

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PRACTICE. OPTIONAL ABILITY OR NECESSITY

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Abstract

Our paper aims to be an analysis of the activity of the school psychologist in Romania at the moment - based on the existing legal framework - in order to highlight the major role that the possession of advanced research skills has on the quality of the psychological services offered by these professionals and of the major impact of continuous professional training on the quality of the professional act.

Keywords: school psychologist; advanced research skills; quality of the psychological services; professional training; educational psychology

The analysis of the activity of the school psychologist in Romania shows us that most of their tasks fall under the field of educational psychology, school and vocational counseling

The activity of the licensed psychologist is regulated by Law 213/2004, the legal framework according to which the psychologist's activity is carried out in four major areas of specialization - educational psychology, school and vocational counseling. As one of them, educational psychology is structured on three levels of competence, according to the Norms regarding the professional competences of licensed psychologists, from 11.01.2019 (extracted from The Official Gazette of Romania/Monitorul Oficial al Romaniei, Part I no. 173, from 05 March 2019).

A careful analysis of these professional skills indicates that, within the first level of competence, one can find an approach focused on intervention at an individual level – psychoeducational, vocational and psychological counseling in order to make the learning more efficient or to optimize it, psychoeducational and psychological counseling in order to promote healthy attitudes and behaviors, psychoeducational and psychological counseling for personal development, overcoming situations of crisis, conflict and risk - activities that, starting from 2023, can be -

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depending on the problem faced by the child – covered within the national program „Out of care for children” - the first national program for reimbursement of psychological services directly to private practice offices. These offices are obviously monitored by the state and the psychologist is supposed to be able to prove the effectiveness of the interventions undertaken, as we are discussing the spending of public money. This aspect involves the existence of several research skills, requiring the collection of data, analyzing it - including statistical analysis - and writing relevant reports, because along with the transition to the next level of competence – that of a specialist psychologist – the approach should focus on interventions at a group level, where the specialist psychologist will have to be able to analyze and highlight the existence of inter-individual differences, on the basis of which he will design his interventions in order to achieve the formulated objectives - the identification of the psychological factors involved in the learning contexts, on a student class level – having to make decisions with an impact on a much larger number of people, both children and indirectly, their families; a reason that imposes the need for a scientific argumentation based on certain data - which necessarily requires a certain level of understanding of the statistical analyzes presented in the researches that have formed the basis of their work and the possibility to prove the effectiveness of the interventions carried out. And how could you do this more clearly than through statistical analyzes; aiming to prove that the changes that occurred after the completion of the intervention go towards the direction you proposed?

At the same level of competence – specialist psychologist – the psychologist is also permitted to take part in the development and validation of psychological assessment tools in the field of educational psychology, school and vocational counseling. Any participation in a research project presupposes first of all the understanding of the studied phenomena and the ability to manage the components of the respective process - detailed knowledge of the steps that are to be followed in that process and of the methods and means by which the process will be carried out, to the exact understanding of the results provided by the statistical analysis of the research data, which, at this level, imposes the need for some consistent knowledge, both in terms of analyzing and statistical processing of the data, in order to be able to accurately understand the steps in which you participate and could explain, and specialty related knowledge.

At the same level, as a specialist, the psychologist offers professional consultancy to teaching staff, parents, administrative staff, community leaders based on the conclusions he draws from the analyzes carried out at the individual level, from the activity carried out with children or at the level of the collectives he works with by highlighting the essential aspects identified. The question that arises is: who tells us what are the key problematic aspects noticed and which should be subject to attention at the

school management level or at the community level? A careful analysis of the problematic aspects identified in the approach to individual cases, justified and supported by the results of the statistical analyzes undertaken.

Going through the hierarchy of professional development, we reach the level of principal psychologist where, in addition to the activities related to the previous levels, there are also activities aimed at the development of working methods and tools or intervention in the field of educational psychology, school and vocational counseling, the development and validation of educational psychological assistance methods, as well as the development and implementation of educational/individual and group psychological counseling projects, activities that require advanced knowledge related to the construction of psychological tests at this level, the psychologist being able to carry out the entire chain of activities that such an approach subsumes, as well as the statistical analyzes that will guide his decisions in the various moments of the respective activity. In addition to specialized knowledge, knowledge of statistical analysis plays an essential role in this endeavor.

Other competencies that can be added to the previous mentioned ones : offering consultancy to national institutions with an educational profile and to those specialized in career guidance; a skill that require the existence of previous studies, in order to sustain the need for national programs aimed to support children and young people in various developmental stages and which, inevitably, must be based on pilot studies, that cover the mentioned aspects and whose results should support the impact of the proposed measures on the target population.

Conclusion

Starting from the debate regarding the professional competencies of the licensed psychologist in the field of educational psychology, school and vocational counseling, we found that

1. The continuous dynamics in the development of specific interventions requires a sustained and continuous documentation for the practicing psychologist, in order to maintain the activity at the highest possible standards;
2. Mastering an optimal level of knowledge in the field of scientific research, in order to analyze and understand the phenomena in this specialty, that are the subject of recent research is an absolute necessity;
3. Continuous personal development through training activities - training programs, courses, trainings - is a priority for a competitive professional act.

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