

**THE SYSTEM OF DEFINING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BY REFERRING TO COMPETENCIES IN THE
 TEACHING CAREER IN IRAQ AND ROMANIA
 - COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS -**

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Abstract

The main objective of this study is to identify the differences regarding the elements of the professional competence units provided for teachers teaching in high schools in Romania and those provided for teachers teaching in Iraq. Two documents related to the problem addressed were analyzed (one that regulates the training of teaching staff in Romania and one that regulates the training of teaching staff in Iraq). The results present the identified differences and suggest directions for the development of the system of defining occupational standards by referring to competencies for the teaching career in Iraq.

Keywords: Occupational standard; unit of competence; teaching career.

1. Introduction

The recognition of the profession status "in one field or another, ensuring and increasing the quality of training programs, emphasizing the principle of responsibility in the evolution of programs require the prior definition of a valid and complete set of professional standards" (Potolea & Toma, 2013)

The development of professional standards for the training and career development of teaching staff is a complex process whose necessity is imperatively claimed by Iraqi educational policy and legislative documents (Jian, Iraqi School System, 2018) .

Starting from the belief that Professionalization and career development are intrinsically correlated with professional standards and competencies of the project "Restructuring the system of continuous training of pre-university personnel by generalizing the system of transferable professional credits" (POSDRU/3/1.3/S/2/ID 3777, 2016)

Professional standards of high school teachers in Romania

Referring to the Methodology for defining professional standards regarding the evolution in the teaching career This document proposes a new model for defining and describing professional standards/competencies. 4 sources of description were used, coherently articulated in a new format:

- ❖ from the CNFPA Methodology - the following ideas were taken: units of competence, elements of the unit of competence, performance conditions;
- ❖ from the documents published by the European Parliament regarding key competences, the idea of the structure of competences: knowledge, skills, attitudes was used;
- ❖ from the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) - the ideas synthesized by the concepts: learning outcomes, the 8 qualification levels and the competence approach from the perspective of autonomy and responsibility were taken over and put into use.

The format of analysis and definition of the competencies that make up the professional standards of development in the teaching career is presented in Table 1

Table 1: The description of the unit of competence and the elements of competence is done by descriptors such as those in the table below.

The title of the unit no		Level of professional qualification: Level of teaching expertise (teaching degree):			
Description of the competence unit					
Elements of competence	Professional competences: descriptors				
	Knowledge	Abilities		attitudes	
	Knowledge, understanding and use of language Specific / Explanation and interpretation	Application, transfer and problem solving	Critical reflection and design	Creativity and iNNOVATION	Autonomy and responsibility
.....

Note: table taken from Annex 10. OFFICIAL GAZETTE no. 31 of January 11, 2017

The authors of the document analyzed the competencies from the perspective of the model proposed by CNCIS because it is already validated and officially confirmed by OMECT no. 4430 /2009 and enjoys European recognition; following the European self-certification procedures,

The specification of competences consists in the delimitation of intellectual capacities or operations such as :

- The ability to detect, identify, etc.
- The ability to select,
- The ability to analyze and synthesize data, information or relationships,
- The ability to learn, act or judge ,
- The ability to argue, etc. (Manolescu, 2015)

In Romania "The competence system on which the professional standards of the evolution in the teaching career are based takes and adapts to the specifics of the teaching profession and to the requirements of the Romanian pre-university education the categories and levels of competence with which the European Qualifications Framework operates " (EQF) Qualifications Framework in the Area European Higher Education Association (EHEA).

The system of defining skills for the evolution in the teaching career proposed in this standard is specifically congruent with the National Education Law and the Methodology regarding the continuous training of teaching staff.

The elaborated standards system complies with the legal provisions in Romania according to which "the continuous training of the teaching staff is based on the competency-based approach model and the concept of cumulative development of the level of competence of the teaching staff" (art. 6.) and aims at: "career professionalization didactic; placing the training system in the European context of continuous professional development/lifelong learning and training and orienting the training system towards mobility and evolution in career and professional development" (art. 90, Methodology of continuous training).

Professional standards of secondary school teachers in Iraq

In order to understand the context in which the Evaluation of teachers in high school education in Iraq is carried out, it is important to study their Professional Standard.

1. Professional standards in Iraq

Professional standards - A term of reference for describing the profession of a classroom teacher, evaluating his performance levels emphasizing his self-development. Based on the recommendations of the strategy for the training and qualification of secondary school teachers in Iraq, the Ministry, in cooperation with UNESCO established the Authority for the Development of the Teaching Profession, whose tasks include building professional standards for teachers (UNESCO, 2013) . where the performance evaluation of teaching staff is closely related to professional standards, but the Authority did not take into account the difference in career development and levels of professional development.

1.1 Standards for measuring professional performance

In Iraq, the performance of teaching staff in high school education is measured using specific standard criteria against which their actual performance is compared. However, the criteria are not clearly defined and no training programs are designed for most of its content to support teaching staff.

These standards must have a measurable quantitative form (Shawish, 2015) .

1.2 Performance Standards

Performance standards mean those elements that are used as a basis of evaluation against which an individual's performance is compared for evaluation purposes. Or they can be defined by the levels at which performance is considered good and satisfactory. Their identification is necessary for the success of the performance evaluation process, because they help to make teachers aware of what is required of them to achieve the institution's objectives and direct managers to the aspects that should be considered for performance development (Nono, 2017). The performance criteria were classified into **three types** (Awwad, 2015) :

- **Quantitative standards:** according to which a certain amount of units to be achieved in a certain period of time is determined, that is, it indicates the relationship between the amount of work performed and the time associated with this performance.
- **Quality standards :** Refers to the performance of the teacher to achieve a certain level of accuracy and professionalism, and often a certain percentage of errors is determined that the teacher should not exceed. This type is called the qualitative rate of performance.
- **Quantitative and qualitative standards:** This type is a combination of the two previous types, according to which the teacher's achievement must reach a certain number of units in a certain period of time and with a certain level of professionalism .

The researcher believes that this type of performance criteria (quantitative and qualitative) is crucial in the field of teaching staff evaluation. Thus, occupational standards can be considered as a set of quantitative and qualitative levels at a certain level of development that correspond to specific teaching degrees". These are usually represented by descriptions of behavior, practices that express values,

attitudes or thought patterns, and the ability to solve problems and make decisions as guidelines that represent the level of quality performance.

2. Domain

The field concept means the general framework that addresses different dimensions related to the teaching profession in general, and at the same time allows to arrive at a set of relevant and usable standards. The Commission for the Development of the Teaching Profession in Iraq has adopted professional standards for teaching staff that cover all the basic requirements of the teaching profession. These were classified into three main integrated and overlapping competences (General Administration for the Inspection and Qualification of Education., 2009) :

- Domain One: Knowledge and Understanding

The teacher's general frameworks of competence are based on the degree of possession of his knowledge and its development in the social, cultural and historical context, as well as on his subjective experience. Knowledge represents the basis on which the teacher's professional skills, beliefs and attitudes towards the teaching profession are built and lead to the achievement of the effectiveness and continuity of the educational learning process. At the same time, it helps the teacher in choosing planned educational practices, which lead to making correct educational decisions with full awareness that the relationship between knowledge and skills is a mutually complementary relationship.

- Domain Two: Professional Skills

The importance of this field is reflected in the teacher's ability to translate knowledge into real skills and practice, bearing in mind that practice builds on knowledge and understanding, and grows and develops with the accumulation of broad knowledge, the exchange of experiences and experimentation.

- Domain three: Professional attitudes and values

The teacher's beliefs and attitudes towards the teaching profession help him to form a value system for himself and his students. Therefore, his commitment to positive attitudes towards the teaching profession pushes him towards cognitive growth and skills, which will influence students to form positive attitudes towards learning and school.

It is worth noting that the rules of conduct and professional ethics have been included in a separate document that includes principles, relationships, rights and duties that the teacher must be aware of and adhere to.

3. Iraqi and international legislative foundations and documents for building professional standards.

The Authority for the Development of the Education Profession proposed to build professional standards for high school teachers from the following aspects:

First of all: Education Law no. 22 of 2011. The basic principles and premises of article (2) mentioned in the Iraqi school system book (Jian, 2018) .

Second: The recommendation of the International Labor Organization and UNESCO regarding the situation of teaching staff for 1996 and the recommendation of UNESCO regarding the situation of teaching staff in higher education issued for 1997, in which it was mentioned in Recommendation no. 19. (The objective of the pre-university teacher training program should be the development among each student of his general knowledge, personal culture, his ability to teach and educate others, awareness of the principles on which good human relations are based, sense of responsibility for education and a good model for social, cultural and economic progress) (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010)

It was updated by the Ministry of Education represented by the Directorate of Total Quality Management and Institutional Development in annex (2) no. ORDER 1/4/21980 from October 15, 2018, attached , including the addition of a standard related to supporting teachers with special needs (Department of Total Quality Management and Institutional Development, 2018)

2. Methodology

2.1. Object

The main objective of this study is to identify the differences regarding the elements of the professional competence units provided for teachers teaching in high schools in Romania and those provided for teachers teaching in Iraq.

2.2. Participants

The documents analyzed were:

For Romania

- 1) MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH (2016). ORDER no. 4,476 of July 6, 2016, Annex 10. OFFICIAL GAZETTE no. 31 of January 11, 2017

For Iraq

- 2) REPUBLIC OF IRAQ, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION: Department of Total Quality Management and Institutional Development (2018). ORDER no. 1/4/21980. from October 15, 2018 .

2.3. Instrument

As a tool, the author designed and applied a comparative analysis grid that included the following coding;

also existing in Iraq = ●

incomplete in Iraq compared to Romania = (-)

non-existent in Iraq = x□

(eg: table 2)

Comparative analysis between the system of defining professional standards regarding the evolution of the teaching career in Iraq and Romania , from the perspective of the competence units and their elements:

Table 2: Comparative analysis between the methodology of defining professional standards regarding the evolution of the teaching career in Iraq and Romania .

The methodology of defining standards	unit of competence	The elements of the unit of competence	terms of achievement	Key Competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes)	Competency descriptors professional	Skill levels
Romania	●	●	●	●	●	●
Iraq	x□	(-)	(-)	●	(-)	(-)

2.4. Data analysis

The evaluation was performed by the author of this study.

3. Results

The results of the comparative analysis between the competences included in the professional standards for teachers in Romania and those in Iraq, by competence units and the elements of the competence units are presented below,

Among the 7 elements of competence unit number 1 (Designing educational activities), present in the Romanian document (Annex 10), only two are found in the document from Iraq (Annex 2) (Designing lesson and Designing extracurricular activities). The design activity annual didactic and semesters are found in an incomplete/approximate form, the others are absent (table 3).

Table 3: Competence unit no. 1: Designing educational activities

Units of competence	The elements of the unit of competence	Romania	Iraq
Unit no. 1 Designing educational activities	1. Analyze the needs of training of students	●	x□
	2. The design activity annual didactic and semesters	●	(-)
	3. The design the unit of learning or module TEACHING	●	x□
	4. The design lesson	●	●
	5. Curriculum design at the school's decision	●	x□

	6. The design products curricular auxiliary	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	7. Designing extracurricular activities	•	•

Among the 4 elements of competence unit no. 2 (Leading and monitoring the learning process) present in the Romanian document (Appendix 10), three are found identically and one is not in the document from Iraq (Appendix 2) (Reconsideration, revision as the case may be of the initial project, depending on the dynamics of the educational situation) (table 4).

Table 4: Competence unit no. 2: Management and monitoring of the learning process

Units of competence	The elements of the unit of competence	Romania	Iraq
Unit no. 2 monitoring of the	1. Development and exploitation of educational communication	•	•
	2. Organization and management of the didactic activity	•	•
	3. Monitoring the training process	•	•
	4. Reconsideration, revision as the case may be of the initial project, depending on the dynamics of the educational situation	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Among the 4 elements of competence unit no. 3 (Evaluation of educational activities) present in the Romanian document (Appendix 10), in the document from Iraq (Appendix 2) two are found (Design of evaluation and evaluation tools and Information and communication of school results) and two are not (table 5).

Table 5: Unit of competence no. 3: Evaluation of educational activities

Units of competence	The elements of the unit of competence	Romania	Iraq
Unit no. 3 Evaluation of educational	1. Designing assessment and assessment tools	•	•
	2. Administration of assessment tools, analysis and interpretation of collected data and decision making regarding the outcome of the assessment	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	3. Information and communication of school results	•	•
	4. Review / optimization of the learning outcomes assessment process	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Of the 4 elements of competence unit 4 (Integration and use of ICT in education) present in the Romanian document (Annex 10) in the document from Iraq (Annex 2), none is found (table 6).

Table 6: Competence unit no. 4 .. Integration and use of ICT in education

Units of competence	The elements of the unit of competence.	Romania	Iraq
Unit no. 4 The integration and use of ICT in education	1. Designing school and extracurricular activities that involve the use of ICT resources	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	2. The use of ICT resources to facilitate the educational process in high school education	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	3. Adaptation and optimization of the educational process by integrating ICT in learning and evaluation activities	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	4. Evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of ICT use in the educational process in high school education	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Among the 6 elements of competence unit 5 (Knowledge, counseling and differentiated treatment of students) present in the Romanian document (Appendix 10), only one can be found in the document from Iraq (Appendix 2), respectively Planning activities for knowledge, counseling and treatment differentiated of students (table 7).

Table 7: Competence unit no. 5: Knowledge, counseling and differentiated treatment of students

Units of competence	The elements of the unit of competence	Romania	Iraq
Unit no. 5 Management of students	1. Planning activities for knowledge, counseling and differentiated treatment of students	•	•
	2. The use of appropriate models, methods, techniques of knowledge, counseling and differentiated treatment	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	3. Capitalizing on the data obtained through the application of models, methods, techniques and tools for knowledge, counseling and differentiated treatment of students	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	4. Evaluation of the effects of knowledge, counseling and differential treatment of students	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	5. Application of appropriate strategies of counseling a family, in specific problems school activity a the students	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	6. Effective management of the processes of school integration of students, relationships at the level of the class and the school organization and career guidance	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Of the 4 elements of competence unit 6 (Management of the class of students) present in the Romanian document (Annex 10) in the document from Iraq (Annex 2) two are found and two are not (Arrangement of the environment of the student class and Design of the class activity and organization of the group of students) (table 8).

Table 8: Competence unit no. 6: Management of the class of students

Units of competence	The elements of the unit of competence	Romania	Iraq
Unit no. 6 Management of the class of students	1. Arrangement of the environment of the student class	•	•
	2. Designing the class activity and organizing the group of students	•	•
	3. Organization and social leadership of the school group	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	4. Resolving conflicts between students and educational crises	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Among the 7 elements of competence unit 7 (Institutional development of the school and the school-community partnership) present in the Romanian document (Annex 10) in the document from Iraq (Annex 2) three are not found (Management of teamwork, Participation in the elaboration and the implementation of the institutional development project, Development together with educational partners and the local community of educational projects useful for the student-school-community axis) (table 9).

Table 9: Unit of competence no. 7: The institutional development of the school and the school-community partnership

Units of competence	The elements of the unit of competence	Romania	Iraq
Unit no. 7 Development of the school and the school-community partnership	1. Communication and relationship with members of the school organization	•	•
	2. Managing teamwork	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	3. Participation in the development and implementation of the institutional development project	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	4. Involvement in the specific activity of the quality assurance system in the school organization	•	•
	5. Effective communication with family/guardian	•	•
	6. Effective communication with educational partners, the community and employers	•	•
	7. The development together with the educational partners and the local community of educational projects useful for the student-school-community axis	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Among the 3 elements of competence unit 8 (Management of career and personal development) present in the Romanian document (Annex 10) in the Iraqi document (Annex 2) only one is found (Participation in specific training programs and activities) (table 10).

Table 10: Competence unit no. 8 : Career and personal development management

Units of competence	The elements of the unit of competence	Romania	Iraq
Unit no. 8 Career and development management	1. Designing your own professional training and career development path	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	2. Participation in specific training programs and activities	•	•
	3. Ensuring a flexible character of one's own career development by readjusting and reconsidering the initial project	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Of the 2 elements of competence unit 9 Applied educational research - present in the Romanian document (Annex 10) in the document from Iraq (Appendix 2), none is found (table 11).

Table 11: Competence unit no. 9: Applied Educational Research

Units of competence	The elements of the unit of competence	Romania	Iraq
Unit no. 9 Applied Educational Research	1. Research design	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	2. Carrying out the research	•	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

4. Discussions

In the Romanian documents, 42 competence elements are included in the 9 competences (professional and transversal). Of these, only 15 are also found in the documents from Iraq. It is noteworthy that none of the elements of competence unit 4 (Integration and use of ICT in education) or competence unit 9 (Applied educational research) present in the Romanian document (Annex 10) are found in the Iraqi document.

The legislative documents from Romania and Iraq operate with a series of defining professional competence categories for the teaching career.

The professional standard regarding the evolution in the teaching career contains and describes six professional competencies : 1 . Designing the educational activity; 2. Management and monitoring of the educational process; 3.Evaluation of educational activities; 4. Integration and use of ICT in education; 5. Knowledge, counseling and differentiated treatment of students; 6. Management of the class/group of students/children and three transversal skills : 7. Institutional development of the school and the school-community partnership; 8. Career and personal development management; 9. Applied educational research. And in Iraq it is considered that the essential professional standards for the description of the profession of a teacher. Based on the recommendations of the strategy for the training and qualification of secondary school teachers in Iraq, the Ministry, in cooperation with UNESCO, established the Authority for the Development of the Teaching Profession, whose tasks include the construction of professional standards for teachers.

The comparative analysis highlighted the fact that, while in the Romanian documents each unit of competence is thoroughly described by measurable elements, it is comprehensive, because it provides an integrated picture of all the components of education and solutions to different aspects that are raised by schools, which is not available in the Iraqi documents. Based on these observations, those general competencies in the Iraqi model do not facilitate the process of teacher evaluation.

This holistic vision appears as a guide for principals, inspectors and teachers when developing training programs and designing educational content, because it establishes in advance the expected results, and as a reference for choosing appropriate teaching methods, integrating ICT in education and benefiting from applied educational research.

For both cultures, however, the need to identify skills and elements of competence differentiated according to the stage of professional training is very clear

- initial training;
- continuous training;
- education levels;
- on steps of evolution in the teaching career (teaching degrees).

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