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Performance and Risks in the European Economy

**Regional Educational Disparities vs Underperforming Educational
Management in Romania**

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Abstract: The paper deals with the regional educational disparities across the EU, with a special focus on the Romanian NUTS 1 and 2 regions. The comparative analysis allows quantifying the Romanian regions position in the EU regarding education, using three indicators: population in all levels of education, students in tertiary education and leavers from educational and training. Forecasting procedures are used in order to describe the indicators' trend until 2020. Regression allows quantifying the regional disparities between European and Romanian regions related to the above three indicators. The main conclusion of the analysis is that the great Romanian educational dysfunctions are the result of an inefficient educational management at macro and regional levels. The analysis and its results are supported by the latest official statistical data and pertinent diagrams.

Keywords: regional educational disparities; levels of education; regional educational management; forecasting procedures.

JEL Classification: H52; H75; I24; I25; R12.

1 Introduction

It is impossible to build a new society without education. Education has a powerful impact on socio-economic development. In Europe, the most economic developed countries have the best educational systems.

In order to maintain its position as main global economic actor, European Union adopted Europe 2020 Strategy (European Commission, 2010). The Strategy is focused on five fundamental objectives. One of them is reducing school dropout rates to below 10 %, with at least 40 % of 30–34-year-olds completing tertiary education. Romania seems to go to another direction related to education. Using demographic argues, the decision makers consider the low educational level and the decrease of those who attend to an educational form as normal trends. Moreover, the Romanian universities, for example, face to acute lack of students. The paper is focused on the idea that only an underperforming educational management led to this phenomenon in Romania.

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2 Related Works

Across the EU, education is the responsibility of each Member State. On the other hand, the European institutes support the educational development by encouraging cooperation between the Member States and increasing quality education (European Union, 2008).

The global crisis' impact on European economy imposed budgetary strain. As a result, many Member States introduced spending cuts in higher education. As a reaction, the universities were forced to find other financing sources. This is why the higher education has to be analyzed as an economic resource and commodity, which is fostered by European-level processes such as the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy (Garben, 2012).

An interesting book presented an analytical description of the education systems across Europe using common guidelines. The analysis is focused on the ways of increasing the quality of a good education system. The comparative analysis between Eastern and Western European educational systems is very useful (Hörner, Döbert, Kopp, & Mitter, 2007).

From the American point of view, the educational policy has to be focused on two targets: what are the major obstacles to substantial change in the public education system and which are the societal implications of not finding ways to make schools successful (Wolk, 2011).

3 Regional Disparities across the European Educational System

According to the latest official statistic data, Romania is not in the best position related to population in all levels of education. The best ranked NUTS 2 Romanian region (Bucuresti-Ilfov) covers only 23.1% of the total population in all levels of education, less than in all Belgian, Finnish, Swedish or English regions, for example. The same indicator represents only 15.9% of total population in Sud-Muntenia region (Eurostat, 2015).

Unfortunately, the population in all levels of education in Romanian regions has a negative trend (see Figure 1).

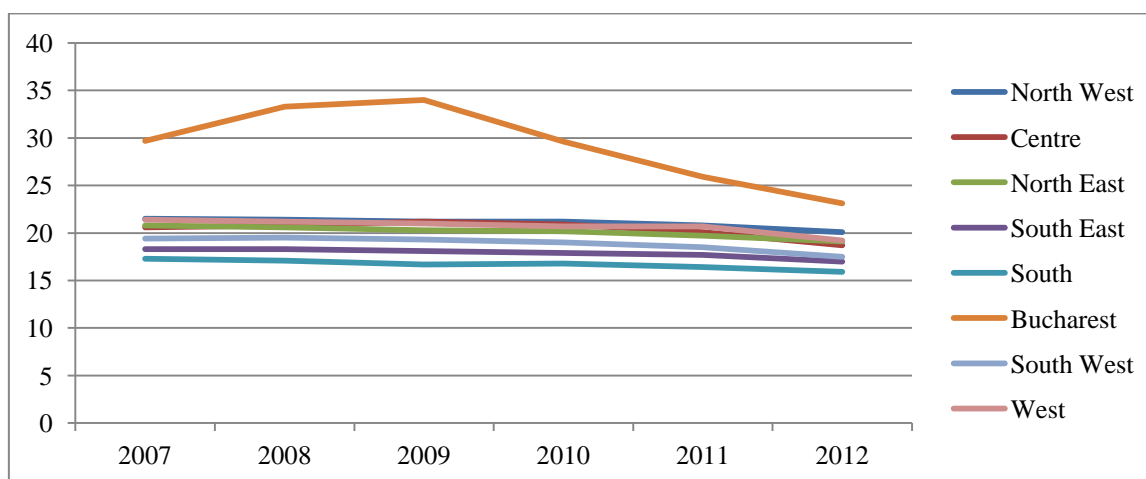


Figure 1. Population in all levels of education in Romanian regions (% of total population)

The population in all levels of education in Romanian regions represents only ½ from the same population in developed countries. As a result, there are great potential resources to increase the value

of this indicator in all Romanian regions. The forecast of this indicator until 2020 leads to the following values (Figure 2):

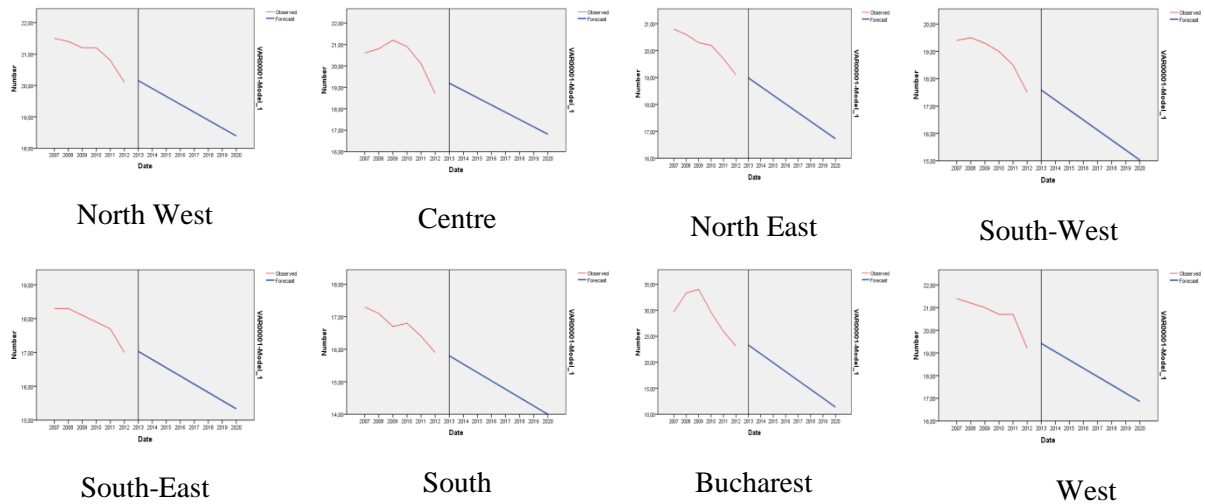


Figure 2. Population in all levels of education in Romanian regions' forecasting (% of total population)

According to Figure 2, the forecasted levels of the above indicator are worse in 2020 than in 2012. Moreover, the disparities related this indicator will increase in 2020 compared to 2012 (see Figure 3).

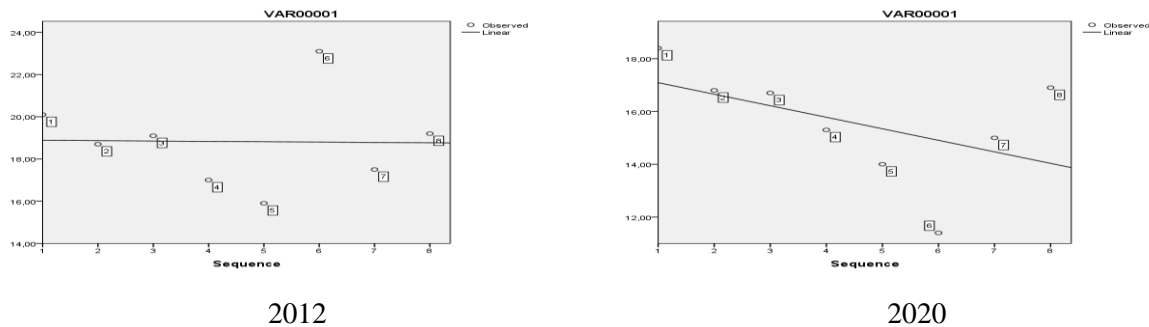


Figure 3. Population in all levels of education in Romanian regions' disparities

According to Figure 3, the disparities will increase in 2020 compared to 2012. As a result, the population in all levels of education will decrease in all Romanian regions.

Another indicator used in the analysis is students in tertiary education. Students represent 142.6% of the population aged 20-24 years in Bucharest-Ilfov, but only 14.9% in Sud-Muntenia. The greatest regional rates were in Bratislavsky kraj (220.5%), Praha (214.7%) and Dytiki Ellada (Greece-182.9%). On the other hand, there are great disparities across the Romanian regions related to this indicator (Eurostat, 2015).

Students in tertiary education have an inconstant evolution in Romanian regions (see Figure 4).

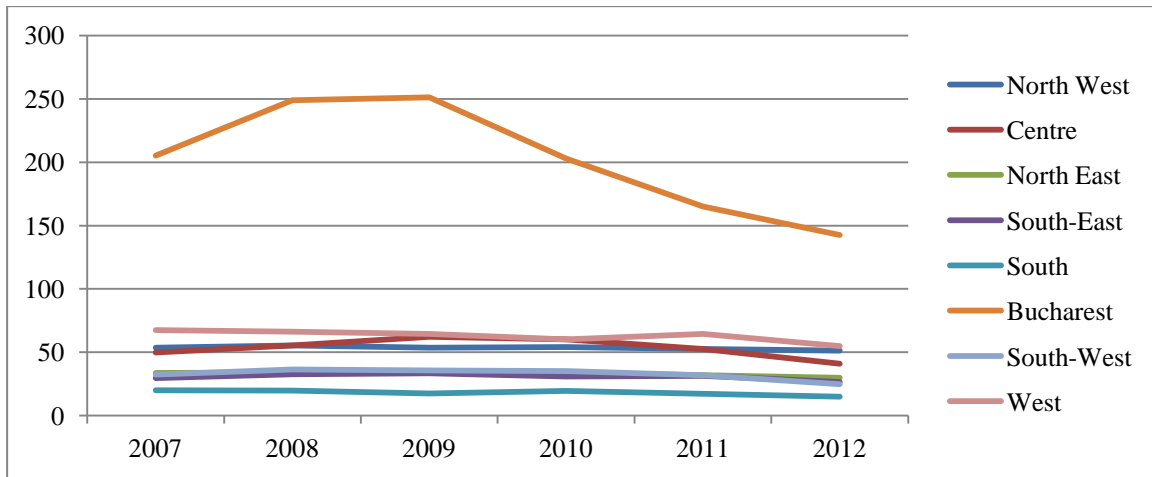


Figure 4. Students in tertiary education (% population aged 20-24 years)

All Romanian regions faced to the decrease of the students' number. The greatest shock was in Bucuresti-Ilfov, where the number of students decreased by 62.6% in only six years. Under the same conditions, the future of the students' number is not good (Figure 5).

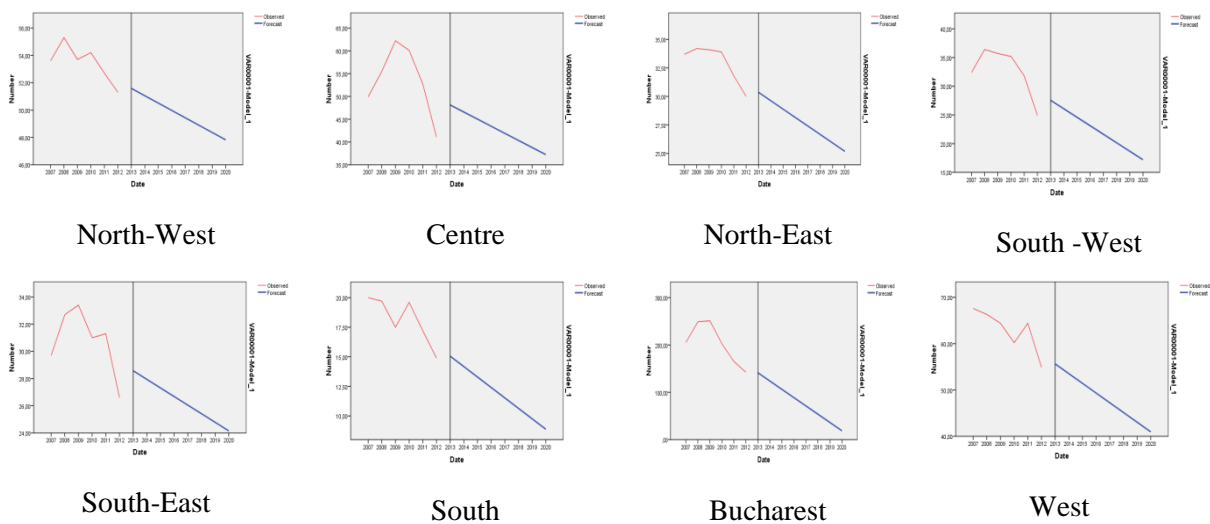


Figure 5. Students in tertiary education forecasting (% of population aged 20-24 years)

All Romanian regions will face to a drastic decrease of the number of students in 2020 if the present educational management doesn't change. Moreover, the disparities between these regions related to the number of students in 2020 will increase (see Figure 6).

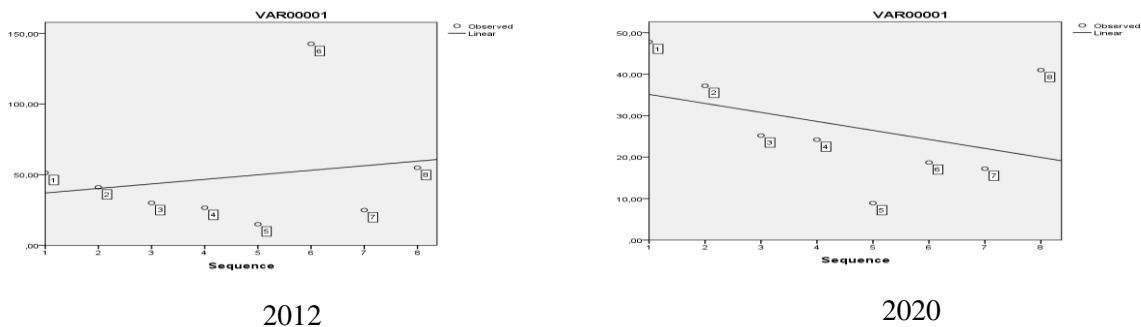


Figure 6 Students' disparities

The third educational indicator used in the European statistics is early leavers from educational and training. It represents a target of Europe 2020 Strategy, as well. The data for this indicator is analyzed on NUTS 1 regions. Macro-region 4 from Romania achieved the best performance of 14.6% from all Romanian NUTS 1 regions. Across the EU28, Polludnlowy achieved 3.8%, Slovenija 3.9%, Czech Republic 5.4% or Hrvatska 4.5% (Eurostat, 2015). The regional evolution of the leavers from educational and training in Romania is presented in Figure 7.

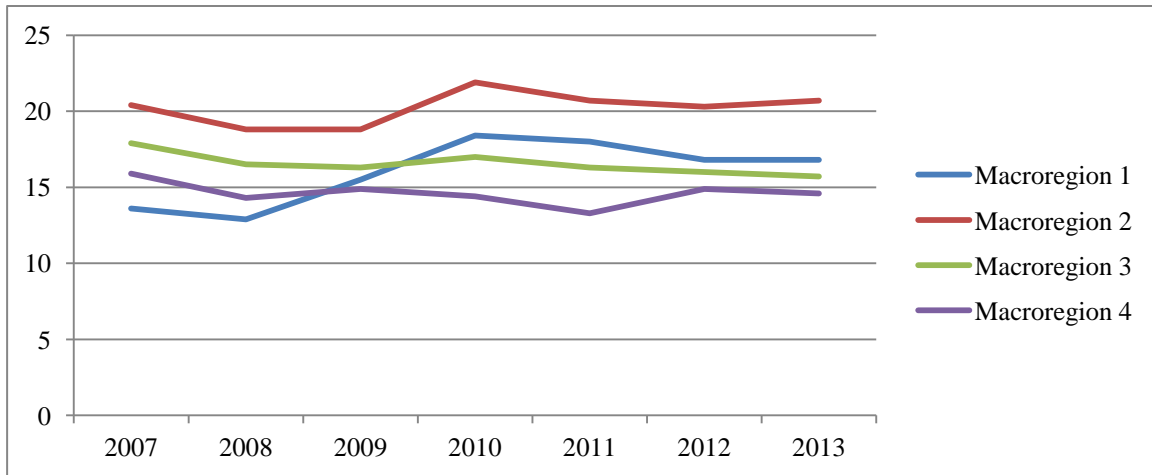


Figure 7 Leavers from educational and training (%)

The greater disparities from 2010-2011, decreased in 2012-2013. The evolution of this indicator until 2020 is presented in Figure 8.

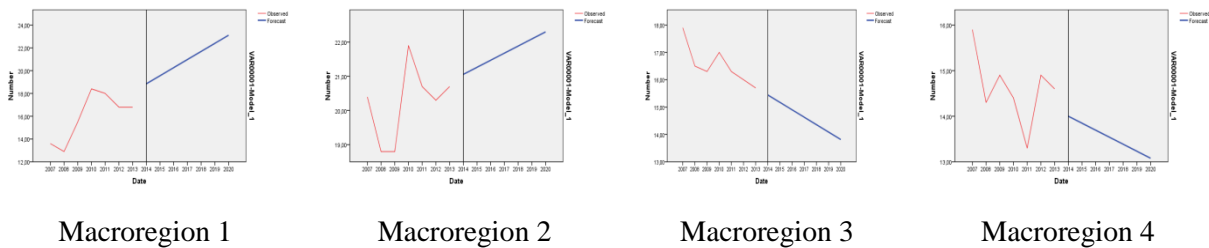


Figure 8 Leavers from educational and training forecasting (%)

Macroregion 3 and Macroregion 4 will achieve better rates in 2020 than in 2013, while the other two NUTS 1 regions will face to worst performances related to this indicator. The regression supports the conclusions from Figure 8 (see Figure 9).

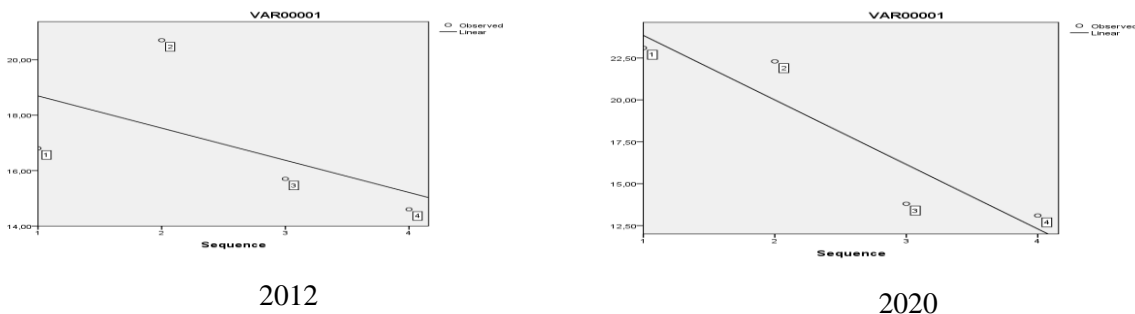


Figure 9. Leavers from educational and training's disparities

4 Conclusions

Education doesn't represent a priority in Romania, nowadays. This is why there is not budgetary adjustment without cutting educational funds. The national educational system in Romania faces to important decrease of the number of those who want to learn. Even the social value system is not connected to education.

At regional level, the disparities connected to educational indicators are high and increase. There is a wrong approach from the decision makers at macro, regional and local levels. This is why only 20% of the population studies in all levels of education in Romania. Moreover, just a little part of the population attends in tertiary education.

The forecasts are not optimistic. The situation may become worst in 2020 if urgent incentive measures will not be implemented. The solution has to imply a new framework in Romanian educational system and a good management at regional level.

5 Acknowledgement

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