



# Dimensions of the Dropout Prevention and Early Leavers from Education and Training Strategy in Romanian Pre-University Education



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**Abstract:** The purpose of this article is to explore the multifaceted approach required to address the alarming dropout rates and early leavers from education and training in Romanian pre-university education. We emphasize the necessity of collaborative efforts among families, educational institutions, and policymakers to implement effective strategies. As the method used, the bibliographic research was carried out, developed in parallel with the research on the realities in the field in order to provide data for their processing, accumulating data by interviewing stakeholders, analysis and interpretation. By surveying 557 internal stakeholders, primarily teachers, the research identifies critical elements in successful dropout prevention strategies, such as consistent evaluation, clear organizational environments, and strategic communication. The findings reveal significant gaps, particularly in the analysis of external factors and the recruitment and training of stakeholders, suggesting areas for improvement. Implications: Enhancing dropout prevention efforts requires a holistic approach, incorporating thorough environmental analyses, a shared mission and vision among stakeholders, and improved communication and training initiatives. We conclude that a comprehensive and adaptable strategy, inclusive of all educational stakeholders, is crucial for reducing dropout rates and fostering a supportive educational environment.

**Keywords:** Dropout prevention; Early leavers from education and training; School management; Educational strategies; Stakeholder engagement

## 1. Introduction

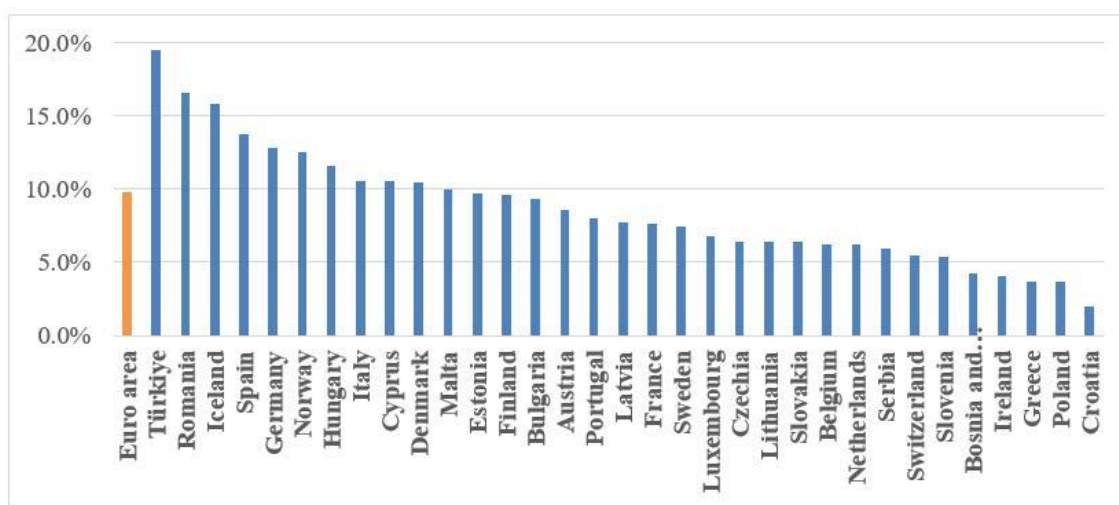
This article is based on the premise that the issue of school dropout and early school leaving is a topical one, even if there are numerous theoretical or practical developments addressed by specialists in various fields over time, which still offer, even today, the ability and usefulness of new analytical and investigative openings that allow the realization of the European Union's objective on the problem of early school leaving, which is obvious and categorical: a school dropout rate in the EU below 10% by 2020. In 2023, we are significantly off this percentage and the target Romania has been committed to since 2011 for 2020 (Figure 1).

However, early school leaving rates in Romania have shown an overall downward trend, from 18.2% in 2019 to 16.5% in 2023, as can be seen in Table 1.

This improvement is attributed to the adaptive educational and organizational measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuous efforts to integrate technology in education, as well as to the implementation of numerous projects/initiatives/strategies at the level of educational units by accessing funding lines offered by national and international grants on the topic of dropout and early school leaving.

According to the Ministry of Education's State of Education Report (Ministerul Educației, 2023), in the school year 2021/2022 the dropout rate in primary and secondary education has remained constant compared to the previous school year, with 1.2% of primary and secondary school pupils dropping out of school. The highest

dropout rates in primary and secondary education were recorded in rural areas (1.7% overall, 1.8% primary, 1.6% secondary), respectively for pupils in preparatory, first and fifth grades (Table 2).



**Figure 1.** Early school leaving rates in the European Union (population aged 18-24), %  
 Note: This table was prepared by the authors, following the (Eurostat, 2023), %.

**Table 1.** Early school leaving rate at national level in Romania (2019-2023)

Year	Drop-out Rate (%)	Description
2019	18.2	Stable
2020	19.0	Increase due to COVID-19
2021	17.5	Decrease after educational adjustments
2022	16.8	Continuation of downward trend
2023	16.5	Stabilization and effects of measures

Note: This table was prepared by the authors, following the literature review.

**Table 2.** Dropout rates in primary and secondary education

Population	School Year 2019/2020	School Year 2020/2021	School Year 2021/2022
Total	1.3	1.2	1.2
Urban	0.8	0.8	0.7
Rural	1.8	1.7	1.7
Female	1.2	1.1	1.1
Male	1.3	1.2	1.2

Note: This table was prepared by the authors, following the literature review.

The report shows that at the primary level the dropout rate is constant (1.3%) compared to the previous year, the rural environment is disadvantaged (0.9 points) and in relation to gender, it is found that boys in primary school drop out in higher percentage (1.4%) than girls (1.2%).

At secondary level, the dropout rate has remained constant compared to the previous school year (1 percentage points) and for the third consecutive year the dropout rate at secondary level is lower than the dropout rate at primary level.

By area of residence, the difference is 1 p.p., to the disadvantage of rural areas (0.6% drop-out rate at secondary level in urban areas compared to 1.6% drop-out rate at secondary level in rural areas), and the difference in the value of the indicator by gender is 0.2 points to the disadvantage of boys.

The analysis of dropout rates by grade shows the following:

- The highest dropout rates are recorded in the classes at the beginning of the schooling cycles: preparatory and first grade, respectively fifth grade, with the value of the indicator in the preparatory grade increasing by 0.1 points compared to the previous school year.

- By area of residence, the situation is unfavorable for rural areas, with the largest differences being recorded in the preparatory, first and eighth grades.

Overall, the high drop-out rates at the beginning of the school cycle have several causes:

- Adjustment difficulties that pupils face in making the transition from one level of education to another;
- Different teaching styles;

- More complex curricular demands;
- Significant differences in the number of school program hours/week.

There is a general downward trend in the drop-out rate from the early to the later school years, due to the progressive adaptation of pupils to the demands of schooling.

Below is the cohort analysis: dropout rate and school attrition rate.

This indicator tracks pupils' school life from the start of primary education to the end of secondary education.

By analyzing twelve cohorts of pupils, it can be observed that both dropout per cohort and wastage per cohort at primary and secondary level are high. In the last 3 years both indicators have been decreasing, reaching 5.4% in the school year 2021-2022 (dropout per cohort) and 8.5% for the same school year (school losses).

Depending on the place of residence, the cohort analysis of school dropout and school wastage shows very large differences between rural and urban areas, placing rural schools in a disadvantaged situation, as follows:

- At the 2021/2022 level, the dropout rate for urban pupils from the 2013-2021 cohort falls below 0, while the value of the same indicator for rural pupils increases. Presumably, the value of the indicator below 0 is driven by the migration of pupils between the two environments of residence. Note that for urban environment, the value of the indicator is decreasing;
- For rural areas, almost one fifth (19.5%) of a school cohort is lost during primary and secondary education.

By gender, during the analyzed period, there is a trend of equalization in the values of school dropout per cohort and school loss from 1st grade/preparatory to 8th grade in the 2021-2022 school year, with the value of school dropout per cohort being equal between girls and boys.

In the school year 2021/2022, the dropout rates for secondary and vocational education (Table 3 and Table 4) showed a slight increase for both secondary and vocational education, with most of the high school dropouts coming from the technological stream and fewer from the theoretical and vocational streams. By gender, the share of male school dropouts is higher in secondary education and lower in vocational education compared to the share of female school dropouts.

**Table 3.** Dropout rates in secondary education

<b>Population</b>	<b>School Year 2019/2020</b>	<b>School Year 2020/2021</b>	<b>School Year 2021/2022</b>
Total	1.9	1.6	2.0
Female	1.6	1.0	1.7
Male	2.2	2.2	2.4

Note: This table was prepared by the authors, following the literature review.

**Table 4.** Dropout rates in vocational education

<b>Population</b>	<b>School Year 2019/2020</b>	<b>School Year 2020/2021</b>	<b>School Year 2021/2022</b>
Total	2.7	2.3	2.8
Female	3.1	2.6	3.1
Male	2.5	2.1	2.7

Note: This table was prepared by the authors, following the literature review.

**Table 5.** Dropout rates in primary and secondary education

<b>Population</b>	<b>School Year 2019/2020</b>	<b>School Year 2020/2021</b>	<b>School Year 2021/2022</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>Theoretical Branch</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.9</b>
- Real	0.8	0.7	1.0
- Humanities	0.6	0.5	0.6
- Special	2.1	12.3	6.4
<b>Technological Branch</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>3.9</b>
- Technical	4.6	3.9	5.0
- Natural Resources and Environmental Protection	3.9	3.0	4.0
- Services	2.5	2.3	2.6
- Special	2.6	5.3	4.4
<b>Vocational Branch</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.9</b>

Note: This table was prepared by the authors, following the literature review.

In the school year 2021/2022, the dropout rates for secondary and vocational education (Table 3 and Table 4) showed a slight increase for both secondary and vocational education, with most of the high school dropouts coming from the technological stream and fewer from the theoretical and vocational streams. By gender, the share of male school dropouts is higher in secondary education and lower in vocational education compared to the share of female school dropouts.

The analysis of the dropout situation between 2014-2020 at the secondary education level (Table 5) reveals reductions in the value of the indicator in all streams. For 2014-2020, the following aspects are highlighted:

- In the theoretical stream - the dropout rate has steadily decreased with the re-establishment of vocational education, reaching the lowest value in the analyzed period (0.6%). the value of the indicator being slightly higher in the real stream than in the humanities stream. Particularly noteworthy is the particularly high value of special education in the 2020/2021 school year - 12.3%.

- In the technological stream - the dropout rate remains high (3.1% in 2020/2021). Within this stream there are differences between profiles: the highest dropout rates are in the technical stream and in the natural resources and environmental protection stream, and the lowest in the services stream. As in the theoretical stream, special education in the technological stream also shows high dropout rates (4.4%).

- In the vocational stream - dropout rates were low (below 1.6%) throughout the period analyzed, reaching 0.4% in 2020/2021.

- Over the whole school year 2021/2022, the values of the indicator have increased compared to the previous year, both overall (reaching 2%) and by streams (theoretical and vocational - 0.9%, and technological - 3.9%).

The dropout rate in vocational education is highlighted in Table 5. With the reorganization of vocational education in 2014/2015, the dropout rate decreased significantly to the value of 2.3% at the end of 2020/2021 and in the reference year of the report, its value increased to 2.8%. There is a higher share of dropouts for girls compared to boys in the year 2021/2022, the values are 3.1% for girls and 2.7% for boys, respectively.

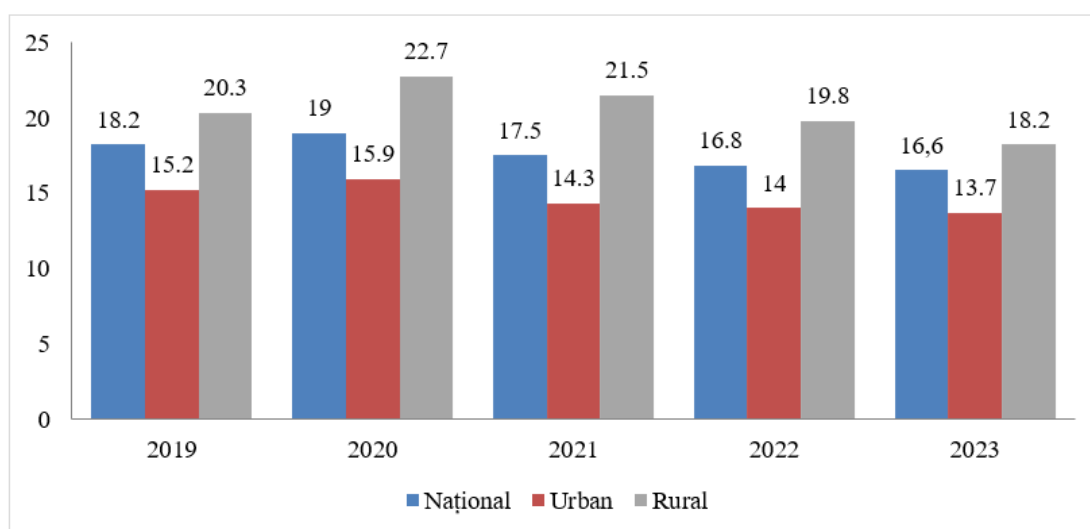
Table 6 highlights the dropout rate in post-secondary education. At the end of the 2021/2022 school year, the dropout rate in post-secondary education increased compared to the previous school year, but the gender gap narrowed. At the end of the 2021/2022 school year, there was an increase in the value of the indicator compared to the previous year to 8.7%, but the gender gap remains, with the female population recording lower dropout rates than the male population.

**Table 6.** Dropout rates in post-secondary education

Population	School Year 2019/2020	School Year 2020/2021	School Year 2021/2022
Total	7.5	7.1	8.7
Female	7.1	6.9	8.6
Male	8.5	7.5	8.8

Note: This table was prepared by the authors, following the literature review.

In Figure 2, we trace the gradual decrease of the early school leaving rate in Romania over five years, highlighting the influence of educational measures and the COVID-19 pandemic in rural and urban educational units.



**Figure 2.** Early school leaving rates in Romania (2019-2023)

Note: This figure was prepared by the authors, following the literature review.

In the European Union, the average early school-leaving rate fell from 10.6% in 2019 to 9.3% in 2023, according to Eurostat data. This reflects a concerted effort across the EU bloc to achieve the Europe 2020 targets for education (Eurostat, 2023).

**Table 7.** Early school leaving rate at national level in Romania (2019-2023)

Country	Drop-out Rate (%)	Description
Romania	16.5	Stabilization after educational measures
Germany	11.3	Low, thanks to effective education policies
France	9.5	One of the lowest rates in the EU
Italy	17.8	High rate, economic and social challenges
Spain	19.2	High rate, large variations between regions
Poland	13.6	Improvement through inclusion programs

Note: This table was prepared by the authors, following the literature review.

Dropout and early school leaving is a complex problem that affects different European countries in different ways, depending on the specific educational policies and socio-economic context (Table 7).

In 2019, around 13% of young people aged 15-29 in OECD countries were not in employment, education or training (OECD, 2023).

The contemporary world, shaken by extreme natural phenomena such as hurricanes and earthquakes, and increasingly by terrorist attacks, wars and pandemics that have claimed thousands of lives and destroyed homes and entire settlements, seems to be heading towards a future that no one can foresee in the long term.

Without the necessary education, without the maximum attention, it can lead to some very extreme situations, from substance abuse, to smoking and dropping out of school. The family is often no longer sufficient to educate a child, and is overwhelmed by the situation for various reasons. Society, decision-makers, politicians, schools and educational institutions must also intervene if we want to save the younger generation. This gives rise to the idea of stakeholders, who will play a decisive role in ‘healing’ education and society in the coming decades.

So, what needs to change in contemporary society, if we really want to “change the world”, is not only curricula and textbooks, but also educational policies, strategies to prevent dropout, but also humanity itself; to the same extent, or even more so, we must also change the attitude of the teaching staff, empathy, openness to accepting the contemporary child, to guiding them, to helping them learn what they will need in the future, because we are looking at the souls of children who are not to blame for the fact that we have remained fixed on old models, on unchanging patterns.

In other words, you must remain ‘a child’ yourself to be able to understand and adapt on the fly to any situation, to any child, who is a world in itself. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the greatest pedagogues of the 18th century, said: “The child becomes, according to the education received, punishment or reward” (Rousseau, 1973). It follows from this that those children who become Olympians in the biggest competitions in the world’s famous capitals, from computer science, mathematics and chess, to thematic or contemporary dance competitions, or swimming competitions, work very hard additionally, sometimes without financial support from the authorities, the burden being on the shoulders of parents who make huge sacrifices so that they can fulfill their dreams. All these news, events, distract our attention from the true and cruel reality of contemporary pre-university education, which has become a kind of “Cinderella” of society.

Contemporary society is thus facing unprecedented challenges - social, economic and environmental - driven by accelerating globalization and a faster pace of technological developments. In this context, the contemporary educational landscape is constantly changing (Szempruch & Potyrala, 2022), influenced by technological advances, developments in teaching methodologies and new demands and expectations of society at large (Kilag, 2023).

Dropout and early school leaving are complex phenomena, which cannot be causally attributed exclusively to schools, nor can they be solved by school efforts alone. This is precisely why they are currently at the top of the education policy agenda in Romania, the European Union and the entire world. All this in a context where research has been carried out since the 1960s, when dropping out of high school was considered a serious social problem both for the individual and for society in general (Dorn, 1996).

In this context school dropout and early school leaving require increased attention, because the impediments they create have a negative correspondence in a person’s life, which can often be followed by significant problems. Of these, the most relevant are: increased public and social spending (Catterall, 2011), decreased social cohesion and participation (Balanzano et al., 2019), higher unemployment rates (Mihalache, 2017), increased likelihood of crime, suicide, a risk relevant to the development of society as a whole (Laghari et al., 2024), with less than satisfactory results on the education and social integration of young people, but also with particular implications for their subsequent insertion into the labor market (Eissel et al., 2013), influencing them, in fact, throughout their lives.

Bearing in mind that civil, economic, political and social rights cannot be exercised by individuals if they do not have a minimum level of education, there is growing concern at national and European level to create educational policies aimed at equalizing educational achievement and providing clear support for vulnerable groups, with clear results.

At the global level, school drop-out has been and continues to be an important concern of specialized research

in the field of education as a whole, which is explained by the very high percentage of young people who do not complete their studies.

School drop-out is generally understood as a child/young person who does not attend school, and gives up or is forced for one or more reasons to miss out on the right to education.

Education is the cornerstone in the development of a nation as a whole and is the most effective channel for bringing prosperity to a society (Ahmed & Qazi, 2011).

Thus, school dropout is one of the fundamental factors contributing to unemployment, poverty and social exclusion and affects not only the community where the school dropouts come from, but also society as a whole.

In the local educational system, the school is a social space in which several intervention programs are operating and activated, focusing on the needs of young people from vulnerable groups.

Nairz-Wirth & Gitschthaler (2020) analyzes and demonstrates that dropping out of school is a much more complex phenomenon than previously thought, pointing out that each case has a distinct history, the roots of which can often be traced back to the kindergarten.

Since it is much more difficult and costly to reintegrate children once they have left school (Wils et al., 2019), it is better to ensure a fair path for all, in which an awareness of personal dignity, self-respect, the feeling of being taken into consideration, of being seen and appreciated for all that they are as human beings, is imprinted.

A worrying phenomenon facing the contemporary world, not only in our country, but also throughout the world, is the drop-out rate from very early schooling (kindergarten) through to secondary and high school, followed by early school leaving.

There is growing talk of the emergence of a generation of ‘indigo children’ (Weiss, 2016) - a term that has been used by American psychologists and sociologists in the last decades, who no longer accept traditional schooling, who are highly intelligent, with an IQ that reaches the genius limit. As such, how can one convince such a child to learn something in a field that he perceives to be irrelevant? Moreover, being an inclusive school, these children can be labeled in various ways from maladjusted to autistic, and the future will show us that we have not found ways to speak at their level for various reasons. It’s all about communication or the “art of small steps” (Saint-Exupéry, 1948), and for the contemporary teacher this is an extraordinary challenge. Communicating with children, with their parents who “stuff” them with books in order to become somebody, or who are indifferent, or worse still, who intervene in the education and obtain grades that are not covered (a situation also pointed out by American sociologists who point out that in today’s American society “competence is dead” (Nichols, 2017), because it is possible with less books, if you have a job, even if you don’t know how to write Romanian, because there are also people with diplomas who don’t practice what they have learned and work in other fields, for example, as sales clerks in shopping malls (Miron & Mistrean, 2023).

And hence the dilemma of people working in education, who have been in education for as long as anyone can remember and will remain the same for as long as time goes by. Perhaps, if we first convince ourselves that it is worth it and that we need to adapt on the fly to the generations that are coming up and are ‘different’, before or while changing the system, the curriculum and the textbooks, we could help create a better world with children left to think freely and beautifully, creatively, physically and mentally healthy, where the sun shines for everyone alike, on every street and in every soul.

As an institution of formal education, schools have an obligation to produce graduates with academic skills, diverse competences, the right mindset and a strong personality so that they can be competitive after graduation (Al-Momani et al., 2012).

In this sense, strategies to prevent early school leaving are the set of methods, procedures, means and forms of organization within a dynamic, rigorous and unitary framework, which are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Although the term strategy is frequently used, there is no universally accepted definition. In different organizational contexts and for different stakeholders, strategy can be interpreted, conceived and implemented in different ways.

The concept of strategy provides the necessary balance between a compelling and systemic vision, decisions, working techniques, ways of working, and actions aimed at making the organizational structures of the institution functional, systematic and modern. This is done with a view to achieving the objectives in an effective and efficient manner.

Strategy, at its core, is not just a plan or a set of instructions, but a comprehensive framework that involves a deep understanding of the organization’s internal and external environment. Through strategies, institutions can adjust their operations to respond appropriately to changing contexts and maximize available resources. Thus, a well-developed and implemented strategy not only improves organizational performance but also contributes to the long-term sustainability of the institution. From this perspective, three key activities in strategic implementation are identified (Pearce et al., 2000):

- (1) Developing short-term goals that are implementable;
- (2) Developing functional tactics;
- (3) Developing policies that empower action.

An important role in optimizing school management strategies to respond directly to the needs of pupils at risk

of dropping out of school is the development of activities that provide supportive and helpful relationships for vulnerable learners, offering them a stimulating, rewarding, safe and supportive educational environment.

At the same time, it is important to quickly and correctly identify vulnerable areas that need to be reviewed, new areas with potential to be exploited or challenges that can lead to dropout prevention and institutional development.

School dropout management strategies are not universal and cannot be simplistically assessed as effective or ineffective without taking into account the specificities of each educational institution. The essential components of an effective strategy include strategic vision, organizational mission, fundamental goals, strategic options, available resources, timeframes and competitive advantage.

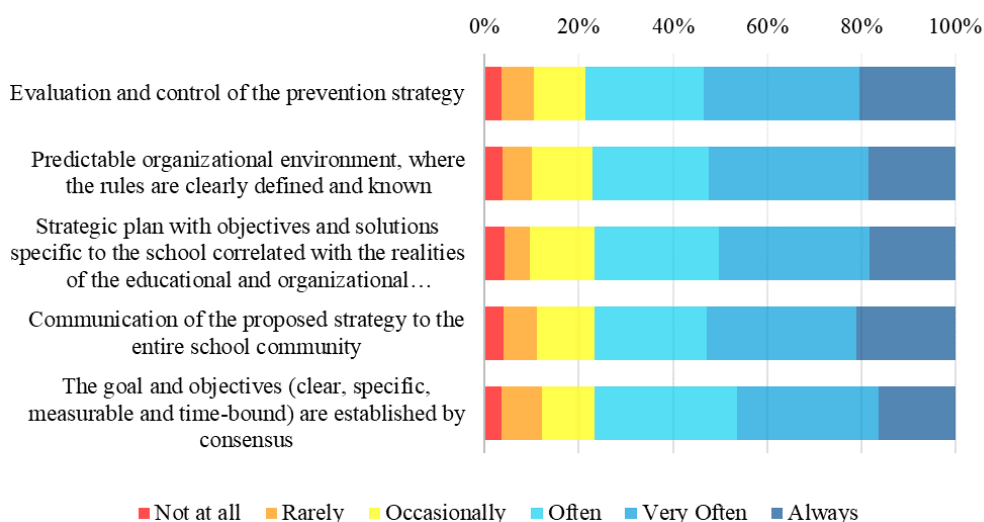
The analysis of public strategies to prevent, reduce and combat school dropout in general, as well as those of the educational institutions under study, consider the S.W.O.T. analysis, the identification of the types of causes of school dropout, the types of internal and external stakeholders that can support the creation, implementation and evaluation of the strategy on school dropout prevention, mission, vision, proposed areas of intervention, strategic objectives, proposed activities, timeframe, performance indicators.

## 2. Methodology

The purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which a series of strategy specific elements aimed at the prevention of school dropout are found at the level of respondents' educational unit. The study sample (N=557) is comprised of internal stakeholders at schools in Romania, mostly teachers and some in managerial functions. There was an initial pre-test of 149 stakeholder respondents at the pre-test stage who felt that educational conditions could be created to maximize students' motivation to stay in school. The answers were obtained via an online survey, which comprises of a broader study on the management of school dropout, and in this research paper we shall focus on the most and least used strategic elements of school dropout management.

## 3. Results

The results are presented in the visual representation of the assessment of various elements related to a school's strategy aimed at preventing school dropout, as perceived by respondents within an educational unit. The responses are categorized into six levels, ranging from "Not at all" to "Always", and add up to 100%.



**Figure 3.** Top 5 most common strategy specific elements aimed at the prevention of school dropout found in schools

Note: This figure was prepared by the authors.

The most frequently found element throughout all school was "Evaluation and control of the prevention strategy", as can be noted from Figure 3. Approximately 33% of respondents indicated that the evaluation and control of the prevention strategy occurs "Very Often", suggesting a relatively strong focus on monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of the prevention efforts. However, about 20.5% of respondents stated that this element is "Always" present, implying that there is still room for improvement in terms of consistently evaluating and controlling the strategy.

"Predictable organizational environment" was the second most frequently found management element. The

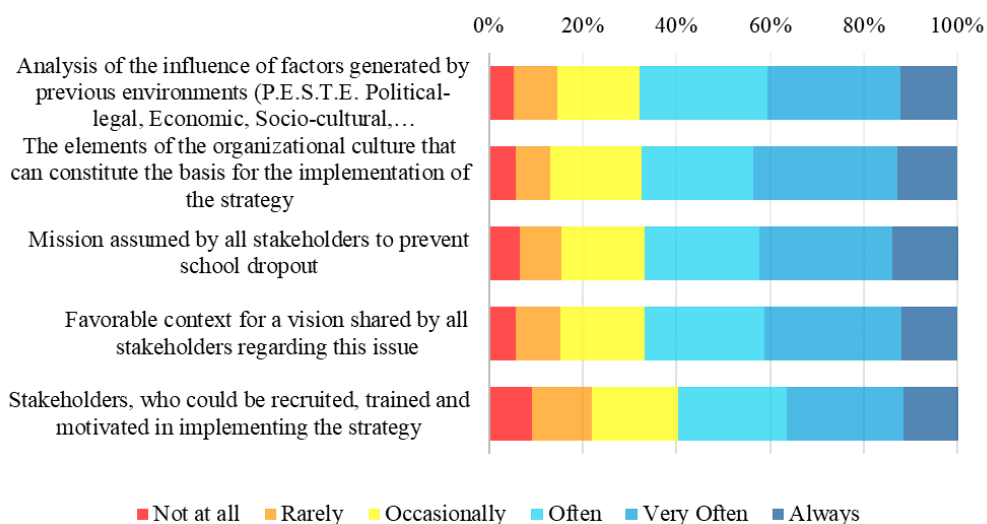
majority of respondents (33.8%) noted that a predictable organizational environment with clearly defined and known rules is “Often” present, while 18.5% stated that it is “Always” present. These results suggest that there is a significant emphasis on establishing clear rules, but more work is needed to ensure consistency in this aspect.

The data shows that 32% of respondents believe that there is often alignment between the school’s strategic plan, objectives, and solutions with the realities of the educational and organizational environment. However, only 18.3% believe that this alignment is “Always” present. This indicates a potential need for greater correlation between the school’s strategy and the actual conditions.

“Communication of strategy” is similarly found between the most cited elements in the management and prevention of school dropout. Approximately 31.8% of respondents indicated that the proposed prevention strategy is “Often” communicated to the entire school community, with 21% stating that it is “Always” communicated. While these numbers are relatively positive, it is essential to maintain consistent communication efforts to ensure that the entire community is well-informed about the strategy.

Last, but not least in our top elements we find “Establishment of clear goals and objectives”, with a significant portion (30.3%) of respondents stated that clear, specific, measurable, and time-bound goals and objectives are “Often” established by consensus. However, only 16.3% believe that this occurs “Always.” This suggests the need for greater consensus-building and precision in goal-setting.

We continue our analysis by discussing the elements which were reported to be the least present in respondents’ schools, as depicted in Figure 4, focusing on the “Not at all” and “Rarely” proportions of responses, which represent areas where there is room for improvement.



**Figure 4.** Top 5 least common strategy specific elements aimed at the prevention of school dropout found in Romanian schools

Note: This figure was prepared by the authors.

A concerning finding is that a significant proportion of respondents (5.20% “Not at all” and 9.50% “Rarely”) reported that there is little to no analysis of factors generated by previous environments, such as political-legal, economic, socio-cultural, technological, and ecological influences. This indicates that the educational unit may not be adequately considering external factors that could impact dropout prevention strategies. There is a clear need to enhance the understanding and assessment of these factors.

The “Organizational culture elements for strategy implementation”, similarly obtains a noteworthy percentage of respondents (5.60% “Not at all” and 7.50% “Rarely”) which indicated that the elements of the organizational culture that could serve as the basis for strategy implementation are not sufficiently present. This suggests that the cultural foundation for executing the dropout prevention strategy may be lacking, which could hinder effective implementation.

A substantial portion of respondents (6.50% “Not at all” and 9.00% “Rarely”) reported that there is no clear mission assumed by all stakeholders to prevent school dropout. This is concerning, because the absence of a shared mission can make it challenging to unite all parties involved in a concerted effort to address this issue effectively.

Similarly, a notable percentage (5.70% “Not at all” and 9.50% “Rarely”) mentioned that there is no favorable context for a shared vision among stakeholders regarding school dropout prevention. A shared vision is crucial for aligning efforts and achieving common goals, and its absence may impede progress.

The least found element of school dropout management pertains to the recruitment, training, and motivation of stakeholders. The data shows that a relatively high percentage of respondents (9.20% “Not at all” and 12.70%



“Rarely”) believe that stakeholders who could be recruited, trained, and motivated for strategy implementation are not adequately addressed. This suggests that there may be challenges in identifying, preparing, and motivating individuals to contribute to the prevention strategy.

This article also presents the extent to which the 149 stakeholder respondents in the pre-testing phase considered that educational conditions can be created to maximize students’ motivation to stay in school.

The implementation of school and out-of-school educational programs and projects in which other stakeholders can participate is an important initiative in the organization, is important in the opinion of 84.6% of the respondents.

The concerns of internal stakeholders to identify behaviors that precede that the pupil is at high risk of dropping out are appreciated as important by the respondents, 85.2% of the total respondents appreciate this form of concern as useful, existing in the home schools.

Involving as many stakeholders as possible in ensuring equal access to all curricular and extra-curricular activities can underpin positive behavioral change towards school dropout, with 85.2% of all respondents believing that this involvement would be beneficial for both the students at risk of dropping out and the organization.

Using effective communication and capitalizing on problem-solving skills as success factors in influencing dropout prevention is not important for 4% of all respondents, contrary to the 89.2% who believe in the usefulness of the two elements highlighted in the question.

One of the measures that could reduce school dropout could be based on supporting pupils at risk by providing immediate, individualized and differentiated pedagogical support, 91.9% of all respondents consider it important.

An essential factor in the fight to reduce school drop-out is to facilitate effective access to the necessary resources to be able to organize diverse, attractive activities for students. An adequate material base is considered as an element for attracting and retaining pupils in the educational environment, an aspect emphasized by 87.2% of respondents.

87.9% of all respondents believe that the development of organizational capacity to identify the risk of dropout among students, in complementarity with the implementation of prevention and intervention activities, are important milestones.

Within school organizations, attention is given to developing the working skills of teachers with students with disabilities/specific educational needs in order for them to maintain a relevant and up-to-date level of knowledge due to the particularities of these students. Recognizing the uniqueness of each dropout pupil is very important for the implementation of relevant measures to meet the needs of each individual case.

The implementation of dropout prevention strategies needs to have a team with the necessary knowledge and experience that can maintain the work of the projects and at the same time support the learning process of new stakeholders. Supporting all stakeholders to gain the necessary knowledge and skills and improving collaboration with other stakeholders to support pupils from vulnerable groups is an important part of the school’s work, according to 89.3% of respondents.

The need for initial and continuous training of internal trainers to work with students at risk of dropping out of school obtains a percentage of 85.9% of respondents who consider these activities as useful and bringing added value to the school organization.

A significant percentage of respondents (83.2%) believe that by creating an educational platform through which to capitalize on examples of good practice in schools, with regard to the implementation of the strategic plan for dropout prevention, the stakeholders’ interest to continue to be involved in school projects can be maintained and the dropout rate will decrease significantly.

82.6% of respondents support the importance of extending the project recently initiated by the Ministry of Education on this issue to all schools with vulnerable children.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Based on the assessment of these elements, it is evident that the educational units have made notable efforts in several aspects of preventing school dropout. Evaluation and control of the prevention strategy, communication of the strategy, and maintaining a predictable organizational environment have shown relatively positive results. However, there is room for improvement in terms of aligning the strategic plan with the educational and organizational realities, as well as establishing clear, specific, and measurable goals by consensus.

The results highlight several areas within the educational unit’s approach to preventing school dropout that require attention and improvement. Specifically, there are concerns related to the analysis of external environmental factors, the establishment of a strong organizational culture, the development of a shared mission and vision, and the recruitment and training of stakeholders.

To enhance the effectiveness of their dropout prevention strategy, the educational units should prioritize some areas where improvement is much needed. This may include conducting thorough analyses of external influences, fostering a culture that supports the strategy’s goals, involving all stakeholders in a shared mission and vision, and investing in recruitment, training, and motivation efforts, improve communication, and place a stronger emphasis on aligning the strategy with the unique challenges and opportunities of the educational environment. Addressing

these issues, complimented by regular assessments and adjustments, can further enhance the prevention efforts and contribute to a more comprehensive approach to reducing school dropout rates.

Developing a strategy for the prevention of early school leaving and dropout at the level of educational institutions is not a simple task. It has to be built over a longer time horizon against the backdrop of the fact that society in general demands flexibility, adaptability and innovation from the organization, so that it truly becomes the common denominator to which school management dynamically and continuously relates.

By making the verbs: to know, to do, to be, to innovate, dynamic in their construction, with an evolutionary meaning in any type of action it involves, the implementation of strategies to prevent early school leaving and dropout becomes an essential attribute of a well-developed, complexly configured and adapted educational organization, which offers legitimacy and credibility and a constantly forward-looking attitude to the specific nature of these phenomena.

Valuing each stakeholder in any pre-university education institution from different perspectives has become a necessity and a continuous concern for rethinking the role of the school in the community/society, being an effective element of orientation of all direct and indirect beneficiaries for a dynamic environment in a constantly changing environment.

Since the implementation of effective strategies to prevent dropout and early school leaving are continuous processes of knowledge by which the medium- and long-term direction is determined, it must be open to reconfiguration, new and innovation, being an active way of discovering the best action plans to reduce and combat this phenomenon.

The implementation of an early school leaving and dropout management that encourages the effective use of the results of strategies and exchanges of good practice in order to improve the quality of pre-university education institutions is more than necessary.

## Data Availability

The data used to support the research findings are available from the corresponding author upon.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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