

The Professional Profile of the Teacher-Researcher. A Romania – France Comparative Study

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Abstract

The paper focuses the teacher-researcher occupation and it is a comparative study, based on a qualitative study of the norms and reglementations. The major aims are: (i) to realize a comparative presentation of the definition of the competencies and occupational standards for teacher and researcher in economics in Romania and France, showing the differences, diversity and specificity of the Romanian classification, and (ii) to identify ways that certain disciplines of economic curricula may contribute to initial specific skills of the teacher-researcher.

Keywords: *teacher-researcher, economic higher education, professional profile, competencies.*

JEL classification: A20, I21, I23.

Introduction

The classification of occupations is a framework applicable to an entire national economy to ensure the character of uniformity and comparability of different labour market segments, according to the tasks and duties undertaken in the job. Usually, it has two components:

1. the classification system itself, which classifies the professions - the most detailed groups (may be called sub-groups) are aggregated into broader groups, using occupational titles and codes;
2. the descriptive component, which gives the depiction of the tasks, duties, required competencies along with other aspects of the professions (e.g. goods and services produced, skill level and specialization, competences, entry restrictions). These descriptions can be said to constitute a dictionary of occupations.

Competencies can be classified into two categories, as follows:
(i) professional and (ii) transversal competencies (Constantin, 2004).

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The professional competencies stand for the proven capabilities to select, combine and use the appropriate knowledge, skills and other acquisitions (values and attitudes), in order to successfully solve a particular category of work or learning situation, circumscribed to the profession, under conditions of effectiveness and efficiency. Professional competencies can be (i) professional general, developed in the broader field of study, (ii) specific professional, which develop within a narrow program of study. Therefore, professional competencies represent a unified and dynamic ensemble of knowledge and skills. Knowledge, as cognitive and structural dimensions of capability, is expressed by the following descriptors: (i) knowledge, understanding and use of specific language, (ii) explanation and interpretation. Skills, the size-driven functional and structural element of competence, are expressed by the following descriptors: (i) application, transfer and problem solving; (ii) critical and constructive reflection, (iii) creativity and innovation.

The transversal competencies are those capabilities that transcend a particular field, the study program, with a trans-disciplinary nature. They represent teamwork skills, oral and written communication skills in the mother tongue or foreign language, of information and communication technology, problem solving and decision making, recognition and respect for diversity and multiculturalism, learning autonomy, initiative and entrepreneurship, openness to lifelong learning, respect and development of ethical and moral values, etc. These types of competencies represent value acquisitions expressed through the following descriptors: (i) autonomy and responsibility, (ii) social interaction, (ii) personal and professional development.

Both of these two types are the result of professional training, the amount of directed and coordinated instructional actions, having as objectives: (i) providing a volume of knowledge and practical experience, and (ii) developing a set of skills and behavioural pattern, all of them being necessary for the efficient implementation of certain professional requirements. It has two components: initial training (according to the level of study required by the regulatory framework) and continuous training. The first component is obtained by attending school cycle in education institutions that are part of the National Education System, and the second component in the lifelong learning programmes offered by certified providers.

1. Defining framework for teacher-researcher occupation. Comparison: ISCO – Romania and France – Romania

The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) is an International Labour Organisation (ILO) classification structure for organizing information on labour and jobs. It is part of the international family of economic and social classifications of the United Nations. The current version, known as ISCO-08, was published in 2008 and is the fourth iteration, following ISCO-58, ISCO-68 and ISCO-88. This most recent version emphasizes four skill levels,

encompassing both formal education and informal training along with work experience as important classification criteria (Bergmann, Joyce, 2002).

Being defined as a standard by the International Labour Organisation, we used this classification as a starting point in our research. We identify the profession “university and higher education teachers” as a sub-group of the larger category of “teaching professionals” (see Table 1). The major group they are being part of is called “professionals”.

Table 1. The profession “university and higher education teachers” in ISCO88

MAJOR GROUP 2
PROFESSIONALS
<i>23 TEACHING PROFESSIONALS</i>
231 COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING PROFESSIONALS
232 SECONDARY EDUCATION TEACHING PROFESSIONALS
233 PRIMARY AND PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION TEACHING PROFESSIONALS
234 SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHING PROFESSIONALS
235 OTHER TEACHING PROFESSIONALS

Source: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco88/major.htm>

The description of the profession is quite simple, saying that “higher education teaching professionals teach their subjects at some or all levels after the termination of secondary education, conduct research and improve or develop concepts, theories and operational methods, and prepare scholarly papers and books”. We have bold the part with “conduct research”. Even if it is not comprised in the title of the profession, being a teacher includes research activities.

Following the definition there are 13 tasks, from which 11 are describing actual activities (see Table 2), which ends with some examples of occupations in this category.

Table 2. Description and tasks in ISCO88

<i>Description:</i> college, university and higher education teaching professionals teach their subjects at some or all levels after the termination of secondary education, conduct research and improve or develop concepts, theories and operational methods, and prepare scholarly papers and books
<i>Tasks:</i> designing and modifying curricula and preparing courses of study in accordance with requirements; delivering lectures and conducting tutorials, seminars and experiments; stimulating discussion and independent thought among students; supervising, where appropriate, practical work undertaken by students; administering, evaluating and marking examination papers and tests; directing research of post-graduate students or other members of department; researching into and developing concepts, theories and operational methods for application in industrial and other fields; preparing scholarly books, papers or articles;

attending conferences and seminars;
participating in decision-making processes concerning college or university departmental, budgetary and other policy matters;
assisting with extra-curricular activities, such as debating societies;
performing related tasks; supervising other workers.

Occupations (examples):

lecturer, college
lecturer, university
professor, college
professor, university
reader

(Source: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/isco/isco88/2310.htm>)

2. Occupational classification in France

The occupational classification in France (referentiel des métiers, fr.) is more complex and detailed than ISCO. First of all, the classification is made within each industry, so we have to address education. Our search revealed the profession of “teacher-researcher” which is defined by a dual role: impart knowledge to their students and advance research in their discipline.

A teacher-researcher working time reference is made to half, by educational services and the other half, by supported and recognized research activity.

The description is very consistent and gives a lot of information (available online at http://media.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/file/Ressources_humaines/89/0/2-reme-enseignement-sup_200890.pdf):

- ✓ definition: ”provide initial and life-long formation in the higher education; perform fundamental and applied research; contribute to the dialog between science and society;
- ✓ list of specializations (economics and management being included here) with examples of occupations;
- ✓ main activities, extensively described in 10 directions;
- ✓ special conditions stipulated in this profession;
- ✓ examples of name of the positions in the higher education sector;
- ✓ competencies are grouped in three categories: knowledge, operational and behavioural, also being comprehensively explained.

3. Occupational classification in Romania

In Romania, C.O.R. (acronym for Occupations’ Classification in Romania) was regulated by Government Decision 1352/2010 and Order 1832/2011 of the Minister of Labour, Family and Social Protection. Its use is mandatory for ordering information on jobs in all fields of economic and social activity: institutions of central government and local budgetary units, businesses, regardless of ownership (state, private or joint - ventures), employer organizations, trade unions, professional and political foundations, associations and other natural and legal

operating in Romania. Classification is made by groups, major subgroups, minor groups, basic groups and occupations, encoding the six characters. European rules were prerequisites and foundation need this framework are Rules (EC) no. 1.022/2009, (EC) 1.738/2005, (EC) no. 698/2006 and (EC) no. 377/2008, (EC) no.1.022/2009 in respect to the International Classification of Occupations (ISCO), bringing the latest changes and additions to the other three. Ministry and the National Institute of Statistics shall, at the request of users, update the Classification of Occupations in Romania in line with the changes taking place in the national economic structure and the specific legislation in force.

Table 3. Occupations of economist-researcher and professor, according to Classification of Occupations in Romania

COR Category	PROFESSION	
	ECONOMIST RESEARCHER IN MANAGEMENT COR CODE: 263112	UNIVERSITY/HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHER COR CODE: 23105
Group	Specialists in various fields	
Code	2	
Description	Develop the existing stock of knowledge, teach systematically and apply theories and scientific or artistic concepts, or engage in any combination of these activities	
Level of instruction	Higher education	
ISCO88 Corresp.	PROFESSIONALS/PROFESSIONS INTELLECTUELLES ET SCIENTIFIQUES	
Major subgroup	Specialists in legal, social and cultural domain	Specialists in education
Code	26	23
Description	Research, improve or develop concepts, theories and operational methods, or apply knowledge relating to law, to storage and retrieval of information and artefacts, psychology, social work, politics, economics, history, religion, language, sociology and other sciences, as well as arts and entertainment	Teaching theory and practice of one or more disciplines at different education levels, coordinating research and improve or develop concepts; theories and operational methods related to their specific disciplines and realize scientific papers and books.
Level of instruction	Higher education	Higher education
ISCO88 Corresp.	None	Teaching professionals/ Spécialistes de l'enseignement

Minor Group	Specialists in social and religious domain	Professors and associate
Code	263	231
Description	Research, improve or develop concepts, theories and operational methods, or apply knowledge on philosophy, politics, economics, sociology, anthropology, history, literature, language, psychology and other social sciences or providing social services to meet the needs of individuals and of the families in a community.	prepare and teach courses and coordinate practical work on one or more subjects within a course set at a university or at another institution of higher education; conducts research activities, prepare scientific papers and books
Level of instruction	Higher education	Higher education
ISCO88 Corresp.	None	College, university and higher education teaching professionals/ Professeurs d'université et d'établissements d'enseignement supérieur
Base group	Economists	Professors and associate
Code	2631	2310
Description	Performs research activities, data monitoring, information analyzing and preparing reports and plans to solve economic and business problems, develop analyze models ,explain and predict economic behaviour, offer business counselling to the target groups and governments to formulate solutions to current and future economic and business problems	prepare and teach courses and coordinate practical work on one or more subjects within a course set at a university or at another institution of higher education; conducts research activities, prepare scientific papers and books
Level of instruction	Higher education	Higher education
ISCO88 Corresp.	None	College, university and higher education teaching professionals/ Professeurs d'université et d'établissements d'enseignement supérieur (fr.)

4. Developing the competencies for the teacher-researcher profession. A proposal for curricula approach in Romania

Since C.O.R. makes no reference to the required competencies and skills for a researcher, further we suggest a set of such competencies for the occupation of "Teacher-Researcher in Management":

- Mastering knowledge about current theoretical debates and trends in managing organizations, public management and macro- or micro systems management;
- Mastering knowledge and ability to use modern research methods and techniques in this field, both quantitative (statistical and econometric methods) and qualitative (interviews, focus groups);
- Capacity to address printed or electronic documentary sources;
- Mastering knowledge in academic writing, publishing and scientific communication;
- Ability to plan, organize, coordinate and control resources and activities within the research team (as team member or as a project manager);
- Ability to connect and develop networking and virtual environments by using modern means of ICT;
- Ability to perceive and interpret correctly the requirements of real economic systems in order to develop applied scientific researches for certain practical problems of micro or macro-economic management;
- Entrepreneurship and capacity to exploit research results through innovation and technology transfer;
- Ability to apply and develop good practices in scientific research in the field and accurately assess socio - economic impact of research results;
- Self-critical spirit in their research.

The formative trajectory of a research in management is based on three educational cycles (Bachelor - 3 years, Master - 2 years, PhD - 2 years), with a complex curricular approach. According to each author's area of specialization, three course units will be described in terms of their contribution to the development of the teacher/researcher profession:

- Professional Ethics
- Cost - Benefit Analysis
- Management Information Systems.

Table 5. Relationship between the course units and competencies for the teacher/researcher profession

Major topics	General and specific competences
Professional ethics	
general ethical theories normative ethics and applied ethics principles of professional	• ability to acquire and adhere to recognized ethical practices and fundamental ethical principles as well as ethical standards in the various national codes of ethics, sartorial or of the institution;

Major topics	General and specific competences
Professional ethics	
ethics (autonomy, merit recognition, responsibility, professionalism, deontology); standards of initiation, maintenance and promotion in a professional body; codes of ethics whistle-blowers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assimilation of the principles of professional responsibility regarding the use of teaching and research resources and in providing relevancy of the activities for the society; • knowledge of all possible forms to avoid plagiarism of any kind, respect the principles of intellectual property and common property of data for collaborative researches; • knowing and applying best practices in teaching and research (adoption of safe working practices in accordance with the law, application of the necessary measures to protect health safety and privacy); • knowledge of the validation need of new discoveries by reproducible experiments.
Cost Benefit Analysis	
conceptual framework for CBA – key concepts and terms; optimization instruments for project cycle management; logic and methodology of CBA; identifying investment projects defining objectives; options analysis financial CBA: objectives, principles, analysis of financial performance indicators; economic CBA: objectives, corrections; analysis of economic performance indicators; risk and sensitivity analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ability to understand the concepts and terms used in evaluating and prioritizing public investment projects. • understanding the social (public) benefit concept and introducing it in the evaluation and prioritization of investment projects. • the ability to use a valid and well-known instrument in the project cycle management • knowing all the necessary steps for the achievement of a complete project investment analysis. • understanding how to formulate the objectives for an investment project. • understanding how an investment project should be approached considering the contextual options. • acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge for calculating and interpreting the indicators used in • evaluating the financial and economic performance of an investment project. • learning the rules for the decision making process in evaluating and prioritizing the public investment projects. • developing flexible thinking in evaluating and prioritizing public investment projects according to their context and area of activity. • mastering the economic-financial logic and enhancing the stringency of management decision making.
Management Information Systems	
e-business applications; database systems; enterprise information systems; business process management; web & internet technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know how information technology is used within organizations (adopt it, then improve business productivity using IT) • through knowledge of business processes (process identification, mapping, and improvement; business process automation and integration, business process outsourcing) • understanding integrated information systems (analyzing and managing the flows of information within and across the organization's business processes, then integrating all)

Major topics	General and specific competences
Professional ethics	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • business information systems development; impact of new it and web technologies (tools, methodologies, management of an is project) • how information systems can support decision making within organizations (enhancing the business information systems' role and helping managers in the decisional process)

Conclusions

By analyzing the three classifications, the following conclusions materialized (some have an absolute character, other are relative, assumed from comparison):

- Romania has a distinct approach for the two professions, starting from the definition of the major subgroup, which lead to differing taxonomic sides, although the job of university professor contains in its description the research activity; even though the major groups are different, the activity of both categories is focused on development and improvement of concepts, and theoretical or scientific methods (mainly for researchers, and complementary for teachers);
- minor subgroup of COR 263 ("specialists in the social and religious field") involves the integration on this level of classification of certain laic professions with some of religious nature, aspect probably unique in the national classification system (e.g. between the profession of Archbishop, code 263601 and the one of researcher economist in management, code 263112 there is no distinction except for the fourth level of classification);
- hence, among the activities required for university professors, it is also included academic research; in fact, the new legal framework for education, established in 2011, referred to a basic criteria for access to the higher position of professor, exclusively the research activity (the number of published articles in journals with significant impact - ISI Thomson with relative score of influence higher than 0.25), therefor the university professor career is built upon research;
- unlike France, COR makes no difference between general and specific competencies required for both occupations, this lack contributing to the difficulties of training providers (universities and/or education providers for lifelong learning programmes) in process of defining a correct and complete curriculum;
- although COR has defined many research occupations in distinct domains (i.e. fundamental sciences, social sciences, linguistic sciences), there is no reference to the distinctive competencies for each of them; this kind of distinction operates only between different areas of activity

of the researchers (i.e. researcher economist in management, marketing, international economic relations, etc.), without having a similar distinction for teachers, which is a formal prerequisite (but not necessarily required) to different approaches of these occupations.

Traditionally viewed as distributors of knowledge, professors are increasingly perceived as facilitators or managers of knowledge. In the knowledge society, they are often thought to be co-learners with their students. They are expected to help their students to think critically as well as imaginatively; to provide practical training; and shape their students' goals, careers, and lives. Professors should be also intellectual leaders who create opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know and what they know how to do.

On the other hand, as experts in their subject fields, they also set standards for research - usually reflected in the articles and books they write - and expand the limits of scholarship and its importance in society. They are expected to perform their dual mission in harmony without sacrificing research or teaching, to embrace the general and the particular carried by the wonderful vector of universality which the university is.

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