated. The school's obligation is to prepare individuals for future demands, thus developing their ability to see beyond the present moment. In this way the school develops its own vision, foreshadowing strategies to operationalize change. Anticipating change makes action possible, removes possible obstacles, prevents failures and makes it easier for the school to adapt to the new. The design of change must be done contextually, depending on the needs of each institution to adapt to the new directions of educational management, to maintain unity and quality at the same time, in controversial contexts of respect for social distance.

## **2. Theoretical background**

The issue of organizations and how to develop them is a constant research of psychosociologists since the early '50s when the field of sociology of organizations was timidly outlined, each claiming the right and authority to explain the concept of organization. For example, Charles Perrow (1970), a renowned sociologist, considered relevant the analysis of organizations from a sociological perspective, starting from the premise that real changes at this level can be projected and obtained by requesting and stimulating organizational structures and not by reality followers, as well as critical positions, being considered limiting for the deep understanding of this concept. (Neculau, 1992, p.12)

The difficulty of conceptualization is also proved by the multitude of definitions that have been attributed to the organization, as it felt its presence at the social level. Today we are witnessing a real phenomenon of diversification of forms of social organization, of organizations built with the aim of changing the personality or individual attitudes that are much more difficult to achieve. At the opposite pole is the concept of psychologists D. Krech and R. Crutchfield (1948) who tried to

analyze organizations based on the duration, size and structure of the groups that form them, these parameters also becoming criteria for defining organizations.

It was considered that the emergence of organizations responds, in fact, to the important need of recognition the limits of the individual to cope with external demands. Some considered the organization to be the ideal solution for superior results, others went so far as to point out that if the nineteenth century can be attributed to individuals, the twentieth century will certainly be the century of great organizations.

From the very beginning, it should be mentioned that the definitions that have been attributed to the organization bear the imprint of the evolutions that marked the management theory and practice, between them there is an interdependence relationship.

In an attempt to clarify the internal functioning of the organization, Pierre Bourdieu defined it using the concept of field by establishing a relationship between the organization and the environment. What is different between these two concepts is the questioning of borders, the reason for the tensions between the main agents of the field. The organization has as benchmarks the decisions based on interests, the relations between individuals, relations of competence but also the possibility to initiate actions. (Bourdieu, 1980, p.113).

The relationship between the network and the organization was approached by specialists in the sociology of organizations in 1990s France. E. Lazega concluded that understanding the mechanisms of operation of the organization can provide facilities for the analysis of networks. The development of the organization derives from the networks that constitute the infrastructure that leads to the production of innovations. (Lazega, 1994, p.293)

Although the definitions given to the concept of organization do not seem to be based on experimental research, being largely descriptive and restrictive, they provide an overview of the concerns of specialists to understand the mechanisms that have ensured its viability over time.

The multiplication of the perspectives of defining the organizations, its analysis through the prism of some correlative concepts, which offer the risk of a relativization of the concept, as well as the metaphorical approach of interpreting the organization are considered by specialists real difficulties for thorough understanding of what can actually represent the concept of organization.

To overcome them, M. Zlate (Zlate, 2004, p.87) proposes as solutions, the study of organizations from an interdisciplinary perspective, to fill the limits of isolated perspectives, the clear delimitation of the concept of organization from similar or neighboring concepts, and the use of metaphor elements. as criteria for classifying organizations.

A pertinent report for analysis is the one between institutions and organizations, made by M. Vlăsceanu. In his conception, the institutions are constraining and normative, being framed in the social environment. The normative aspect derives from models of action and behavior guided by a set of rules and norms that are included in legal provisions as well as from treaties, conventions and rituals. (Vlăsceanu, 2003, p.86) The rules are all the more constraining as their violation is associated with punishment while observance attracts the reward. Behavioral relationships are therefore conditioned at the level of any institution to the detriment of communication relationships.

The following consequences follow from the institutional model: models of routine behavior with social blocking effect are promoted, which can even lead to the blocking of performances to the same extent that behavioral adequacy is exploited by institutions. During the development of society, the term organization is used instead of institution but it should be noted that between organizations and institutions there is a relationship of interdependence insofar as the organization is formed based on the institution and the organization can cause institutional change by the typology of interpersonal relationships provides the necessary framework for the regeneration of the normative system.

Between the two forms of organization, P.F. Drucker insists on arguing the importance of the organization he invests with the attribute of change and innovation, to the detriment of institutions characterized by conservatism. (Drucker, 1993, p.218)

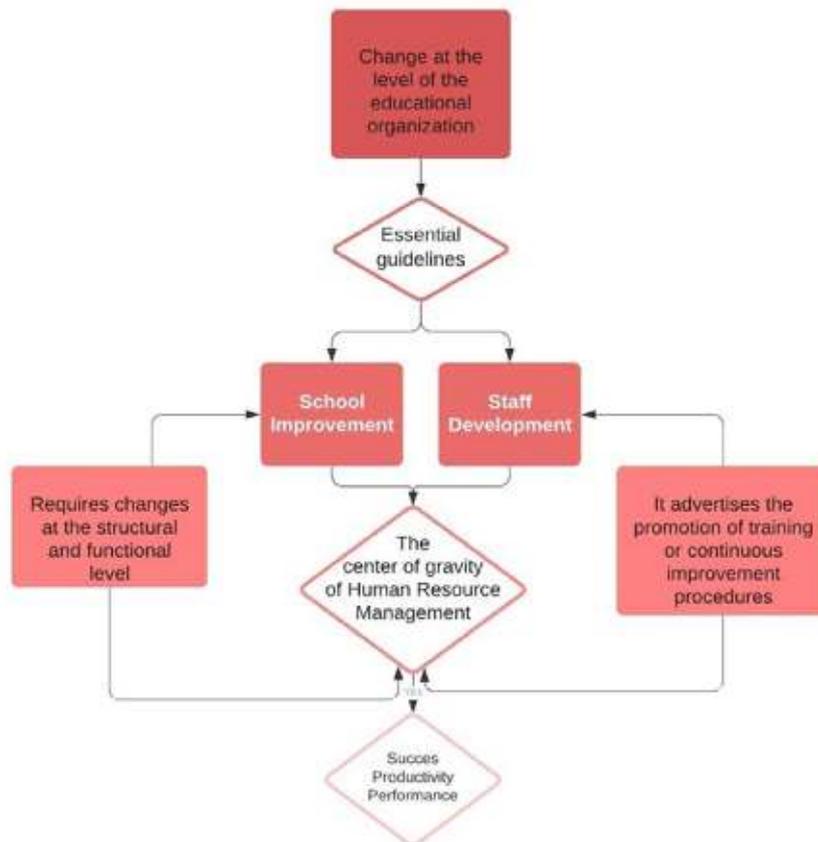
One can object to this analysis perspective the somewhat forced way of interpreting the two concepts from different positions. The supposed characteristics of institutions and organizations are based more on a semantic differentiation than on a real basis. It is considered that the institutions establish, impose, hence their normative, rigid and binding characteristic. On the other hand,

organizations emphasize the ability of individuals to organize, to establish cooperative or competitive relationships to meet both the requirements of the organization and their own interests. These aspects cannot be denied, nor absolutized. The risk would be to consider the institutions as structures that do not accept or do not imply interpersonal relations, as it would be risky to consider that organizations operate in the absence of principles, rules, a normative framework that clearly delimits its limits. The interdependence between institutions and organizations was probably due to the need to clarify the correlations between them. In fact, the basic element that differentiates the organizational institution is the type of management accepted and assumed at the structural-functional level.

### 3. Research methodology

The substantiation of impulses to enable a combative management to overcome the controversies present in educational organizations and to be able to implement and maintain the balanced form of a design of organizational change is a broad and lasting process. The adaptation of the educational system requires the delimitation of the aspects that exist in the organizations and the identification of the strategic resources, or of any type, that would support this process of school improvement / development.

Figure no. 1. Conceptual model of managerial change and adaptation to changes in society



Source: Authors' concept based on the analysis of data observed globally

Psychosociologists have recently stressed the need to look at the process of educational adaptation and change by clearly delimiting two levels: the organization and its people, which highlights two key orientations of change, namely the development of the school organization and staff development. (Figure no.1)

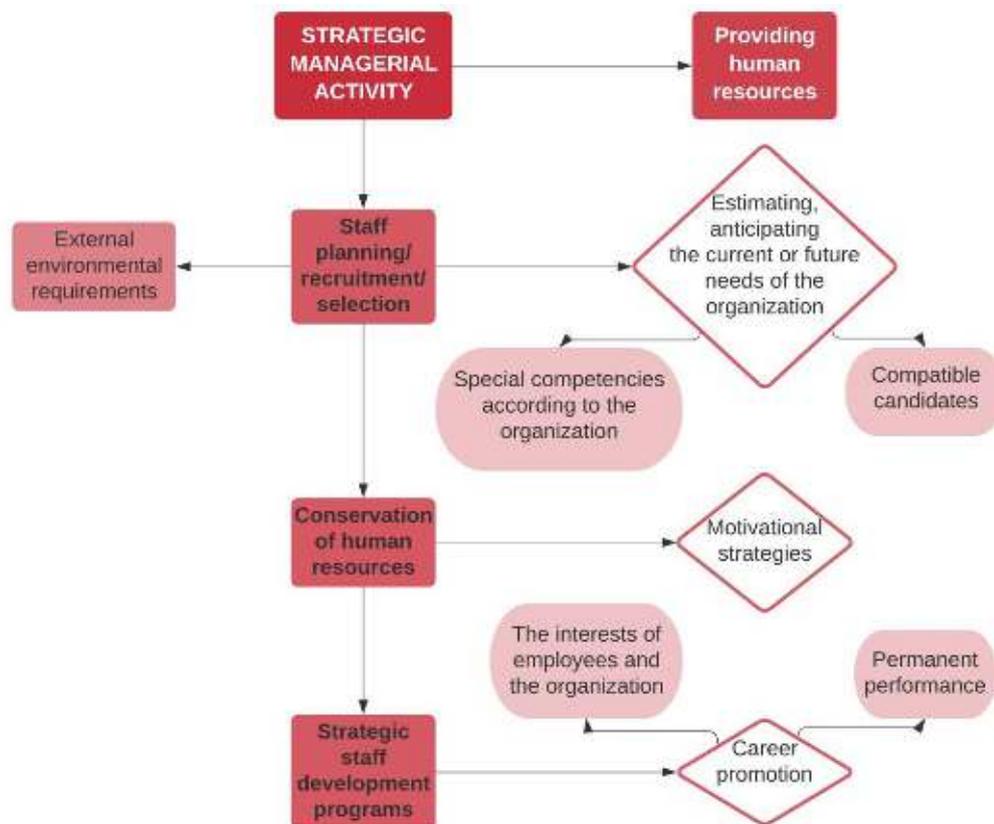
The two guidelines are mutually supportive: the organization facilitates the development of teachers' skills, which provide support for the development of the organization. But neither of the two dimensions of change is sufficient for itself, depending on each other, each being due to the existence of the other party. Today, they are the center of gravity of human resource management, an area interested in achieving success, productivity and performance or, in other words, how employees get to work and develop within an organization.

To understand the necessity and the usefulness of using strategies to promote change at the organizational level, the authors consider it appropriate to highlight the most important details that make up the two guidelines.

### A. School Improvement

There are at least three elements of major importance for this direction, presented in Figure no.2, namely: planning / recruitment / selection of staff, conservation of human resources and promotion of medium and long-term strategic programs for employee development.

Figure no. 2. Map of major elements used in strategies to promote change in strategic managerial activities



Source: Authors' concept based on details examined at school level

Staff planning / recruitment / selection. Any organization, including the school, owes a significant part of the success of its ability to attract and allocate to individual positions that demonstrate skills appropriate to their application. For this reason, human resource planning becomes a managerial, strategic activity, aiming to estimate, anticipate the current or future needs of the organization, but also the external requirements of the environment, especially considering the present and fully felt diseases by each organization. .

Recruitment is also in this context an activity that aims to ensure the necessary human resources. The aim is to attract those candidates who are compatible with the requirements of the posts in that organization. The selection aims to hire those individuals who demonstrate the ability to cope with the requirements of the job, as long as the planning, recruitment and selection of the teaching staff represents another centralized managerial activity, which requires a high level of expertise,

achieved through competitions focused on competence criteria. The new education law promotes changing this model, giving up the centralized mechanism and ensuring the freedom and autonomy of the school to recruit staff, a law that seems to be constantly subject to reorganizations and upgrades, depending on the trials to which all structures are subjected. organizational in fact.

Conserving human resources is now an issue that further highlights the importance of using motivational strategies. There is a need to shift the emphasis from extrinsic motivation, eminently financial, to intrinsic motivation in relation to the work done. If, unfortunately, the school organization still sins by promoting the teaching staff on the criteria of age and less on the criteria of competence, which generates not only the maintenance of a bureaucratic practice, but also demotivation of staff, especially young people, the new education law requires the promotion competence criteria, access of young performers to an eligible place in the school organization hierarchy.

Strategic staff development programs must facilitate career advancement, continuous improvement, meeting the interests of employees and the organization.

A noteworthy aspect is the relationship between staff recruitment and promotion of the existing one, observed by E. Păun. The advantage of recruiting new staff is given by the prevention of the installation of routines, the infusion of new ideas, but there is also the risk that they will be greeted with hostility, which would make it difficult for them to integrate. Regarding the promotion, it has the disadvantage of highlighting envies, interpersonal conflicts, which is why it is necessary to establish performance criteria, but it has the great advantage of motivating human resources. (Peacock, 1999, p.162).

At the level of the school organization, the recruitment of staff is not occasional, but imposed by internal needs and carried out in accordance with the principle of stability of rules. Promotion is much more present at this level and unfortunately has the same disadvantages that frequently occur in other organizations.

## **B. Staff Development**

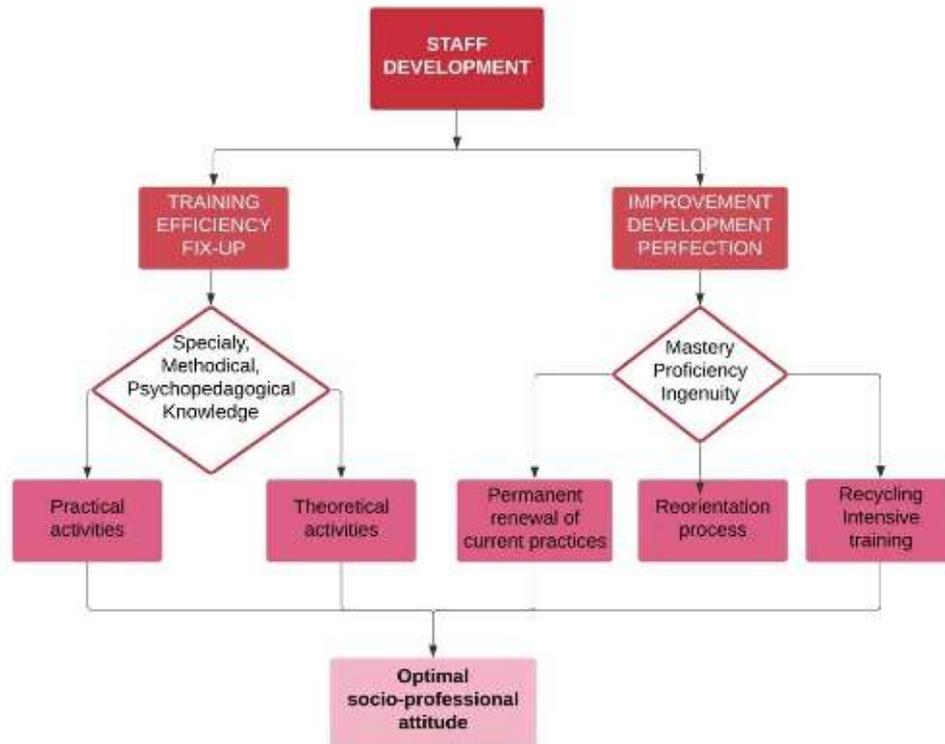
Borrowed from the field of sociology of organizations, the term "staff development" refers to the process by which the professional development of individuals in an organization takes place, in education being further promoted the concepts of continuing education, teaching career development, self-management, etc. The specialized literature at national level intensely promotes the terms of initial training and continuous training, corresponding to the preparation for the didactic career (university studies), respectively to the improvement during the exercise of the didactic profession.

Regarding the continuous training, an aspect on which the authors insist, it is defined by S. Cristea (Cristea, 1998, p.182) as a set of practical and theoretical activities that require the participation of teachers in order to deepen the specialized knowledge, methodical and psycho-pedagogical tools useful for the development of optimal socio-professional attitudes related to the requirements of a quality education. In the analysis of the continuous training process, the specialists start with two essential actions. The first action aims at the permanent renewal and improvement of current professional practice through a permanent updating of the knowledge acquired through initial training, and the second action takes into account the process of professional reorientation of teachers, which involves acquiring new skills, validated by obtaining diplomas.

Another fairly common concept is retraining, which, according to T. Husen, designates an intensive training activity, necessary in case of skills crisis, when knowledge is exceeded, or when there are very serious gaps in teacher training, such as moving training and the management of organizations in the online environment. (Husen, 1985, p.62)

The two concepts are not synonymous. While continuing education aims to revise upwards the knowledge acquired during the professionalization stage for the teaching career, retraining takes place in conditions where the old knowledge is no longer operable, when sudden changes take place in this plan. Knowledge of the elements that allow the distance between the two concepts is urgently needed to diagnose staff development needs and provide suggestions and models for highlighting the benefits of changing mindsets, practices and organizational structures. (Figure no.3)

Figure no. 3. Impulses for substantiating the process of professional development of human resources



Source: Authors' concept related to the requirements of educational change management

Continuing education supports, says E. Păun, two opposite, contrasting perspectives: the “defect” perspective and the “growth” perspective. The wording is suggestive enough to understand their meanings. Thus, the “defective” perspective supports the need for teacher training in order to improve skills, as a result of promoting initial training outdated by current developments in the field, which is why the teacher can be assessed as inefficient. The second standard perspective starts from the premise that the school does not stimulate enough the professional development of teachers, which is why it is necessary to consider external factors.

#### 4. Findings

The school as an organization and the teachers are the real agents of change, having the responsibility to be aware of the need for change, starting from the need to develop the organization and the individual. Therefore, both at organizational and individual level, the involvement of strategic resources based primarily on individual experience is needed. It must be understood that change is not the choice of the school manager or a particular teacher but of the institution that wants a favorable report to the requirements of society at the same time as its development as an organization. It is therefore a matter of teamwork but also of a permanent feedback. The results will be quantifiable taking into account the quality of trained young people able to meet the new requirements.

Not infrequently psychologists have resorted to metaphors in the evolution of the concept of organization (Morgan, 1998, p.343), starting from the premise that they most clearly reflect the multiple perspectives from which it can be analyzed.

Table no. 1 Table of metaphors for the analysis of the organization

No. crt.	Metaphor	Defining
1	Machine	the main means by which human needs can be met, with a decisive role being played by the rules governing human behavior at the organizational level
2	Organism	mechanism similar to the human body, able to adapt and characterized by a clear division of labor, interpersonal relationships
3	Brain	increased degree of rationality, oriented towards solving problems and having a self-critical and innovative mechanism
4	Cultural System	based on values, beliefs and attitudes related to the way in which individuals can work
5	Political System	invested with responsibility, authority and power, but also with control mechanisms and influences, with power games and divergent interests
6	Flow and Transformation	capable of continuous (re) generation and which highlights human and behavioral typologies that manifest at the level of the organization
7	Means of Domination	imposition of one's own will on individuals, where phenomena of intergroup segregation or solidarity within the group can be generated

Source: Adaptation of the authors after Gareth Morgan

What stands out in Morgan's approach is that one cannot really speak of a clear characterization of the concept of organization, but rather of highlighting some perspectives of its analysis, which emphasize the typology of organizations, each with its own characteristics, depending on the purpose for which they were created. For example, the organization cannot be equated as a cultural system with the machine or political organization. Their fundamental goals are totally different, therefore they will promote and require a certain organizational behavior and certain performances.

Although attractive as a way, the metaphor of the organization also attracts opponents who can blame the subjective and reductionist way of analyzing the organization, which emphasizes certain features of it to the detriment of others, just as important.

Table no. 2 Table of metaphors for the analysis of the organization

No. crt.	Period	Organization Definition
1	60s	Organizations have been defined through goals, formal structures and in an integrative manner.
2	70s – 80s	Organizations have been defined as socially regulated human activities with a purpose.
3	At the moment	Organizations are defined taking into account the type of performance that must be in accordance with the standards imposed by that organization.

Source: Processing and adaptation of the authors after M. Zlate

This staging has the advantage of analyzing with some detachment the evolution of the concept of organization, in all its complexity, as reflected in the research of psychosociologists, being also a useful tool in trying to find the equilibrium form of organizations in the current situation they are challenged not so much in adapting as in maintaining quality standards.

Starting from the evolution registered in terms of human knowledge and the level of the social field, E. Paun considers that the organization is represented by a system of structured activities, with clearly formulated purposes, being involved a large number of individuals who have very well defined roles. Among the characteristics of the organization: structure, control, organizational behavior, change is included, which indicates that change must be the key element for each

institution. In this context, it is both in question and in the final product of the school organization. Organizations can be defined in terms of performance and purpose, representing structures whose resources, human and non-human, are in a relationship of interdependence, aiming to achieve the maximum level of performance.

Analyzed in terms of the institution-organization relationship, the school meets both the characteristics of an institution and those of an organization. It is an institution because it is characterized by formal and informal norms and procedures, has legal status and a well-defined structure that includes: manager, faculty, students. It can be considered at the same time an organization because it has a clearly established mission and objectives (educating young people), has human resources, more precisely a system of interpersonal relationships that are established between individuals belonging to the same community, having communication system, means of education, curriculum and an organizational culture, involves human activity, as well as obtaining educational performance.

Characterized through metaphors, the school best fits the metaphor of the organization as a cultural system, which operates with human values, principles, attitudes and beliefs.

What needs to be emphasized is that, in general, organizations have the same characteristics, the differentiating element being given only by the nature of the services that that organization provides to society. Therefore, the school meets all the attributes of a true organization. What can distinguish it from other organizations is only its ability to change.

## 5. Conclusions

The school's efforts for the development of the teaching staff become insufficient if they are not corroborated with the personal efforts in this direction. In order to increase teachers, it is necessary to shift the focus from career management to self-management, which involves assuming professional development at the individual level.

In the current context, of the accentuation of the measures of reform in education, of transfer in the online environment of education, the promotion of efficient policies for professional development of teachers is especially necessary, especially since they are the main engine of the Romanian school reform.

There are also voices claiming that sometimes policy makers seem to ignore the importance of this, preferring to promote the reform of "external variables" such as curriculum and assessment - a commendable fact, but minimizing the risks that exist if teachers are not sufficient trained or motivated to apply process-level innovations. The evaluation of the reform as real is not made according to the changes that appear at the basic level of education, the didactic process. For this reason alone, reviewing the teacher training model should be a priority for the school. The particularities of the two levels of human resources management and, in particular, the existing deficiencies at these levels, require the adoption and application of strategies to promote change at the school level. School organization evaluation, staff integration, organizational and staff development are just some of the issues that require strategic reviews.

In order to streamline the educational activity, it is necessary to highlight the institutional priorities, thus ensuring the choice of a good strategic option and adaptation.

In the absence of support from individuals, anticipation and planning of educational change, reporting to the requirements of society remains only at the stage of preparation for change. The driving force behind human behavior is motivation. Change generates tension, an inner struggle between the desire to continue carrying out activities that generate a certain comfort and the fear of the new. The imbalance can be overcome by being aware of the need for change and motivating those involved to support this process. Change is more easily realized in practice if it is sustained intrinsically, acquiring the valences of the internal need that the individual wants to satisfy. If the change is a consequence of external pressure, personal involvement is reduced, and the risk of resistance may arise.

The development of motivation is possible insofar as the objectives of the school coincide with the objectives of the people involved who value the change they consider a need. A relationship of mutual conditioning is established between motivation and change because the implementation of change is dependent on the degree of motivation of people and change facilitates the opportunity to

test new skills and knowledge. Motivation has a decisive role to play in ensuring the effectiveness of change, being the primary energy source.

The strategic goal of each organization and the concern of the manager must be to ensure the efficient nature of change, its effects being reflected in the quality of human resources, the whole process and the level of development of the institution. As a result of the growing demand for innovation, there are important changes in the level of education policy, the effectiveness of change having chances as long as there are rules governing the process of change.

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