

Role of the European Funds' Absorption on School Management

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Abstract. *European non-reimbursable funds are funding lines that aim to achieve objectives of European or national interest. The absorption of non-reimbursable funds in schools is an important opportunity for education development, but it also requires responsibility and management capacity. The current research is based on survey responses of school managers regarding the implementation of the non-reimbursed financed projects in schools during the period 2021-2 2024. The research results were obtained using descriptive statistics, correlation and factor analysis with SPSS 30.0 software. The current research can represent a basis for well-thought-out strategies and effective collaborations, that schools can transform into significant improvements for their communities.*

Keywords: External funding, School management, PNRR, National Recovery and Resilience Plan, Erasmus.

Introduction

The general concept of "*European funds*" designates the non-repayable financing instruments allocated to the Member States of the European Union, in order to reduce the economic and social development gaps between them. Non-repayable funds are non-refundable sums of money, through which the EU seeks to achieve objectives of European or national/regional interest, in order to reduce economic, social and territorial disparities. European funds are managed by the European Commission (jointly) and by each Member State individually. The money is used for public investments (infrastructure, etc.), more competitive SMEs, education, social inclusion, combating discrimination and – in recent years – digitalization and green transition.

Funding calls fall within certain programmatic periods, which are 7 years long. We are currently in the middle of the 2021-2027 period. In 2025, funding from the European Commission will boost green and digital transitions, job creation, support for Ukraine and help address migration challenges and the Middle East crisis

In the period 2007-2013, Romania attracted 91% of the 27 billion euros available. In 2014-2020, the percentage was 84% of 41 billion euros; in the current exercise (2021-2027), not even 3% of the European funds that Romania has at its disposal (45.08 billion euros) have been attracted. Starting from the still low level of absorption of non-refundable funds at the level of pre-university education units, also enhanced by the lack of experience of human resources in schools in accessing grants and, moreover, in managing them for the benefit of the educational

DOI: 10.2478/picbe-2025-0059

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act, we propose to highlight some mechanisms for absorbing existing European funds at the level of the Romanian education system in the period 2021-2024 and to reflect their implementation at the institutional level.

If we were to make an analysis of the positive effects of the European funds projects' implementation, we can emphasize the analysis of Martins et al. (2024) on the teachers in Portugal. The authors results take as example the impact of transnational mobility projects, such as Erasmus+ and reveal the *"continuing professional development of teaching and non-teaching staff of schools for the sole purpose of improving the quality of education, as well as establishing networks of communications [...]"*. Gorette Alonso de Castro and Garcia- Penalvo (2023) presented good practices of Erasmus + projects that are linked to the impact of the educational process: *"improvement in concrete professional skills as well as digital competencies; problem solving and practical approach; training, tutoring and mentoring along the process; digital tools with attractive environments to foster the participation of all interested agents; a well-defined methodology; exchange of good practices and recommendations with good communication channels; opensource materials; curriculum integration"*.

Literature review

External funding plays a vital role in school management by providing additional resources that can enhance educational programs, improve facilities, and support various initiatives.

Here are some key aspects of its role.

Financial Support. External funding sources, such as grants, donations and sponsorships can significantly alleviate budget constraints faced by schools. This additional funding allows for better educational materials, technologies and equipment. *"Having a good idea is only one part of the equation. Having the funds to execute it is the other important element."* (Ramkrishna, 2020)

Program Expansion. Schools can use external funds to implement new programs or expand existing ones, such as extracurricular activities, specialized courses or after-school tutoring. This can enrich the educational experience for pupils.

Infrastructure Improvement. Funding from external sources can facilitate necessary renovations or construction projects that might not be attainable through regular school budgets. Improved facilities can enhance the school environment and attract more students.

Professional Development. External funding can support teacher training and professional development, ensuring that educators stay up to date with teaching methods and educational technologies.

Community Engagement. Schools that successfully attract external funding often engage more actively with the community. Partnerships with local businesses, non-profits, and other organizations can lead to collaborative efforts that benefit both students and the broader community.

Diversity of Funding Sources. Relying on a mix of funding sources can drive innovation and reduce dependence on governmental funding, which can be unpredictable. It allows schools to tailor their initiatives to the unique needs of their student populations.

Accountability and Reporting. While external funding can be beneficial, it often comes with requirements for accountability and reporting. Schools must manage these obligations, ensuring they use funds effectively and transparently.

A good school manager cannot lead efficiently and responsibly as long as he does not know the principles and functions of the teaching process, the specifics of educational

management. In terms of the act of managing educational units, the school manager is not only an administrative manager, but is the leader of the entire activity carried out by the school unit, both in an administrative way and in an instructive-educational way. (Parsloe and Leedham, 2016) The school manager must be sufficiently competent in managing material and monetary funds, as well as in supervising the way in which buildings, furniture and teaching materials are maintained. The modern principal is the one who capitalizes on human and material resources, in bringing value to the school, through good relations with the internal and external factors of influence of the school. Effective leadership must use the motivational and satisfaction-generating aspects of the activities performed as an advantage and, at the same time, overcome or compensate those aspects that demotivate or bring dissatisfaction. Each teacher must believe in his colleagues, trust being the element that maintains the cohesion of a team. (Botha et al., 2015)

There are several European programs for financing the education. The most known is Erasmus+ program that supports activities linked to education, training, youth and sport. The European Commission establishes the policies related to Erasmus+ and supervises its general implementation. Funding is provided following two ways: decentralised actions managed by the national agencies at the level of the EU member states and centralised actions managed directly at the level of the European Commission. Another program is Education and Employment Program, a vocational training program for: preschool education, employment for all, university dropout, VET. (<https://mfe.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/84774ec679584793c3f386751cfaf3e4.pdf>, accessed March 2025)

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan of Romania (PNRR) should be regarded as an opportunity to strengthen the country's resilience to crisis situations, its adaptation capacity and its growth potential in a digitalized and green environment. PNRR has an Education component that aims to increase the resilience capacity of Romanian education system, investing in the modernization of the equipment and infrastructure used in education, correlated with the present and future needs of the labor market from the perspective of ensuring a qualitative, modern and inclusive educational process. (<https://pnrr.edu.ro/despre-pnrr>, accessed March 2025)

In Romania, the adoption of Education Laws in 2023 represented a reference point for the modernization of the education system, together with the priorities established by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, the Education and Employment Program (PEO) and other European and national funding sources, within the context of global rapid changes such as acceleration of ICT, together with the need of reducing inequalities. (https://www.edu.ro/raport_activitate_X_2022_XII_2023, accessed march 2025)

Methodology

Research method and data collection

The research method is based on statistical analysis in SPSS 30.0 software, using the data collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaires were sent online and were filled in by 62 school managers from Romania during January 2025.

The hypotheses were developed from previous interviews with school managers:

H1. The evaluation of the degree of the education process improvement in school as a result of implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing can be done mainly through: more attractive lessons, decrease in school absenteeism, decrease in school leave, decrease in bullying in schools, improvement of family- school relationship, increase in the percentage of passing school exams, improvement of school grades.

H2. The main difficulties in obtaining non-reimbursable funds are: lack of qualified human resource, complexity of the documentation to be filled in, complexity of the information documentation, time management, financial management, risk management.

H3. The main proposals for improving the efficiency of accessing and implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing are: specialized training with a practical side, attending workshops for filling in applications hosted by experts within the field, existence of dedicated platforms with specific information for each project type, training in financial management for projects, attending specialized meetings with representatives of the city halls, school inspectorates relevant ministry, Erasmus Agency.

Sample description

The questionnaire was distributed online to over 150 school managers and, we got 62 answers. The school managers that responded to the questionnaire represent schools mainly from Bucharest (93,5%). (Table 1)

Table 1. County of the school

In which county is the school?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Arges	1	1.6	1.6	1.6
	Bihor	1	1.6	1.6	3.2
	Bucharest	58	93.5	93.5	96.8
	Galati	1	1.6	1.6	98.4
	Ilfov	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	62	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

The managers of the school occupy a management position obtained manly by audition (95,2%). (Table 2)

Table 2. Managerial position

Managerial position					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Audition	59	95.2	95.2	95.2
	Detachment	3	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	62	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

School managers have between a minimum of one year and a maximum of 30 years experience in educational management, with an average of almost 12 years. (Table 3)

Table 3. Experience in educational management

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How many years do you have in educational management?	61	1	30	11.97	7.102
Valid N (listwise)	61				

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

School managers have between a minimum of seven years and a maximum of 46 years experience in teaching, with an average of almost 30 years. (Table 4)

Table 4. Experience in teaching

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How many years do you have in teaching?	62	7	46	29.61	8.827
Valid N (listwise)	62				

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

Results and discussions

In this section we present the main findings of the research.

The first construct is *evaluation of the degree of the education process improvement in school as a result of implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing* and is measured through the following variables: more attractive lessons [1], decrease in school absenteeism [2], decrease in school leave [3], decrease in bullying in schools [4], improvement of family- school relationship [5], increase in the percentage of passing school exams [6], improvement of school grades [7].

According to the results from the Table 5, there is a strong correlation between: decrease in school absenteeism [2] and improvement of family- school relationship [5] (Pearson coefficient = 0,927, sig. = 0,01); decrease in school leave [3] and improvement of school grades [7] (Pearson coefficient = 0,811, sig. = 0,01); increase in the percentage of passing school exams [6] and improvement of school grades [7] (Pearson coefficient = 0,813, sig. = 0,01); more attractive lessons [1] and increase in the percentage of passing school exams [6] (Pearson coefficient = 0,712, sig. = 0,01); decrease in school absenteeism [2] and decrease in school leave [3] (Pearson coefficient = 0,807, sig. = 0,01).

Table 5. Correlations for the evaluation of the degree of the education process improvement in school as a result of implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing

Correlations		[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]
[1]	Pearson Correlation	1	.572**	.552**	.503**	.535**	.712**	.622**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
[2]	Pearson Correlation	.572**	1	.807**	.664**	.927**	.653**	.698**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
[3]	Pearson Correlation	.552**	.807**	1	.742**	.752**	.729**	.811**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
[4]	Pearson Correlation	.503**	.664**	.742**	1	.631**	.723**	.586**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62

Correlations								
		[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]
[5]	Pearson Correlation	.535**	.927**	.752**	.631**	1	.587**	.603**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
[6]	Pearson Correlation	.712**	.653**	.729**	.723**	.587**	1	.813**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62
[7]	Pearson Correlation	.622**	.698**	.811**	.586**	.603**	.813**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62	62

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

Caring out a dimension reduction by factor analysis, we aim to define one or more variables that best describe the *evaluation of the degree of the education process improvement in school as a result of implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing*. The Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test has the value of 0,806, while the significance is lower than 0,001. (Table 6)

Table 6. KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.806
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	309.599
	df	10
	Sig.	<.001

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

The table of the explained variance presents one dimension that resume the information, explaining 79,123% of the variation of the phenomenon. (Table 7)

Table 7. Total variance explained

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.956	79.123	79.123	3.956	79.123	79.123
2	.607	12.137	91.260			
3	.229	4.586	95.846			
4	.144	2.889	98.735			
5	.063	1.265	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

The results from the Table 8 allow to define the main variables for *evaluation of the degree of the education process improvement in school as a result of implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing*. The component matrix shows the extracted factor, with the following dimensions: decrease in school absenteeism [2], decrease in school leave [3], improvement of family- school relationship [5], increase in the percentage of passing school exams [6], improvement of school grades [7].

Table 8. Component matrix

Component Matrix^a	
	Component
	1
The evaluation of the degree of the educational process improvement in my school as a result of implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing can be done through decrease of school absenteeism	.921
The evaluation of the degree of the educational process improvement in my school as a result of implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing can be done through decrease in school leave	.924
The evaluation of the degree of the educational process improvement in my school as a result of implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing can be done through improvement of the family- school relationship	.872
The evaluation of the degree of the educational process improvement in my school as a result of implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing can be done through increase in the percentage of passing school exams	.847
The evaluation of the degree of the educational process improvement in my school as a result of implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing can be done through improvement in school grades	.882
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.	
a. 1 components extracted.	

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

According to the reliability statistics, the value of Cronbach's Alpha is 0,931. (Table 9)

Table 9. Reliability statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.931	5

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

Thus, H1 is partially validated. H1. The evaluation of the degree of the education process improvement in school as a result of implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing can be done mainly through: decrease in school absenteeism, decrease in school leave, improvement of family- school relationship, increase in the percentage of passing school exams, improvement of school grades.

The second construct is represented by the *difficulties in obtaining non-reimbursable funds* and is measured through the following variables: lack of qualified human resource [1], complexity of the documentation to be filled in [2], complexity of the information documentation [3], time management [4], financial management [5], risk management [6].

According to the results from the Table 10, there is a strong correlation between: lack of qualified human resource [1] and complexity of the documentation to be filled in [2] (Pearson coefficient = 0,918, sig. = 0,01); time management [4] and financial management [5] (Pearson coefficient = 0,848, sig. = 0,01); complexity of the information documentation [3] and financial management [5] (Pearson coefficient = 0,648, sig. = 0,01).

Table 10. Correlations for the evaluation of the difficulties in obtaining non-reimbursable funds

		Correlations					
		[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
[1]	Pearson Correlation	1	.918**	.482**	.343**	.304*	.480**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	.006	.016	<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62
[2]	Pearson Correlation	.918**	1	.513**	.357**	.307*	.378**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	.004	.015	.002
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62
[3]	Pearson Correlation	.482**	.513**	1	.546**	.648**	.468**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62
[4]	Pearson Correlation	.343**	.357**	.546**	1	.848**	.462**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.004	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62
[5]	Pearson Correlation	.304*	.307*	.648**	.848**	1	.467**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.015	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62
[6]	Pearson Correlation	.480**	.378**	.468**	.462**	.467**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.002	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	62	62	62	62	62	62

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

Caring out a dimension reduction by factor analysis, we aim to define one or more variables that best describe the *difficulties in obtaining non-reimbursable funds*. The Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test has the value of 0,655, while the significance is lower than 0,001. (Table 11)

Table 11. KMO and Bartlett's test

		KMO and Bartlett's Test
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.655
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	235.332
	df	10
	Sig.	<.001

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

The table of the explained variance presents two dimension that resume the information. The first dimension allows us to explain 45,820% of the variation of the phenomenon. The second dimension allows us to explain 45,733% of the total variance. The cumulated variance of 86,999% underlines the fact that the reduction of the phenomenon to two dimensions can allow us to explain the measured phenomenon by 5 variables. (Table 12)

Table 12. Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Total Variance Explained		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.108	62.152	62.152	3.108	62.152	62.152	2.291	45.820	45.820
2	1.242	24.847	86.999	1.242	24.847	86.999	2.059	41.179	86.999
3	.437	8.750	95.748						
4	.133	2.654	98.402						
5	.080	1.598	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

The results from the Table 13 allow to define the main variables for the *difficulties in obtaining non-reimbursable funds*. The rotated component matrix shows the extracted factors, with the following dimensions for each factor:

- Factor 1: lack of qualified human resource [1], complexity of the documentation to be filled in [2];
- Factor 2: complexity of the information documentation [3], time management [4], financial management [5].

Table 13. Rotated component matrix

Rotated Component Matrix ^a		
	Component	
	1	2
One of the difficulties in obtaining non-reimbursable funds is lack of qualified human resource	.182	.955
One of the difficulties in obtaining non-reimbursable funds is complexity of the documentation to be filled in	.199	.955
One of the difficulties in obtaining non-reimbursable funds is complexity of information documentation	.693	.444
One of the difficulties in obtaining non-reimbursable funds is time management	.910	.157
One of the difficulties in obtaining non-reimbursable funds is financial management	.954	.115

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

According to the reliability statistics, the value of Cronbach's Alpha is 0,845. (Table 14)

Table 14. Reliability statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.845	5

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

Thus, H2 is partially validated. H2. The main difficulties in obtaining non-reimbursable funds are: lack of qualified human resource, complexity of the documentation to be filled in, complexity of the information documentation, time management, financial management.

The third construct is *improving the efficiency of accessing and implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing* and is measured through the following variables: specialized training with a practical side [1], attending workshops for filling in applications hosted by experts

within the field [2], existence of dedicated platforms with specific information for each project type [3], training in financial management for projects [4], attending specialized meetings with representatives of the city halls, school inspectorates, relevant ministry, Erasmus Agency [5].

According to the results from the Table 15, there is a strong correlation between: specialized training with a practical side [1] and training in financial management for projects [4] (Pearson coefficient = 0,788, sig. = 0,001); attending workshops for filling in applications hosted by experts within the field [2] and existence of dedicated platforms with specific information for each project type [3] (Pearson coefficient = 0,703, sig. = 0,001); existence of dedicated platforms with specific information for each project type [3] and attending specialized meetings with representatives of the city halls, school inspectorates, relevant ministry, Erasmus Agency [5] (Pearson coefficient = 0,805, sig. = 0,001); training in financial management for projects [4] and attending specialized meetings with representatives of the city halls, school inspectorates, relevant ministry, Erasmus Agency [5] (Pearson coefficient = 0,733, sig. = 0,001).

Table 15. Correlations for improving the efficiency of accessing and implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing

		Correlations				
		[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
[1]	Pearson Correlation	1	.526**	.422**	.788**	.579**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62
[2]	Pearson Correlation	.526**	1	.703**	.565**	.641**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62
[3]	Pearson Correlation	.422**	.703**	1	.613**	.805**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001	<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62
[4]	Pearson Correlation	.788**	.565**	.613**	1	.733**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001		<.001
	N	62	62	62	62	62
[5]	Pearson Correlation	.579**	.641**	.805**	.733**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	
	N	62	62	62	62	62

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

Caring out a dimension reduction by factor analysis, we aim to define one or more variables that best describe the *improving the efficiency of accessing and implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing*. The Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test has the value of 0,690, while the significance is lower than 0,001. (Table 16)

Table 16. KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's Test			
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			.690
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square		107.388
	df		3
	Sig.		<.001

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

The table of the explained variance presents one dimension that resume the information, explaining 81,203% of the variation of the phenomenon. (Table 17)

Table 17. Total variance explained

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.436	81.203	81.203	2.436	81.203	81.203
2	.394	13.149	94.352			
3	.169	5.648	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

The results from the Table 18 allow to define the main variables for *improving the efficiency of accessing and implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing*. The component matrix shows the extracted factor, with the following dimensions: existence of dedicated platforms with specific information for each project type [3], training in financial management for projects [4], attending specialized meetings with representatives of the city halls, school inspectorates, relevant ministry, Erasmus Agency [5].

Table 18. Component matrix

Component Matrix ^a	
	Component
	1
One proposal for efficiency of accessing and implementing projects with non-reimbursement financing is the existence of dedicated platforms with specific information for each project type	.896
One proposal for efficiency of accessing and implementing projects with non-reimbursement financing is training in financial management for projects	.863
One proposal for efficiency of accessing and implementing projects with non-reimbursement financing is attending specialized meetings with representatives of the city halls, school inspectorates, relevant ministry, Erasmus Agency etc.	.942

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

According to the reliability statistics, the value of Cronbach's Alpha is 0,880. (Table 19)

Table 19. Reliability statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.880	3

Source: Authors' own research, using SPSS 30.00 for Mac.

Thus, H3 is partially validated. H3. The main proposals for improving the efficiency of accessing and implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing are: existence of dedicated platforms with specific information for each project type, training in financial management for projects, attending specialized meetings with representatives of the city halls, school inspectorates relevant ministry, Erasmus Agency.

Conclusion

In summary, external funding can enhance school management by providing essential resources for education improvement, infrastructure, and community relationships. The evaluation of the degree of the education process improvement in school as a result of implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing can be done mainly through: decrease in school absenteeism, decrease in school leave, improvement of family- school relationship, increase in the percentage of passing school exams, improvement of school grades. The main difficulties in obtaining non-reimbursable funds are: lack of qualified human resource, complexity of the documentation to be filled in, complexity of the information documentation, time management, financial management. The main proposals for improving the efficiency of accessing and implementing projects with non-reimbursable financing are: existence of dedicated platforms with specific information for each project type, training in financial management for projects, attending specialized meetings with representatives of the city halls, school inspectorates relevant ministry, Erasmus Agency. Thus, schools must strategically manage these funds to maximize their impact. However, based on the discussions with school managers, schools mainly receive support in accessing and implementing non-reimbursed financed projects from city hall, school inspectorate, Ministry of Education and Teachers House. There were few school representatives with no support received. In terms of actionable policy recommendations for improving fund absorption and efficiency at different levels of governance, our proposals are: measures for receiving the funds with less delay and an increased number of dedicated personnel at the level of public administrations.

This paper was co-financed by the Bucharest University of Economic Studies during the PhD program.

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