
The Strategies and Barriers of Career Development for Young Doctors in Romania – An Overview of the Romanian Medical System

Author: Oana Maria Lungu (Dragomir), Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania, oanal2o@yahoo.com

The main purpose of the paper is to illustrate the actual and current situation of the human resources within the Romanian medical system. The objective is to reflect the main aspects regarding the beginning and the development of the medical career for the young doctors in Romania.

Furthermore, we will reveal the results of a research that had as main goal to demonstrate the interlinks among medical career choice, the job satisfaction and performance.

Although, those concerns are frequently met for all the main domains of activity, the medical system have not adopted strategies regarding those terms.

Keywords: *medical career, Romanian medical system, personal branding*

Introduction

The medical career development has been an issue seldom taken into consideration by the Romanian authorities, even if during the last decade over 20,000 doctors has chosen to work and develop their career outside the borders of Romania.

There is an acute necessity to adopt strategies in order to motivate and retain the doctors (as to attract them to work in the rural areas) such as: life-long training programs, access to new technologies, work-life balance

programs, professional management, motivating salaries and work conditions for all medical personnel (doctors and auxiliary personnel).

Theoretical aspects regarding the medical career development

At the beginning, the paper underlines few theoretical elements that were chosen in order to emphasize the career management development paths, afterwards it brings to light the practical aspects regarding the Romanian doctors career.

Regarding the proper implementation of the studied theories, there have been taken into consideration, according to the Holland¹ theory, what pattern of personality matches the medical system workers - ISA - investigative, social, artistic, what degree of satisfaction and job achievement (according to Dawis and Lofquist² theory) is needed, if there is a positive interaction between the individual and his work environment, the social and economic context, if the individual expectations are met (the Vroom³ theory).

The social and economic context of career development for Romanian doctors has a major role, and all the expectations, predictions (according to Lent, Brown and Hackett⁴ theory) will have a positive impact if all the environmental and developmental factors are taken into consideration (the Super⁵ and Krumboltz⁶ theories).

¹ Holland, J. L. (1985). Making vocational choices: A theory of personalities and work environment. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

² Dawis, R. V., & Lofquist, L. H. (1984). A psychological theory of work adjustment. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press;

³ Vroom V H. Work and motivation. New York: Wiley, 1964, pg. 331., Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh. PA);

⁴ Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 45, 79-122;

⁵ Super, D.E. (1990) A Life-Span, Life-Space Approach to Career Development in Brown, D. Brooks, L. & Associates (2nd edn) *Career Choice and Development* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pg. 197-261;

⁶ Krumboltz, J.D. (1994). Improving career development theory from a social learning perspective. In Savickas, M.L. & Lent, R.L. (eds.), *Convergence in Career Development Theories*, 9-31. Palo Alto, California: CPP Books;

As a conclusion, the paper brings to attention the basic theoretical marks, the theories that may influence the development of a career within the Romanian medical system. The theoretical elements are included in a research study and the obtained results may represent starting points for young doctors in developing and managing a successful career. As for the theoretical aspects regarding the motivation of medical employees, we presented the Maslow⁷ reference points.

The medical employee's motivation is a poorly appreciated issue nationally speaking, although the development of some motivation strategies will lead to an increase of the personnel retention.

The public medical system lacks the management pursuit for intrinsic and extrinsic factors (according to Herzberg⁸ theory), meaning developing optimum job relationships, work and efforts recognition, work security. One of the theories which most reflect the situation of the human resources within the medical system is the Equity theory (Adams⁹ theory). Having this theory as a major support, we developed the research study in order to show its applicability.

Using the theoretical support, it is proven that the young and unexperienced doctors have chosen their career due to their expectations regarding the personal development, access to technology, networking, and job satisfaction when helping the sick people.

As seen for all the domains of activity, there is always the tendency to make comparisons when referring to others on same professional levels or even on other fields.

Career choice - Job Satisfaction – Job Performance Correlations

The research undertaken refers to the core subjects of medical career – the decision, satisfaction and performance. In order to obtain clear information, the research has been divided in two different multiple choice questionnaires, one about the influences of career choices, and the other showing the link between job satisfaction and performance.

⁷ Maslow Abraham, "Motivation and Personality", 1954;

⁸ Herzberg F., Work and the Nature of Man, Staples, 1966;

⁹ <http://www.businessballs.com/adamsequitytheory.htm>, retrieved 28.01.2014;

The questions needed to be answered refer to¹⁰:

- What are the factors and situations that influence individuals to choose a career?
- What kind of impact their career choice has on their performance at work?
- What is the relationship between career satisfaction and their performance?
- How the parents affect the career choice?
- How the does the media affect in choosing a career?
- What are the reasons for dissatisfaction from medical profession?
- What type of improvements the young doctors want in their benefit packages?

| SATISFACTIE PERFORMAN REMUNERATI | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| SATISFACTIE | 1.000000 | 0.384636 | 0.622752 |
| PERFORMAN | 0.384636 | 1.000000 | 0.435346 |
| REMUNERATI | 0.622752 | 0.435346 | 1.000000 |

Figure 1: The correlation matrix for job satisfaction-job performance-salary

The results have shown that the choice regarding a medical career is not related to family or friend's involvement, but more on obtaining a certain reputation and acknowledgement from the peers.

Also, the perspective of a well-paid working place is a more important element in medical career choice.

The greatest concern for all the people attending the research was the finding of a good working place (hospital) that offers the possibility and the necessary factors to develop a successful career with promotion possibilities and life-long programs.

As for the conclusions reached after evaluating the answers concerning the job satisfaction and performance, there have been both expected and unexpected results. A large number of respondents agreed that they are pleased with all their working conditions, with their tasks, having

¹⁰ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/14525845/Impact-of-Career-Choice-on-Job-Performance>, retrieved 20.03.2014;

the certainty that their work provides development of their working department.

The econometric studies on the interrelation among career choice, job satisfaction and performance have led to many interpretations as the doctors provided a variety of answers and the study sample had a slightly reduced dimension (the final number of respondents, given valid answers, were 109).

Recommendations regarding the study¹¹

- There is a considerable evidence that young people develop unrealistic information about career from media and these images cannot be corrected through career counseling which is poorly done in medical educational institutions;
- There should be more interaction between students and employers or employing organizations within medical system, otherwise they will remain unrealistic;
- Career decision-making is a lifelong process occurring through an individual's life, there is a more need to improve career development within the institution (hospital).

Factors of Career Development for Romanian Doctors

After presenting the most important theoretical guidelines and the results of the study, there is necessary to reveal the core characteristics of the Romanian doctor: the will of continuous training and development, creativity, spontaneity, courage and the stamina for a high workload.

More important, there are two matters that help creating and maintaining a medical career, namely: creating a personal development plan and a personal brand. Although neglected for this field of activity, those aspects may contribute to a harmonious and facile development of the career, and even gaining reputation among peers.

The doctors that have acknowledged the necessity and importance of those factors of professional and personal development had immediate and positive feedback, among patients and peers.

¹¹ Idem 10

As a first step in the personal development process, it is recommended for young doctors to fulfill their SWOT analysis in order to discover the opportunities and the development factors that need to be improved.

Table 1: The SWOT analysis for medical careers choice

| Strenghts | Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a good reputation - belonging to a well-known hospital - trainings and specialisation in the field of activity - personal branding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communication issues with hospital management - teamwork issues - limited law regulations - the lack of WLB programs - overtime work |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the possibility to access technology and updated equipment - the possibility to have access to life-long trainings (even abroad) - the possibility to be part of the team in an impressive hospital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continious competition in each medical specialisation - the lack of financial support for national training programs - the lack of a legal framework regarding doctors remunerations according to their performance |

The Romanian Medical System

In order to describe the Romanian medical system (taking into consideration the importance of the human resources), the main aspect that would reveal the actual and updated situation is the comparison of the Health Consumer Report in 2013 that showed the position of the Romanian health system within the EU countries. Its last but one place in the European top, between Serbia and Latvia shows that the national health system lacks a lot of developing elements both for patients and medical personnel.

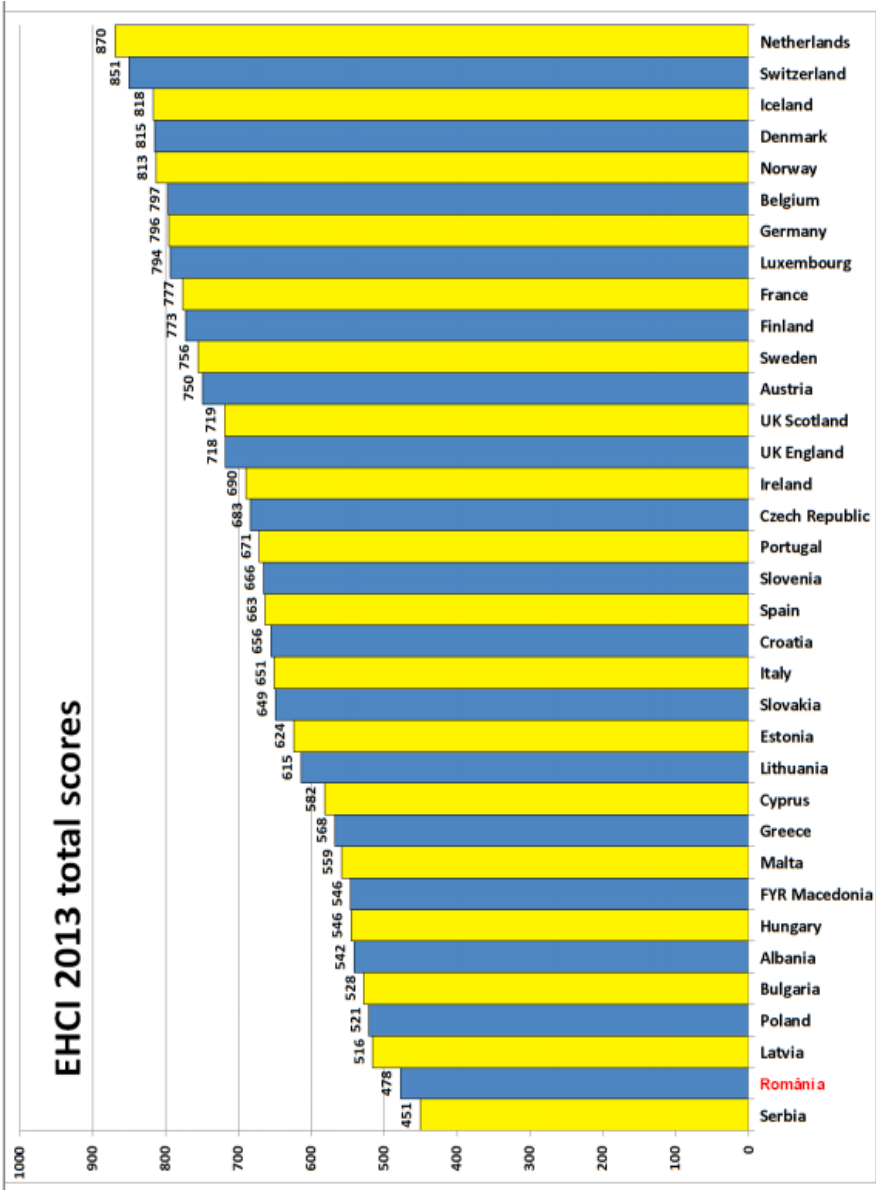


Figure 2: Health Policies Among European Countries (general situation)¹²
 MU – Points for 35 measuring indicators of the health system

¹² Health Consumer Powerhouse

The statistics and researches regarding the doctor's mobility had shown the breadth of this phenomenon and its factors.

Table 2: The number of doctors that left Romania 2007-2011¹³

| Year | Number of people |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2007 | 2200 |
| 2008 | 1252 |
| 2009 | 1900 |
| 2010 | 2779 |
| 2011-the first 8 months of the year | 1700 |

Regarding the mobility of the medical personnel, there is a lack of statistical information for the last few years.

Nevertheless, the number is increasing from one year to another. A study of the Romanian Doctors College¹⁴ has shown the following:

- 54% of the responding doctors want to leave the country;
- 89% would like to go to work in one of the EU countries;
- 55% of them stated that the main reason of leaving the country is the low salary;
- 40% have also mentioned the bad working conditions.

Conclusions

The purpose of the paper was to propose some recommendations and perspectives regarding the retention of the medical personnel, both in rural and urban, based on theoretical and practical researches.

The conclusion is that there is an acute need for a medium and long term national strategy to develop the human capital and furthermore, the ability of finding the solutions for its retention and motivation.

¹³ www.cmr.ro;

¹⁴ www.cmr.ro

The barriers and difficulties regarding Romanian doctors mobility may be: the knowledge of foreign languages, reluctance regarding risk-taking, the lack of professional experience, age, family.

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