

# THE UNIVERSITY ROLE IN ADAPTING THE STUDENTS PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION TO THE NOWADAYS AND FUTURE ECONOMICAL ENVIRONMENT REQUIREMENTS

**Diaconu Mihaela**

*CONSTANTIN BRÂNCOVEANU UNIVERSITY OF PITEȘTI, CALEA BASCOVULUI STREET, NO.2A, E-MAIL diaconu\_m2005@yahoo.com, PHONE 0248/212627*

**Puiu Ovidiu**

*CONSTANTIN BRÂNCOVEANU UNIVERSITY OF PITEȘTI, CALEA BASCOVULUI STREET, NO.2A, e-mail ucb\_prorectorat@yahoo.com, PHONE0248/221098*

*Abstract*

*The academic environment, through its activities and through its role in the society consists into a method of cultural answer to the social and professional elites need. Between the academic environment and society exists an interdependence relation, meaning that the well-functioning of the activity from the university level influence the society good development? The universities can transform in researching laboratories for the business environment (surroundings), with the condition of existing reciprocal opening and will.*

*Key words: knowledge management, cultural/intellectual capital, professional training*

## **Knowledge – university – organization**

An important domain for each organization which functions into a concurential market is represented by the knowledge management, whose base is represented through ideas, information, information kept and used inside the organization. Knowledge management includes on the one side, the sources of knowledge represented by the employees accretions and on the other side, the knowledge flux and the methods through the knowledge is used on the organization activities'. The strategies of the knowledge management imply communicating connections between people and information in order to work with well-informed experiences.

Cognition (according to Scarborough and Carter, 2000) is formed as a result of a collective labour experience and it is shared by the group members or by a certain community.

Knowledge consists in information used on an active manner (Armstrong 2003) and the information has certain meanings. (Drucker 1988)

Blake (1998) claimed that the knowledge management purpose is to have a good grip on the collective specialist knowledge of the company and to share it anywhere it can succeed into a great success.

Trussler (1988) endorsed that „in the following period, in many companies, the organizing and efficiently usage capacity will represent an important source of competitive benefit source”.

Mecklenburg and others (1999) claimed that „knowledge management allow companies to capture, apply and tune value from their employees experts creativity and competence”

The practical problems connected to the organization human resources supply, developing and compensation, employees value recognition, organizational learning and knowledge management , all can be found on **the cultural capital theory**. **The cultural capital** „consists in knowledge accretions and flux that a company dispose (Armstrong, 2003).

The elements of the cultural capital, according to Youndt (2000):

- Human capital: company employees knowledge's, abilities and skills;
- Social capital: knowledge's accretions and flux ones which issues from the relations' networks from the interior and the exterior of the organization;
- The managerial capital – knowledge emerged effectively in possession of the organization or institutionalized “baggage” of knowledge emerged in the possession of one organization, stocked in data base, textbooks, etc.

The human capital is the one who stock the knowledge which can amplify through the interaction with the social capital (clients, provision, and competitors) leading straight to the organizational capital or organization science. The value in organization is created by the human capital through knowledge, abilities, skills, but the organization efficiency is assured by the people knowledge, the interaction manner with the social, compounds that lead to the organizational capital appearance.

According to Armstrong opinion, taking to account the organization point of view, the intellectual capital theory, we can ask the following questions: 1. Which are the skills that the organization has in its possession? 2. What kinds of skills are necessary now and in the future? 3. How can we develop and maintain these kinds of skills? 4. What can we do in order to create a culture and an environment where can live peacefully not only individual learning, but also the organizational one, so as our employees and our necessities should be satisfied? 5. What can we do so the wordless and precisely knowledge created in our organization should be kept, registered and judiciously used?

The academic environment, through its activities and through its role in the society consists into a method of cultural answer to the social and professional elites need. Between the academic environment and society exists an interdependence relation, meaning that the well-functioning of the activity from the university level influence the society good development?

Schelling, the philosopher, claimed that **the university** should train only science people, researchers and under no circumstances professionals, because its goal is to rise the conscience latency, making reference only to the pure science. If we take into account the fact that the whole nations culture is influenced not only by pure ideas, but also by social reality, the Schelling conception can't be consider absolute. The university from our days has a complex goal: next to the scientific research and creation of the science that form its existence, the university intent to form the student spiritual personality and training for a job. It is said that the exaggeration of the direction of realizing the students professional training often contributed to the university study level descent. On the other side, it must be accentuated the fact that economy critical status determined the young in draft towards the university seeing that the university title conferee several chances to obtain a certain position into a company.

Lately seems that more and more universities train more professionals than scientists. Of course, the savants are having a serious and continue training, only in the individual office.

The student spiritual personality formation implies the advice to a see over the moment impressions, to understand the sense of the notions and to integrate inside their spectrum.

Dimitrie Gusti sustained that the **university**, thought at the beginning as a religious institution, then as an instrument of political power and today only as a professional training institution, is actually a social institution with a deeply value. It consists of „a sum of things, wills and facts, more precisely a structural relations system: outside, the university connection to the state and society, and inside, the academics material and cultural life, the student's relation with the university authority and in the end, the teachers – student's bounds.”

**The professional training** is defined by the specialty literature, as a training process where the participants achieve practical and theoretical knowledge necessary the activities course. It can't be measured through the graduation degrees number or obtained certificates, although they have their importance too, respectively the results obtained and its role in the society.

The professional training goals are: achievement the capacity to solve certain issues related to the activity field; certain actions execution; good communication inside and outside the organization; the capacity to bind certain changes to the labour location inside the company.

**The professional evolution** represents a complex training process that has as target the acquirement of the useful knowledge, taking to account the actual and the future status of the person.

### **The impact of Bologna Declaration over the higher education system professional training level and curricula**

The European process has become an increasingly concrete and relevant reality for the European Union and its citizens. The academic world has an important role in this process through the necessity of building upon and strengthening intellectual, cultural, scientific and technologic dimensions of the new Europe. Only a Europe of Knowledge is capable of giving the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium.

European higher education institutions have launched into a construction process of the European field of higher education, which has as aim the educational European system competitively increasing.

An important compound of the Bologna process refers to the higher education organization on studying cycle's system and is connected to the learning process quality increasing necessity and also to the creation of a more bounded relation between higher education and research, between higher education and economic dimension.

The common bases of the higher European education are fundamentals, according to the Bologna process, on two main cycles that separate higher education on different levels, known as Bachelor and Master, in order to increase a compelling environment, common to the national and international graduations.

The qualification levels are specialized according to the results of the formation process and the specific and general competences. **The competences** are those attributes (knowledge, attitudes, skills, and responsibilities) which outline the level that a person is capable to apply and obtain performances. They illustrate the training, appropriateness and responsibility level that a person can assume. Competences refer how to know, to understand, to action, to know theoretically speaking, to understand this knowledge in order to put them in practice on a special social context.

The curriculum, through its organization and structure, develops special and general competences, starting from the academic objectives materialized into *specializations* and from the labour market requests materialized in *qualifications*.

By creating this European framework it is envisaged the each national frame qualification harmonization, assignation of transparent and comparable qualifications. The European general framework of qualifications must be understood as an agreement regarding a common architecture and structure, where different national qualifications might be easily identified. The qualification framework has as main goal to simplify the process of establish precise objectives in order to carry through the curriculum elaborating process. The description of each qualification obtained by the student through individuals programs should provide the base for the disciplines content and further for the individual educational programs.

In this moment, the improvement of the conceptual approach used on qualifications description, represents a priority for Romania. Expressing and measuring study programs methods are the references standards, the level indicators, time, credits number, qualifications, the results of the competences and learning process. The curriculum expression in results provides precision to the learning process and leads to a curriculum centred on the student profile.

The reorganization of the qualification framework will improve the useful information towards students delivering process and will sustain the students to know the methods through they can complete their competences by appealing to the other national or international programs compatible with those whom they are already registered. The special competences description helps the student to obtain them by getting through the educational offer.

On working out for the curricula, the issue should start from the actual Romanian legislation on higher educational domain, from the European rules and Bologna process recommendations concerning higher education in the next decade, from the professional standards of the renewed and enriched professional domains based on the existing studies and documents, from the university experience regarding de professional training programs.

The modern curriculum, adequate to a knowledge society is characterized through the following features:

- Learning and results placement in the centre of the educational activity;
- Using the participative strategies on the educational process, in order to form the special competences;
- A flexible learning offer adequate to the professional career;
- Organizing the contents of the learning process by considering the final goal of the university training through its future use;
- Efficient mixture of the academic culture with the functional one, specific to each specialization;
- Conformation of the higher education content to the requests solicited by local community and civil society.

The specific organism which has the mission to promote the partnerships between the higher education institutions and economical-social environment, is The National Agency for Qualifications in Higher Education and Partnership with the Economic and Social Environment – ACPART, which turned in 2005, based on GD no.1357 from the The National Agency from Partnership between Universities and the Economic and Social Environment (APART).

In order to achieve its missions, the ACPART main objectives as a national authority for qualifications in higher education are:

- elaborate, implement and update the national framework for higher education qualifications which involves development, recognition and certification of qualifications based on the competences acquired by beneficiaries of the higher education system;
- analyse compatibility of the specialisations curricula in the fundamental areas of higher education with national qualifications framework standards;

National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (NQFHE) is structured on three levels, each level having its own set of indicators/ general descriptions of a level expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. Together with the workshops on study domains, NQFHE will elaborate the definitions to the corresponding qualifications.

There is a working team called “Consultative Committee for the Qualifications from the Higher Education System” made of qualifications experts, representants of different study domains and universities, and also social partners.

ACPART nowadays is preparing a key terms glossary, in order to propose to the decision factors and qualifications framework users, a common nomenclature. Its goal is to create a National Qualifications Register for Higher Education (NQRHE), considered the essential feature of the diplomas recognition and validation process, offered by the Romanian higher education institutions. It also elaborated a coherent 2006-2009 strategy which includes an operative actions plan regarding qualifications issue.

### **Conclusions:**

- the necessity to restructure the specializations according to the economic, social and scientific progress;
- the necessity to correlate the specializations with the qualifications , taking to account the labour market requests, study program period and study cycle (bachelor, master, doctorate);
- the necessity to establish the specific and general competences framework which each student of a private study domain should be capable to practice;
- The necessity to project the curricula so it contains not only the specific and general competences, but also a developing and evolution strategy together with the incorporation of the specialty and community practices.

### **The business environment – academic environment relation nowadays**

In order to offer a view as more as close to the reality of the business environment – academic environment relation, it was applied one of the qualitative research method – the focus group through the capacity of the “Constantin Brâncoveanu Pitești “University teachers.

The focus-group objectives, with semi-structured questions are:

- to identify the university man perception regarding the university role in the economic space;
- To evaluate the actual coordinates of the business environment – academic environment relation.

The focus-group with the academic area was organized on 5<sup>th</sup> of March, 2008 on “Constantin Brâncoveanu Pitești “University, with the participation of the 10 teachers .

The present article is restoring the main directions of the discussions and presents the main conclusion of the study: the universities can transform in researching laboratories for the business environment (surroundings), with the condition of existing reciprocal opening and will.

From the discussion focused on the relationship practice – research, the academic environment – business environment we can detach the following conclusions:

The mission of the academic environment is appreciated by the majority of the participants being not only that of forming people specialized and capable to incorporate easily in the labour market; only 2 subjects recognized the necessity and the importance of the activity of scientific researching.

The majority of the subjects had accentuate the fact that through the researching activity the academic environment must contribute to the business environment improvement; the economic agent, the organization should benefit of the results of the implementation of the specialist's ideas from the academic environment.

There are deep discrepancies between the academic environment and business environment in the way that, most of the times, there aren't common points in the developed activities in part.

The academic environment can offer to the business environment – the possibility of ubiquity in the real context of the market – capitalization the information and the dates obtained from the companies. It cannot influence the business environment because of the stiffness which the didactic staff could identify with the occasion of the activities of accumulating material during the doctor's degree studies. Generally, business environment accepts influences from the exterior.

The appreciation of the representative of the business environment was univocal in what concerning the indispensable necessity that each didactic staff should have certain format of collaborating with the economic agents in order to streamline the didactic and researching activity through the direct connection of the economic environment's problem and to have the possibility to identify researching ideas which can execute directly the economic environment; the didactic staff who had a direct experience with the business environment through the activity evolved before the activity from the university – can be now considered to be isolated from the practice, they feel that they lost the connection with the practice. Some of the participant didactic staff had accentuated the fact that they feel a complex of inferiority determined by the lack of practical experience.

Other subjects consider that it would be benefice if in the University will function a researching department with a strategy of coherent search.

The appreciation that the didactic staff from the economic universities can realize, in principal, activity of applied researching - had been univocal; only one subject declares that could be a combination of applicative reserchments with the fundamental one, but the applicative one has a significant balance.

Another general appreciation was that it is hard collaborating with the business environment which is not always disposed - especially with the companies which are not in the multi national category – to allocate financial resources for the analysis. The majority of the economic agents from Pitesti are less preoccupied of the developing of their scientific activities, using a methodology which results from the scientific research. It is very difficult to organize a field research because of the reticence in giving information inside the enterprise and because of the exaggerated bureaucracy promoted with the achievement of slowing down the movement of the researching activity.

The economic agents are organizing the forming continuous activity - preparing their own trainers or appealing to consulting companies and not to universities – whose role is considered only regarding the masters which are developing.

One of the subjects considers the business environment being unable to develop a partnership with the academic environment, cognition that was sustained by other participants, too. Many times, the university image is created only through the graduates training level who intend to apply for different jobs in certain companies. Some of the teachers experience's presents to the discussion showed that not always the top of the graduates are also good praticiens, because of the individual features, but also of the non-existence of a clear bound between university's specializations and labour market qualifications.

The nowadays benefits of the research – practice relation are more presumptively. The academic environment doesn't take advantages from the business environment existence; there is no good communication between the two parts unless the well-prepared specialists supply part. The partnerships will take effect only when the business environment will be aware of its importance and role.

We can state that there is a relation between “Constantin Brâncoveanu” University and business environment, but this is not a solid one, because the economic agents consider that an intrusion into their

intern environment (educational staff might invade their privacy) and some features that must be secret might be identified.

The relationship practice – research – is different seen from the didactic staff in rapport with the business environment cooperation experience, with the training obtained from the Master degrees:

- the research activity is an expensive activity for the didactic staff who must pay conference attending taxes and publicity taxes as a result of the researching which, sometimes, overdraw the own financial possibilities ;
- the research based on the projects is toilsome because of the excessive bureaucracy; there were described many uncomfortable experiences regarding the steps of the projects;
- some of the didactic staff are making research by passion, others are not attracted by this activity and consider that they don't have ideas and cannot involve in projects;
- The necessity idea of running research activity on small groups taking to account the individual skills and specializations it is unanimity accepted.

The conclusion regarding of what it should be done in order to improve the relation practice– research might be materialized under the following aspects:

- there is possible a cooperation with the voluntary economic agents, educational staff and students, and for this, the business people associations should be sensitized;
- project ideas based on the experience and certain results obtained on your own or from the activities with the students which can succeed in some companies; it is preferred to start the interaction with the economic agents who are opened to the partnerships idea ;
- the relation academic environment – business environment should be intermediate through students project's; we can determine the student to realize projects by using the information from the economic agents; we must help the students to promote their new ideas in order to promote their specialist image – a possible future employee;
- we must determine the students to interact with the business environment through common activities organized with the economic agents, through well-prepared practice stages, monitorized, by putting accent on the student personal evolution;
- we can identify the companies having problems and propose them to research projects voluntary and then materialized into contracts;
- we can attract in the research activity also the economic environment representants , because it was stated that where the managers followed doctor master degree's, the opening to the academic environment was larger;
- we can attract specialists into the educational activities, on certain themes, for a better understanding of the opportunities offered by the academic environment; some kind of successfully experiences existed;
- The research possibility should be valued at the maximum level through the master students that rise from the business environment.

The focus-group results with the academic environment will be completed with the results of the business environment one.

### **Bibliography:**

1. Michael Armstrong- *Human resources management – practice book*, Codec's Editure, 2003
2. Ioan Jinga- *Education and daily life*, Educational Editure, RA, 2005
3. Adrian Nedelcu (coord),- *The university field and its actors* , Collegium's, Polirom, Iași, 1997