

# THE EDUCATIONAL MARKET. A COMPARISON BETWEEN ROMANIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

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**Abstract:** *For both Romania and the European Union, the educational market plays an increasingly important role in the social and economic life. Being the supplier of specialized work force, the market is carefully supervised by governments and mass-media. One of the options that can handle the educational market situations is provided by educational marketing. The analysis of these markets can be the first step for a better understanding of the future trends. The article takes into account the structure and the evolution of both markets and it matches the observed differences with several changes in the marketing environment.*

**Key words:** *educational marketing, higher education institutions, market analysis.*

## 1. Introduction

After the real estate crisis, the educational market became one of the contenders for the next bubble, the educational bubble [8]. It is argued that educational systems are no longer producing relevant qualified work force. Thus, graduate students are facing serious troubles in finding jobs that suit their abilities.

Given this context, educational marketing can become one of the solutions. With its ability to understand and analyse the market, educational marketing can offer some useful insights on the cause of the problems and it can develop ways to overcome these situations.

The concepts of educational marketing take advantages from the development of social services [2, 11] and public services [1] marketing concepts. But all concepts

are being transformed by the peculiarities of the educational field. Researchers like Conway [3], Hanson [5], Johnson [6], Kotler [7], and Maringe and Gibbs [9] are finding ways to adapt the educational marketing concepts so that they will better suit the educational market needs.

But different educational markets have different educational needs and even if the concepts of educational marketing are applicable in all these markets, there is still a need for local analysis and local adjustments.

The Romanian educational market has its own characteristics. Legal changes, like the new national education law, are putting pressure on academia [4]. The demographic evolution is also another big challenge for the educational sector. Therefore, an analysis and a comparison between the Romanian and the European

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Union educational markets will offer another point of view on these market characteristics.

## 2. The educational market structure

The use of the ISCED standard in the higher education structure in Romania and in the European Union is presented in

Figure 1. The ISCED levels, from 0 to 6, correspond to: pre-primary education, primary education, lower secondary education, secondary education, post secondary non tertiary education, first stage of tertiary education, and second stage of tertiary education [12].

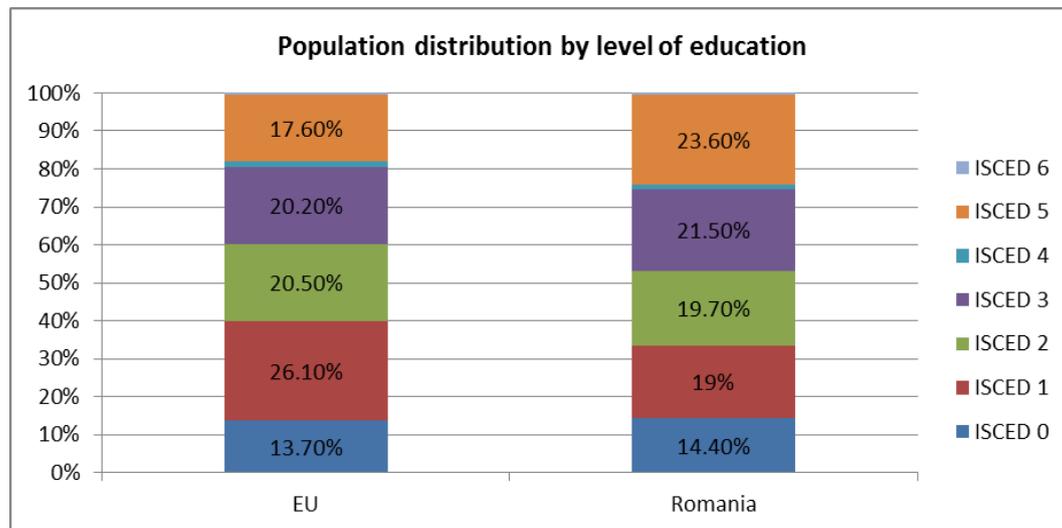


Fig. 1. Population distribution by level of education for the 2009-2010 school year

Source: Eurostat, Education and Training, available at:

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search\\_database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database)

The figure shows a very low percentage for ISCED 4 (1.4% for the European Union and 1.2% for Romania) and for ISCED 6 (0.5% for the European Union and 0.6% for Romania). ISCED 0, ISCED 2 and ISCED 3 have similar values but between ISCED 1 and ISCED 5 there are important differences.

These differences change the big picture of the population distribution. Ignoring ISCED 0, ISCED 4 and ISCED 6, the figure shows that, starting with the primary education, the European Union has decreasing percentages as the level of education increases, but Romania has increased percentages as the education level increases.

This kind of difference will have an important impact on the future of the Romanian educational market. The lower numbers for small ISCED levels will decrease the total number of pupils and students enrolled in higher ISCED levels. As the pupils from primary education will advance to lower secondary education, the lower secondary education will face a decreasing number of enrolled pupils. This effect will spread to higher ISCED levels as soon as the pupils from primary education reach them.

The comparison of the evolution of the Romanian and the European Union educational markets can provide further understanding for this market situation.

### 3. The educational market evolution

Starting with the 2000 – 2001 school year, the educational market had an oscillating

evolution in the European Union, as well as in Romania,. In Table 1 this evolution is aggregate until the 2009 – 2010 school year.

*Evolution of school population by level of education  
between 2000/2001 - 2009/2010 school years*

Table 1

Nivel de învățământ	EU	Romania
ISCED 0	7.36%	5.94%
ISCED 1	-9.84%	-27.74%
ISCED 2	-2.89%	-31.77%
ISCED 3	-11.27%	6.22%
ISCED 4	9.89%	-41.82%
ISCED 5	22.10%	36.48%

*Source: Eurostat, Education and Training, available at:  
[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search\\_database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database)*

Compared to the European Union, Romania had bigger fluctuations for 4 out of 6 ISCED levels. For the European Union, the biggest change in the numbers was found in ISCED 5 level, and it was an increase by more than 22%. In Romania, the biggest change was a 41% decrease of ISCED 4 level. The ISCED 5 had the biggest increase in Romania, but three levels of education experienced a severe drop in numbers. The biggest loss in the European Union was reported for ISCED 3 level, but this loss was less than half as compared to Romania's smallest loss. The only level where Romania and the European Union had a similar evolution was ISCED 0.

It is obvious that in the last ten years, the evolution of the Romanian and the European Union school population was different. There are three main reasons for this situation.

The first one, also mentioned in a report released by the Romanian Ministry of Education, Research, Innovation and Sport [10], is the decreasing number of children caused by a decrease in the birth rate.

The 41% decrease in ISCED 4 level was caused by the closure of the Schools of Arts and Crafts.

The third reason for this evolution is related to the increasing interest for higher education programmes. Due to private education institutions, as well as to unbudgeted vacancies provided by public institutions, the consumers' interest found a common ground with the institutions interest. This change was also facilitated by the national and European policies that encourage education and research.

### 4. Conclusions

The educational market proves to be a complex system. The impact of various legal changes, demographic trends or consumer attitudes is important and it can lead to changes in the structure and evolution of the educational market.

The comparison between Romania and the European Union can help to a better understanding of the future of the Romanian market.

It has been shown that the Romanian market has different characteristics than the European educational market and these

characteristics are related to the present legal, demographical and customer attitudes trends.

### Acknowledgements

This paper is supported by the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), ID59321 financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government.

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