

STRATEGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

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Abstract

Through education, people become specialists in a field of activity and can bring added value to society as a whole. Increasing the standard of living and quality of life is based on education, through the accumulation of knowledge, skills and complements to put them to personal and societal benefit. Choosing the right school for children completing middle school is essential for developing career prospects. Often, it makes you think about the following aspects: "is the high school close to home?", "is it a private high school or a state high school?", "what are the essential attributes for choosing a high school?". In fact, choosing the right high school must start from the children's vocations, their talents and their inclinations towards a particular preferred subject. Therefore, the observation of children throughout their school development, by parents and teachers, is essential in developing career perspectives for future high school students. Thus, strategies for developing educational services in private high schools take into account the vocations of children. Focusing on the talents of high school students is the basis of a comprehensive strategy and the starting point for providing quality educational services. The present paper assesses the private high school educational services in Romania and generates a plan strategy to enhance the development of this kind of educational services. In 2023, there were a total of 7102 education units in Romania, of which 6180 were public and 922 were private, according to the Romanian Institute of Statistics. The quality of education offered with an emphasis on talent and vocations, the lunch conditions and the cleanliness of the buildings, the safety offered, and the financial costs were criteria for differentiating between public and private education units in Romania. We propose a "meaningful private high school" as one that is based on the following values: creativity, courage and humanity. By implementing development strategies based on these values, we will succeed in offering high school children a better life and a high quality of life.

Keywords: high school education, SWOT analysis, school enrollment rate, school dropout rate

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1. Introduction

A distinction has always been made between hard skills (technical knowledge and skills, cognitive skills) and soft skills (empathy and social interrelationship, non-cognitive skills) (Heckman et al., 2006). Thus, the personal preferences of employers take precedence over the academic knowledge of employees. Moreover, the development of artificial intelligence (AI) covering analytical tasks is leading humanity towards an era of the “Feeling Economy” in which human qualities are paramount (Huang et al., 2019).

By practicing non-cognitive skills from high school, children will be able to meet the current demands of the labor market (Chen & Chen, 2025). Social emotional competence leads to positive youth development according to studies conducted by Taylor et al. (2017). Moreover, social emotional competence is directly responsible for achieving a solid career (Cipriano et al., 2023) and increasing the quality of life (Shi & Cheung, 2024).

A private high school based on cultivating vocations and talents will aim to instill the values of trust and self-esteem, collaboration through teamwork, emotional communication, and the ability to relate to peers (Gil-Hernandez, 2021).

The 21st-century skills are critical thinking, digital literacy and emotional intelligence (Maoulida et al., 2023). These skills are more pronounced in private high schools than in public ones (Martínez-Bravo, 2022). The Romanian public education system comes with a lack of resources, overcrowded classrooms, and constant political changes that affect the entire public education system (Grigoriu, 2025).

Education services represent an investment in the economy and society with a view to their development (Febrianti et al., 2023). Unfortunately, the high cost of quality education limits access for students who do not have the money to learn in a high-performing system (OECD, 2019).

This paper first conducts an economic analysis of supply and demand for private high school education services in Romania, continues with a SWOT analysis of private high school services in Romania, and finally develops a unified development strategy for private high school education services in Romania.

The importance of this paper stems from the fact that private high school education services need a unified approach to educational provision in order to develop the empathy and interpersonal skills of potential students and future employees in the Romanian labor market.

Moreover, in order to raise the standard of living of the community as a whole, private high school education services create the right context for economic and social prosperity.

2. Literature review

According to Niche (2025), the selection of the best private high schools in America is based on their academic reputation and excellence. In addition,

the student-teacher interaction that develops over the years of study is important for potential students to develop an interest in the subjects.

For example, Groton School in Massachusetts (tuition \$44,800, student-teacher ratio: 5:1, students: 1,146) is considered to be the best private high school in America. Private high schools in America have always been intended for the wealthy, with fantastically high tuition fees and admission based on family connections passed down from generation to generation. The scholarship system and transparency in admissions have improved access over the past 10 years for high school students from a wider range of social classes, including those with high and average incomes. However, white students are still in the majority at prestigious private high schools in America, and racial issues have often been a topic of discussion (Newsweek, 2025).

Tarkhnishvili et al. (2022) analyzes the reasons why parents choose private high schools over public ones. The analysis is conducted at the level of high schools in Georgia and highlights the fact that the reputation of the high school, the importance of parental involvement in the process of choosing their child's future, and the social status of families are essential in choosing private high schools over public ones. Azimi et al. (2023) researched how private high schools influence students' performance in literature and mathematics, and the results confirmed that some private schools outperform public schools. According to Shakeel & Dills (2023) enrollment in private schools has boomed worldwide, from around 14% in 2000 to 18% in 2019, and the countries that have diversified enrollment in private schools have made better progress in learning than those that have not.

The public education system in Romania is rightly criticized. The figures are frightening. The pass rate for the aptitude test (8th grade for 9th grade) barely exceeds 70%, and for the baccalaureate (12th grade for university) it does not even reach 70%. In Romania, public education is free. However, parents still pay significant amounts each year for the “class” fund, the “school” fund, security, video surveillance systems within the school, transportation, in some cases, alternative textbooks and workbooks, and, last but not least, private tutoring (Agerpres, 2025).

Over the last 10 years (2014-2023), private high schools in Romania have seen a steady increase in demand and supply. According to the Romanian Institute of Statistics, in 2023 there were 922 private educational institutions registered, of which 88 were high schools. A total of 18,742 high school students were enrolled in these schools.

The largest increase in the number of private schools in Romania took place between 2012 and 2013, with an increase of 49 schools in that year. In the following years, the increase was steady, but did not maintain the same rapid pace. Most private schools are located in the Bucharest-Ilfov region, with 69 schools, 55 of which are in Bucharest alone.

Cluj ranks second in the ranking, with 24 such educational institutions, followed by Constanta, with 20 schools, and Iasi, with 15.

Firstly, private high schools are in demand because they offer a modern learning environment with opportunities for an international university career. Secondly, parents believe that the best financial investment is in their children's future, and allocate part of the family budget to pay for private education services.

The novelty it brings to the field our research is that it is usefully to have a development strategy created specifically for private high schools in Romania. In this way, prospective students can be provided with soft skills for their professional careers.

3. Research methodology and methods

First, we conducted a detailed analysis using up-to-date data on the supply and demand for private education services at the high school level. For this purpose, we used the databases of the National Institute of Statistics of Romania. The data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted. The following reference indicators for the private education services system at the high school level in Romania were considered, namely: Education units, by categories of units and ownerships in Romania; The evolution of the Private education units in Romania; The evolution of the enrolled population in private high schools in Romania; The evolution of the Classroom teachers in private education in Romania.

The data was organized into tables and figures to increase the degree of analysis and highlight the evolution of the phenomenon. The data was interpreted over a 10-year period, from 2014 to 2023, with 2023 being the most recent year in the Statistics Institute's database for which we had complete annual information.

The data analysis was supplemented with a SWOT analysis, and finally, the proposed development strategy was outlined.

4. Results and discussion

In 2023, a total of 7102 Education units were registered in Romania, of which 6180 were state education units, and 922 were private education units. The total number of private high schools in Romania in 2023 was 88, representing 6% of the total number of high schools in Romania (see Table 1).

Thus, in 2023, there were 1469 high schools in Romania, of which 94% were public high schools. Regarding the number of private theoretical high schools, these are 72, representing 12% of the total number of theoretical high schools in Romania.

The figures highlight a significant demarcation between state and private high schools and the fact that there is demand, and there is a market for private high school education services in Romania.

Table no.1 Education units, by categories of units and ownerships in Romania

Categories of educational units	Type of ownership	Year 2023
		Number
Total	Total	7102
-	Public ownership	6180
-	Private ownership	922
High schools - secondary education 2nd cycle	Total	1469
-	Public ownership	1381
-	Private ownership	88
Theoretical high schools and colleges	Total	598
-	Public ownership	526
-	Private ownership	72

Source: adapted from Romanian Institute of Statistics (2025),
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

Analyzing the evolution over time (2014-2023) for 10 years regarding the development of the private high school system in Romania, we note that in 2014, 82 private high schools were registered, of which 53 were theoretical high schools (65% of all private high schools) (see Table 2).

In 2023, the total number of private high schools was 88, of which 72 were private theoretical high schools. Practically, in 2023, the share of private theoretical high schools in the total number of private high schools in Romania was 82%.

The demand is overwhelmingly directed towards the theoretical profit of high schools on the education services market.

Even though the pandemic closed and halted the activity of a number of private high schools in 2020-2021, a return to their offer is observed for 2022-2023.

Table no.2 The evolution of the Private education units in Romania

Categories of private educational units	Year 2014	Year 2015	Year 2016	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2020	Year 2021	Year 2022	Year 2023
	MU: Number									
High schools - secondary education 2nd cycle	82	79	68	63	68	68	69	70	80	88
Theoretical high schools and colleges	53	53	50	49	51	53	55	56	65	72
Share of the Theoretical high schools and colleges from the total High schools	65%	67%	74%	78%	75%	78%	80%	80%	81%	82%

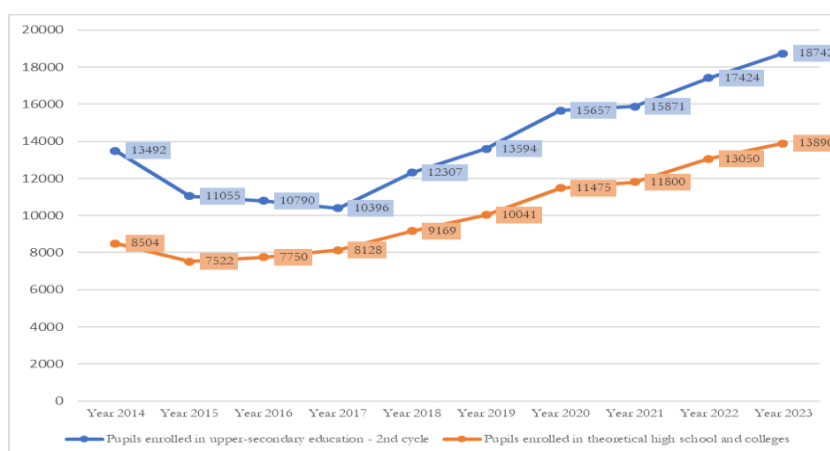
Source: adapted from Romanian Institute of Statistics (2025),
<http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table> ,
 shares authors own calculations

Studying the enrolled population in private high schools, over 10 years of activity (2014-2023), it can be observed in Figure 1 a year-on-year growth in the number of high school students in private education in Romania. The financial effort of parents is capitalized on through foreign language teaching programs, extracurricular activities that enhance the creative character of high school students. In 2023, 18,742 high school students were enrolled in private high schools in Romania, of which 13,890 were high school students studying in private high schools with a theoretical profile. On average, during the period 2014-2023, in Romania, approximately 14,000 high school students were registered in the private education environment. On average, during the period 2014-2023, 10,000 high school students were registered in private high schools with a theoretical profile. In a single year, 2023 compared to 2022, there was an 8% increase in the number of high school students attending private education services.

Regarding the elite private High Schools in Romania: One such institution is Avenor College, an institution that adheres to the British educational curriculum and offers the subsequent programs: The International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), typically taken during the 10th and 11th grades, and the Advanced Level (A-Level) program, which is generally followed in the 12th and 13th grades, both highlight a robust focus on entrepreneurship. Alternative distinguished institution is the American International School of Bucharest (AISB), which suggest a distinguishing curriculum. The AISB has been decided full accreditation to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) programs: The Middle Years Programme (MYP) is planned for students in Grades 6–10, while the Diploma Programme (DP) is intended for students in Grades 11–12. Moreover, the British School of Bucharest boasts a longstanding reputation. The Cambridge School of Bucharest is an institution that offers the opportunity to take Cambridge exams. Olga Gudynn International School has received accreditation for its provision of the IB Diploma Programme. Ioanid International High School has been recognized for its innovative and interactive teaching methodologies. Mark Twain International School: An emphasis on the arts and humanities. Verita International School: An emphasis on inquiry-based learning. Școala Europeană București: A multilingual, civic education emphasis. Under Romania's National Strategy for Environmental Education and Climate Change (2023–2030), private institutions can earn “Green School” status by meeting criteria like energy efficiency, biodiversity. Curriculum Innovation: Subjects like “Climate Change Education” and “Ecological Education” are gradually obtainable by the Romanian private high schools. Environmental Awareness Campaigns: Many private institutions run extracurricular programs, eco-clubs, and green weeks. Private education in Romania is self-confident to be a compound for: Entrepreneurial Mindsets: Encouraging students to reason imaginatively and

launch green or tech startups. Global Competitiveness: Equipping learners with skills that meet EU and global standards for sustainability and digital fluency. Resilience and Adaptability: Making students not just for jobs, but for lifelong learning in a rapidly evolving economy. Digital Skills Training: Coding, robotics, and AI are taught from primary levels in many private institutions. Partnerships with Tech Firms: Collaborations with companies like Microsoft, Google, and local startups help bring cutting-edge tools and real-world relevance into classrooms. Alignment with SMART-Edu Strategy: Many private institutions mirror the goals of the national digitalization strategy, such as fostering innovation, inclusivity, and preparing students for future jobs.

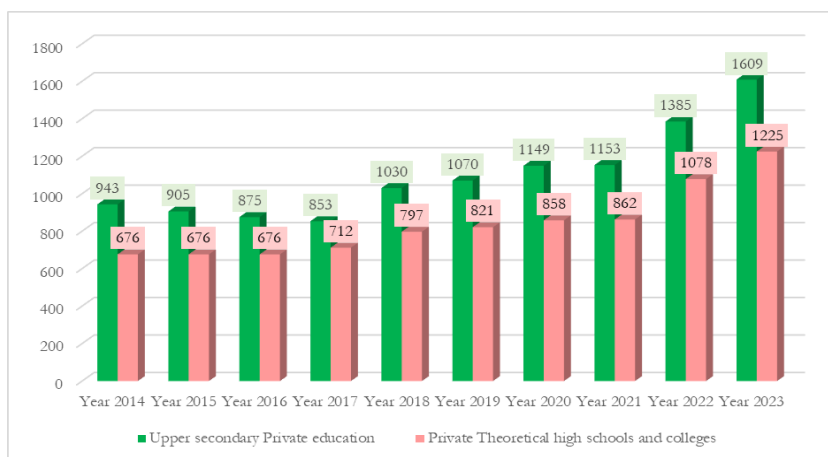
Figure no.1 The evolution of the enrolled population in private high schools in Romania



Source: created by the author using real data from Romanian Institute of Statistics, <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

Closely following the number of teachers in private education services in the high school cycle, a favorable evolution is observed, increasing the number of teachers. Thus, demand influences supply, and in 2023 there were 1609 high school teachers teaching in the private system and 1225 theoretical high school teachers teaching in the private structure (see Figure 2). In 2023 compared to 2014, the number of high school teachers in the private environment increased by 70%, and the number of teachers in private theoretical high schools increased by 80%.

Figure no.2 The evolution of the Classroom teachers in private education in Romania



Source: created by the author using real data from Romanian Institute of Statistics, <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

Romania's private high schools are walking into a transformative role, bring into line their educational strategies with European and global priorities for sustainable development, institutional resilience, and innovation. Green Curriculum Integration: Schools like Avenor College are ground-breaking transdisciplinary tactics that connect subjects like mathematics with real-world sustainability challenge. Environmental Literacy: Students are taught climate science, circular economy principles, and ecological responsibility, making them to be agents of change in the green economy. Private schools are showing agendas that can be replicated nationwide, influencing policy and practice across Europe.

With growing student mobility and emigration of families, private schools modified by input bilingual programs, international curricula (e.g., Cambridge, IB), and supple enrollment policies to accommodate transient student populations.

Strategic Resilience Factors – Community Engagement Strong ties with parents and local communities allowed private schools to mobilize support and resources during crises—whether through fundraising, volunteerism, or digital outreach.

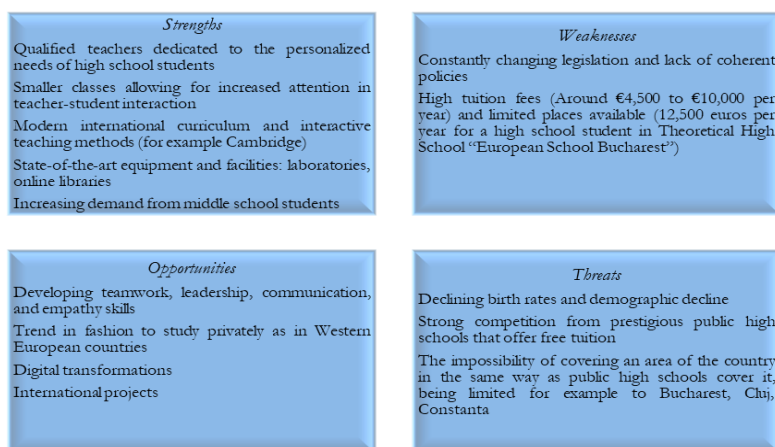
Reducing Dropout Rates with personalized learning smaller class sizes and customized attention help identify at-risk students early, offering personalized interventions that prevent dropout. Private schools frequently offer counseling, mentorship, and extracurricular appointment that foster a sense of belonging and motivation to stay in school.

Promoting Inclusive Education – Support for Students with Disabilities, as private schools have begun integrating inclusive teaching practices and facilities for students with special needs.

Anti-Discrimination Initiatives Programs that encourage tolerance, diversity, and civic responsibility are gradually implanted in curricula, serving fight social exclusion.

By designing a SWOT analysis for the high school private education services in Romania, we can highlight the following essential elements (see Figure 3):

Figure no.3 SWOT analysis for the high school private education services in Romania



Source: created by the author

Conceiving the strategy

In developing the strategy for the development of educational services in private high schools, the entire analysis carried out above and critical and empathetic thinking towards high school students were taken into account. Thus, in our opinion, the mission is to create an optimal environment in which students can develop harmoniously and express their personalities, generating opportunities for each student to train their intellectual, creative, moral, professional, physical, and aesthetic resources.

Strategic objectives (SO)

SO1 Use educational portfolios that allow for transparent monitoring of the child's progress during private high schooling

Specifically, the following actions will be pursued: implementing an automated portfolio, generated after completing the electronic catalog, which will include grades, summative assessment of students throughout their school career, and observations from school counselors; creating a section of the portfolio that highlights a profile and a series of recommendations for recovery or improvement, if necessary, based on the accumulated data.

SO2 Encouraging innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial initiative among high school students by creating opportunities to stimulate their interest through various experiments, projects, and simulations

Precisely, the following steps will be taken as an action plan: identifying talents in various fields of activity (such as sports, art, chess, practical skills, etc.); supporting all students with special skills and talents to achieve excellence; enrolling talented students in contests or competitions to develop their skills, gain experience, and boost their self-confidence.

SO3 Developing practical solutions for identifying high school students' areas of performance, as well as their values, vocations, and talents in the way that academic excellence can be accomplished

Explicitly, organizing competitions and talent contests that emphasize teamwork, collaboration, and stimulating quick decisions that encourage courage and empathy among the high school students involved.

SO4 Support and continuous training of teaching staff and administrative personnel in private high schools

Recruiting and selecting the best teachers. Creating development opportunities for teachers through international mobility and financial and non-financial incentives (vacations and medical service packages). Organizing team-building events, training sessions, and free courses for teachers. Evaluating performance and offering subsequent bonuses.

SO5 Development, along with the renewal of equipment and laboratories used during classes and vocational hours

Purchase and use of new, high-performance, state-of-the-art equipment and devices (computers, printers, SMART boards, video projectors, tablets).

SO6 Developing the promotion of private education services for high school students through student and parent reviews and social media, so that publicity leads to an increase in the number of high school students in private high schools in Romania

Creation of official pages for each private high school on social media networks, creation of online content on social media pages, paid promotion through Google Ads/Facebook Ads, and Instagram. Promotion plays an extremely important role in building a reputation and creating awareness among parents and students.

Private education services can also be promoted through various competitions and contests, workshops for students, games, as well as informative and educational videos.

5. Conclusions

Reduced government funding and the perception that private schools offer a superior education have motivated parents to seek ways to afford private high school education. The rapid increase in the number of private schools in

Romania is largely due to the increase in the financial income of parents who can afford to pay expensive fees. With demand for private high school education services, there is also supply. This is evident from the analyzed data. In 2023, a total of 7102 Education units were registered in Romania, of which 6180 were state education units, and 922 were private education units.

Consequently, in 2023, 18,742 high school students were enrolled in private high schools in Romania, and there were 1609 high school teachers teaching in the private system. In conclusion, there are considerable differences between public and private schools in terms of teacher remuneration, extracurricular activities, employment opportunities after graduation, and national exam results. Private schools also offer a varied collection of extracurricular activities, with arts and sports facilities such as tennis courts.

The development strategy was designed to better position the strengths of private educational services in the eyes of consumers and ensure academic excellence by focusing on high school students with their vocations and talents.

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