

ASSESSMENT METHODS IN DEVELOPING SKILLS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION PROCESS FOR ITS DIRECT BENEFICIARIES/STUDENTS AND USERS OF TES SERVICES

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Abstract

The study aimed to analyze the main opinions of teachers and students from diverse academic change estimated to register tertiary education to meet the medium and long term challenges of society and economy. The design of possible future policy orientations tertiary education was achieved by implementing a questionnaire. The response options were established on the basis of a questionnaire to provide a pilot sample of 220 people (teachers and students) of the following institutions and private higher education in Bucharest: National School of Political Science and Public Administration; University of Economics; Polytechnic University; Police Academy Alexandru Ioan Cuza; Spiru Haret University; Hyperion University. In conclusion regardless of formulations made in this study promoted values took into consideration oriented educational policy for academia with a focus on sustainability and social responsibility, openness, transparency, innovation and professionalism, the ability to create skills in accordance with the requirements of the labor market.

Keywords:

Tertiary education system (SIT), questionnaire, university education policy, institutional service providers of SIT, labor market

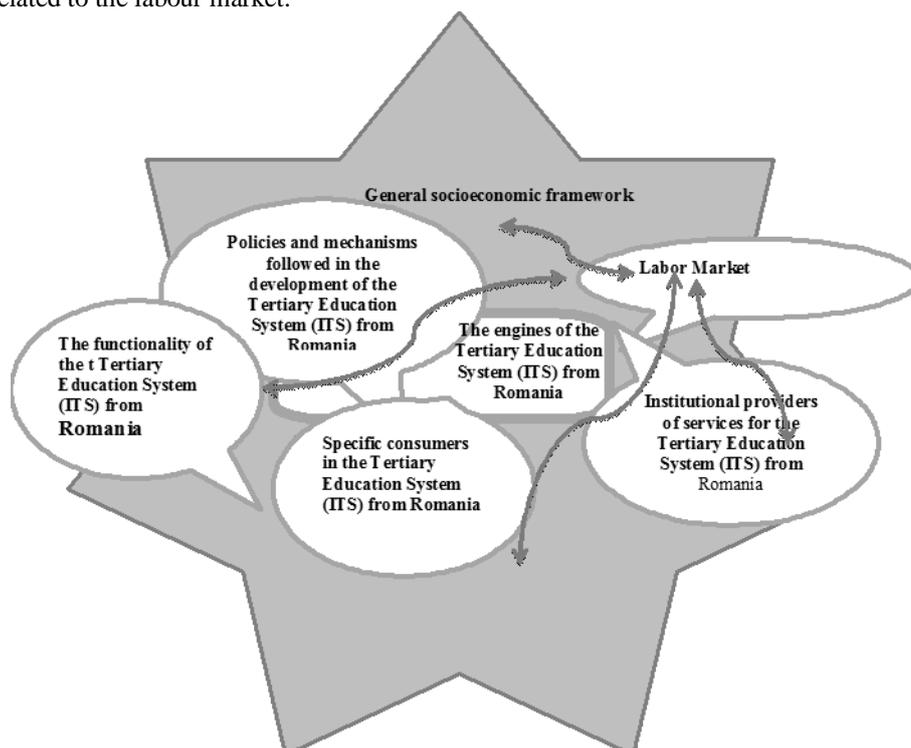
Introduction

The basic idea of this approach was that academic education policy must be completed by training specialists for the job market who might cover, first the qualified human resource demand locally and regionally, but also at the national/international level. The processes of research, innovation and learning targeted by the mission of the academic education policies must consider the development of students' knowledge, aptitudes and competencies, which finally must be retrieved in as many members of the communities we work and live in, and to support at the same time the processes of fostering long-life learning.

The design of some potential directions of orientation of the future policies in the field of tertiary education was made by implementing a questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured around the idea of identification of the place and role of five components as „main engines” influencing the field of tertiary education. The components of the main engines of the future policies in the line of higher education are as many sections that were developed in the above-named questionnaire.

At the same time, we should point out that in the Scheme proposed in this paper and used to design the questionnaire” Changes estimated to occur in tertiary education to respond on a medium and long term challenges in the society and economy” (Figure 1) there are connections of the labour market with all the other components, because it was considered

that some of the questions define both the section they were included in, and the aspects related to the labour market.



Source: own scheme

Fig. 1 Changes estimated to occur in tertiary education to respond on a medium and long term challenges in the society and economy

The questions took into consideration the following **objectives**: knowing the general directions targeted through the Romanian Tertiary Education System (SIT); the realism of the academic education policies currently practiced; the identification of the main characteristics of the institutional service providers of SIT; the quantification of the perception of the interviewee in relation with the importance of monitoring the development of competencies with young students during academic studies; the identification of the role of the professor in; the identification of the way of assessing competencies development by the academic education process for its direct beneficiaries/ students and for the SIT service users; the perceptions on the elements of SIT functionality (legislatives; educational aspects; financial aspects); the identification of the Tertiary Education System policy and the labour market requirements.

1. Literature review

Although opened in 2012 according to official data of the school population tertiary recorded a percentage of 22.26% while the number of students in undergraduate education has seen a decrease in the number of students compared with 2011 stood at 2,199,516 people. The results of the national education system are measured by indicators expressing

its ability to create potential skilled labor necessary, adapted to the requirements of economic and social development. Such education system should provide, in addition to developing skills, abilities and skills of the school population, a more flexible educational offer, based on a correlation between the number of graduates and the demand for labor, for all fields (Social and Economic Status, Synthesis, National Institute of Statistics, 2011 and 2013).

Barcelona European Council adopted the "Program details working on implementing the objectives of education and training in the European Union" become a reference for the development of European policy in education. The objective "Optimal use of resources invested in education and training 'states ensuring fair and effective distribution and use of financial resources in the education and training systems, and also supporting the assessment and quality assurance systems by using indicators and benchmarking, the potential of public-private partnerships and the development of cost-benefit analysis for investment in education and training (National Education Law, 2011).

For this, European Union member states, will have to adopt measures within the competence of state authority, to identify coherent strategies and practical measures to facilitate the development of learning throughout working life of individuals, both at individual and institutional and in public and private spheres of life. It aims to harmonize the high education systems to achieve, by 2010, a European area of higher education by National Trends in the Bologna Process, EURYDICE the information network on education in Europe (web: www.ond.vlaanderen.be/Edinburgh?Feb08)

In the context of the concern shared by governments for economic growth, competitiveness and income convergence employability of graduates all cycles of education becomes a priority for reform of European universities encouraged by the Bologna Process Study: *Quality education for the labor market* by Mihai Korca (2009). Also reports qualitative research in various fields of business practices illustrates a variety of both employers and the providers of higher education. There are examples of specific practices that perpetuate disparities between academic qualifications and job requirements, as there are practice based on dialogue between universities and businesses that disparities are eliminated. Thus, "Changes in the nature of the request for qualifications are often dictated by the constraints of the labor market or market pressure as Bevan and Cowling (2007).

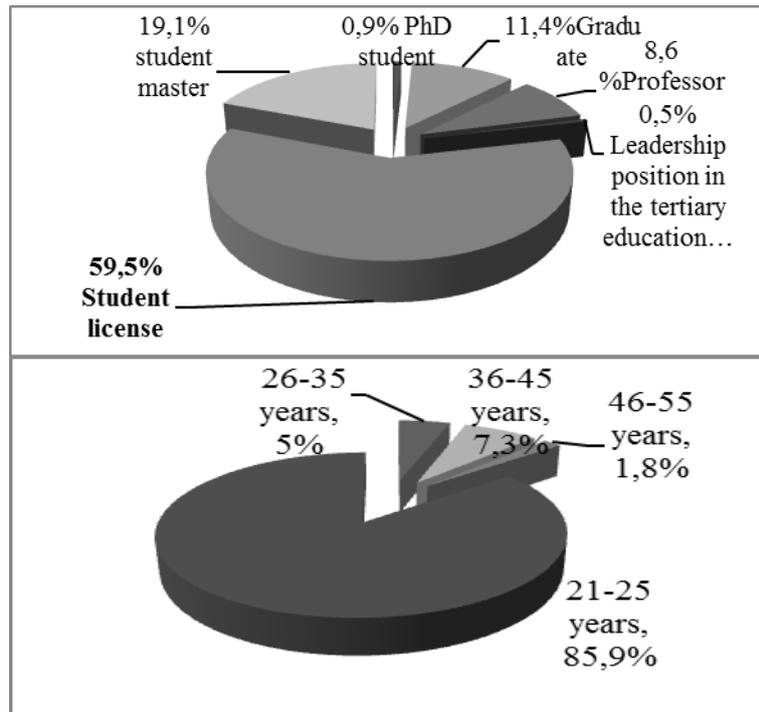
In accordance with the "Strategy Europe 2020" on the increase of quality of the education system, it must be taken into account the centering of the university education of the student, expressing learning outcomes with cognitive skills and functional setting (professional and transverse), as well as by other purchases (values, belief, attitudes in their professional career and in life) are of such a nature as to increase transparency and attractiveness of the study programs, competitiveness and efficiency of these ([http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012XG0308\(01\)&from=E](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012XG0308(01)&from=E)).

2. Results

Processing and analysis stage observation data sample yielded statistical indicators required analysis of the variables analyzed, starting from simple methods (graphical method, structural changes method) to analyze complex methods (regression and correlation methods, etc.)

2.1 Horizontal Analysis Developing a National Strategy for medium and long-term SIT

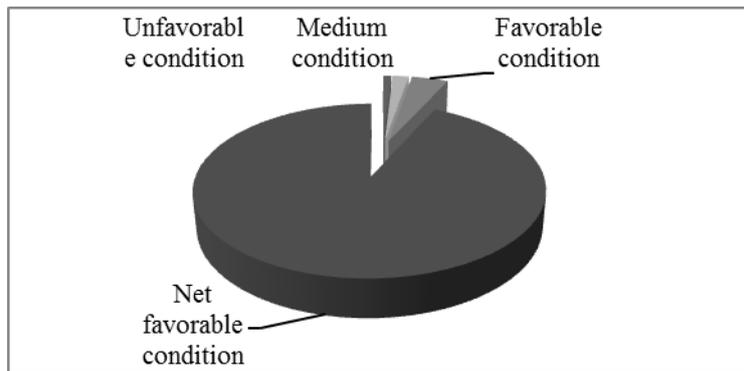
The horizontal analysis of the responses yielded the following results: in terms of the role of the SIT and age groups represented (Figure 2) ages of the people involved were: 21-25 years; 26-35 years; 36-45; 46-55 years and over.



Source: own processing

Fig. 2 Structure per roles and age categories of the interviewees

At the same time, the opinions of the interviewees regarding the elaboration of a National Strategy for SIT on an average and long term are to a large extent favorable (the marks ranged from 9 to 10) to this action for 93.2% of all the interviewees (Figure 3). It is worth noticing that the most optimistic in remarks were the students, who gave a 9 in 89.5% of the cases and 10 in 10.5% of the answers. At the same time, for the same issue the answers given by the professors were more weighted – they gave a 9 in 20.0% of the cases and mark 10 in 25.0% of the answers – a phenomenon which may be considered realistic given their role and position.



Source: own processing

Fig.3 Overall opinions on the elaboration of a medium and long term National Strategy for SIT

In order to identify the elements of realism in the SIT specific policies two questions were used related to the need to elaborate "evidence-based policies" and how necessary is the funding with an emphasis on digital economy and entrepreneurship development to support SIT policies. At the question related to the "need to elaborate evidence-based policies" the answers of all the interviewees were as follows: one third of the interviewees (30.0% of the total) gave marks 5 and 6, proving opinions in the average trend; 25% of the interviewees gave marks 7 and 8, proving opinion within the trend "favorable to a great extent"; and most of the respondents (45% of the interviewees) gave marks 9 and 10, proving opinions in the trend "favorable to a great extent".

At the question "the need for funding with an emphasis on digital economy and for the development of entrepreneurship to support SIT policies" the answers of all the interviewees were the following: a very low percentage (1.9% of the interviewees of the total) gave marks 5 and 6, this marking being similar to the average trend of supporting SIT policies regarding the need for funding with an emphasis on digital economy and on the development of entrepreneurship (9.5%) of the interviewees gave marks 7 and 8, proving opinions within the trend "favorable to a great extent"; most of the respondents (88.6% of the interviewees) gave marks 9 and 10, proving opinions within the trend "favorable to a very great extent" of SIT funding with an emphasis on digital economy and the development of entrepreneurship.

On the other hand, it was found that that some of the students are less and less interested in the courses which fail to enable them to *acquire competencies*, which materialize in a "certified/ diploma" that they later might submit to the future work places.

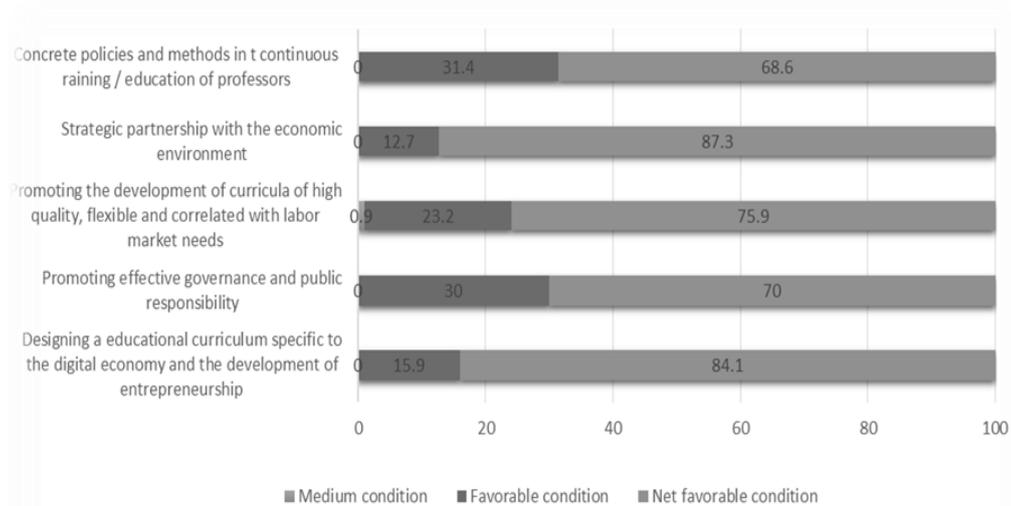
2.2 Realism university education policies in the opinion of teachers

The answers given by the interviewed academia concerning the realism of the academic education policies as having a *very great importance* reveal the following aspects:

- The best appreciated are the proposals of including the issues regarding "The strategic partnership with the economic environment to a percentage of 87.3% of total answers and " The design of an educational curriculum specific for the digital economy and for the development of entrepreneurship with a percentage of 84.1%

of total answers; These answers mean that the two dimensions mentioned as possibly belonging to a future SIT policy might have a net influence over it;

- Coming second in importance in designing a SIT policy and which might have a net favorable influence over it was the need for "Promoting the development of high quality study programmers flexible and correlated to the job market requirements" (with 75.9% of the answers);
- Coming third in importance in the design of SIT policies with a net favorable influence on them was „Promoting effective governance and public responsibility" (70.0%) and „Concrete policies and methods in the continuous training/instruction of the academia" (with 68.6% of the answers) (Figure 4).



Source: own processing

Fig. 4 Other elements which contribute to the realism of the academic education policies – Total interviewees – Weight in total answers.

All the interviewees consider as of very great importance 69.5% of the answers the process "Periodical evaluation of the academia performance, lead to and improved quality of the educational process"; 29.1% of the respondents consider as important the periodical performance of the academia and only 1.4% think that this direction of designing SIT policies is of average importance. The assessments of the *consulted professors* are more balanced: 50.0% of them consider as very important the activity of periodical evaluation of the performance of the academia, 35.0% consider as important and 15.0% confers this activity an average importance. The assessments of the *interviewed students'* amount to 71.5% for the periodical evaluation of the academia and 28.5% consider as important this activity.

2.3 Analysis regular performance evaluation procedures for teachers

The analysis of the procedures of periodical evaluation of the performance of the academia in the opinion of *the whole group of interviewees* show as being of a *very great importance* the following actions which should be included in SIT policy:

- Most of the respondents indicated as of a great importance "The internal methodologies and procedures lead to enhancing the quality of the institutional processes" by 97.7% and "The development of certain mechanisms which might provide for the design of the programmers of studies in correlation with the labour market" – by 92.7%;
- Over half of the respondents specified "The development of some mechanisms of students' involvement in increasing the quality of the academic processes" – by 77.7% and "The development of a policy and culture oriented to research/innovation in the educational field" – by 61.3%;
- Over a quarter of the interviewees specified „Internal regulations assure the best, correct and efficient performance of the educational activities”, respectively 38.2%.

Concerning the main characteristics of the institutional service provider of SIT, in the opinion of *the whole group of interviewees*, the following actions resulted to be of a *great importance*: "The internal regulations which assure the best, correct and efficient performance of the educational activities", preferred to an amount of 61.8%; At a long distance came – in ascending order (as a weight in each characteristic considered) "Capacity of creation" by 8.6% of answers, "Capacity of execution" by 18.2% of total answers of the consulted persons and "Capacity of adaptation" by 31.4%.

Concerning the marks given by the professors, showing *a favorable influence* in designing the functionality of the educational policies in the academic system, i.e. marks 7 and 8, placed on the first place – in importance – Section V "Tertiary Education System and the labour market requirements with 41.0% of the options. It was followed by: Section I „Policies and mechanisms targeted in the development of Tertiary Education" by 33.7% of options; Section IV" Functionality and main results of SIT" – the way in which they should be treated by 20.9% of options; Section II that of „Institutional service providers of SIT" by 17.9% of preferences; Section III" SIT service users" by 15.5% of option.

Implications and Conclusions

Sometimes the degree of understanding of the meaning of the delivered courses differs, the students being confused whether they acquire knowledge or competences. Some young people find it unclear whether competency acquisition is based on knowledge that they receive during the educational process. Some of the students want to attend more and more exciting/ interesting. It should be noticed on the other hand that the current instruction services, provided by SIT, and those of training in similar domains are quite similar, because all the universities address to the same young people. Therefore, through the existing information systems these young people have access to they may know a number of principles and general aspects – in particular from the general education courses in the domains they opt for. In this context, the young interviewees commented positively their attendance to such courses provided that these courses should undergo changes in „design, structure and presentation,” so that they might learn useful things. So, it is very important to see that by the way of designing, structuring and presenting the courses to the students, who attend such courses, they might see that the "professor teaches for each and every one of them" and that what is presented is at the crossroads with the interests of as many young people/ individuals as possible. All the above aspects/ commentaries which appeared in some of the questionnaires received are of the nature of academic management and belong

to policies where universities foster innovative quality and connections with various practical aspects.

Therefore, we deem that by the results supplied by the administration of the Questionnaire "Changes estimated to occur in tertiary education to respond on a medium and long term challenges in the society and economy" the policymakers should be careful with the actions to be oriented to the labor market – Section V "The Tertiary Education System and the labor market requirements" – because they influence the average state of the system of reference by 19.1% of options. At the same time, from previous consultations with some professors regarding the above-described aspects, the result was that by accepting the idea that "the professor teaches for each and every student" modifications might appear in the current teaching technique. In supporting this direction, we may also find in the commentaries of some interviewed professors who, in other commentaries showed that sometimes they can hardly involve the students, make them communicate, which makes it easier to adopt the 'lecture' type of teaching where the professor is the only one talking. The increase of the interactive courses number – where the students find themselves useful, important, and taken into account, especially in the case of the senior students – may be considered a direction of development and increase of the SIT impact.

In conclusion, a continuous work of updating the educational policies, in general, and of those dedicated to academic education will contribute to fighting against the phenomena affecting the "... Google generation, Facebook generation, SMS generation or all together! ..." after Pop (2016) and which materializes at present in "... people without a general background and artistic horizon, people capable of solving only limited problems, people who no longer have the capacity of comparing and making informed decisions.

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