

EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE IN EDUCATION

Abstract

The education represents an essential priority for every country, a way whereby the society can grow and an important factor of development and progress. But it is very important that some specific criteria exist to check up the quality of education, to see what is wrong and must be improved or modified. Respecting these criteria can lead to a significant growth of the quality of educational system and to a correct and profound reformation of the system.

Keywords: education, criteria, development, quality

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EVALUAREA PERFORMANȚEI ÎN EDUCAȚIE

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Rezumat

Educația reprezintă o prioritate importantă pentru orice țară prin care societatea poate crește, reprezentând și un factor important pentru dezvoltare și progres. Dar, este foarte important ca să existe criterii specifice pentru verificarea calității educației pentru a vedea ceea ce este nepotrivit și a îl îmbunătăți sau a îl modifica. Respectarea acestor criterii poate conduce la o creștere semnificativă a calității sistemului educațional și la o reformare corectă și profundă a sistemului.

Cuvinte cheie: educație, criterii, dezvoltare, calitate



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1. EMPLOYABILITY

Employability represents one the specific criteria of main importance for the performance evaluation of education system because the result of the graduation should represent the enforcement on the workforce either as employer, employee or entrepreneur.

The employability is a new concept which reflects old realities. The employability is a synergic combination of personal qualities, different types of abilities and also of the person's way to feel and understand things. What makes us valuable resources on the work field it is not absolutely necessary to be found only on the actual job or on CV.

There are a lot of external environmental factors who influence a person's absolute professional power: macroeconomics pointers, the attraction of the chosen industry, the discrimination, the rapport demand-bid, and the level of corruption.

Employability depends on the fellow, on the qualities and competences acquired by various forms of education. The employability is not limited to a list of competences but those are her most important component. Measuring the employability supposes to measure those components which the employers consider to be valuable. Examples: the ability to communicate efficiently, to work in team, an analytical mind and focused (centred) on problems solving, the capacity of self-setting the activities (a critical attitude over your own activity, adaptability, flexibility, capacity of fast learning on which can be add the fellow's capacity to present himself in a favourable way in front of the employer).

The classical definition of employability: "a set of achievements-skills, understandings and personal attributes- that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy" (Knight and Mantz, 2007).

Regarding this subject of employability, in November 2010 the European Commission has published the results of a survey -which covered all the EU Member States as well as other European countries (Norway, Iceland, Croatia and Turkey) - to see what the employers' perception of graduate employability is. The survey was made with the main goal of monitoring the staff in companies of what they think about: the importance of various skills and abilities required by graduates, the levels of satisfaction as to whether or not graduates have these skills, which levels of graduate education are best suited to fill vacant positions, the factors that influence the level of graduate recruitment, the importance of educational institutions' reputation, the amount and type of training given to graduates, the numbers of

graduates recruited from abroad and the reasons why such graduates are hired, the major challenges that companies face in hiring graduates, the amount and type of cooperation between companies and educational institutions, views on how graduates could be made more employable.

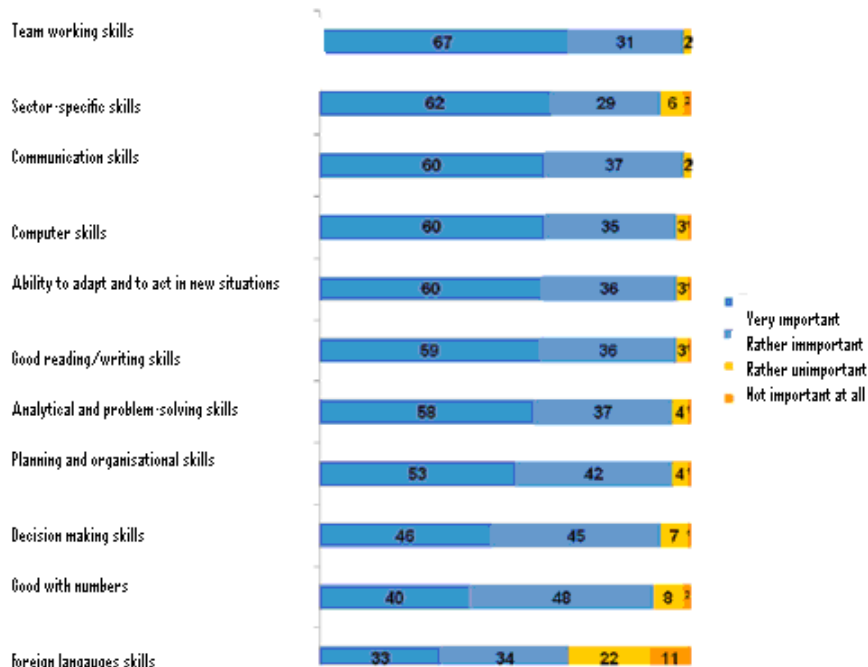


FIGURE 1 - THE SKILLS AND COMPETENCES IMPORTANCE IN THE GRADUATES RECRUITMENT PROCESS
Source: Flash Eurobarometer - Employers perception of graduate employability

Overall, 7036 companies were interviewed, 201 of them from Romania, large and medium-sized from different domains, from the public and private environment which had recruited higher education graduates in the past five years or were planning to do this in the future. More than a third (35%) of respondents estimated that more than a fifth of their employees were that type of a graduate. Although companies included in this study recruited such graduates from a variety of educational fields, the areas most frequently mentioned were business or economic studies and engineering (54%-55% of them).

On European level concerning the skills importance 67% of companies considered that the team working skills are the most important (Flash Eurobarometer, 2010).

In Romania the most important skills are: team working (80%), computer skills (79%), ability to act and to adapt in new situations (70%), communication skills (70%), analytical and problem-solving skills (66%), planning and organizational skills (61%), decision-making skills (47%), foreign languages skills (42%).

On what concerns the employers' satisfaction about the graduates' skills, the majority of them (89%) whose have recruited graduates were very pleased with their skills after the employment. But in Romania the percent of the respondents whose have chosen the option "total agreement" was only of 17% while 60% of them have chosen the option "partial agreement". The Romanian employers are more satisfied with next abilities of the employees: computer skills (48%), editing skills (51%), but there are skills of which the Romanian employers are not very satisfied (partial agreement) comparing to other European countries: good with numbers skills (21%), team working (31%), specific skills for a specific domain (30%), communication skills (25%), analytical and problem-solving skills but also planning and organizational skills(21%). A slim majority of employers (55%) answered that graduates with bachelor's degrees would best match the skill requirements in their company, while 35% said that graduates with master's degrees would be a better fit. On European level hiring graduates from higher education institutions with high international rankings and a good reputation it is rather unimportant (35%).

On European level approximately 8 in 10 graduate recruiters mentioned the next factors being important for the graduates' recruitment process:

- actual growth in business (40% of the responders considered this factor very important and 39% rather important);
- anticipated growth in business (38% of the employers considered it very important);
- increasing complexity of tasks (27% of the employers considered it very important and 44% rather important).

In Romania the graduates' recruitment process the evaluation was over the European average but the differences were rather low.

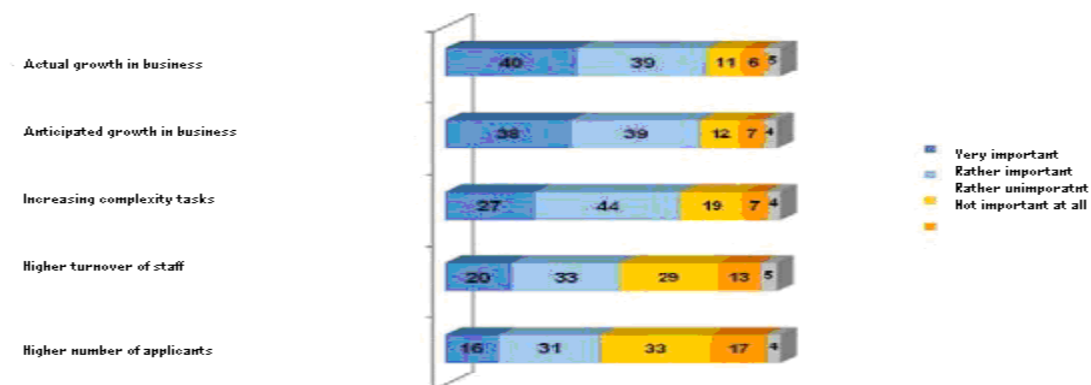


FIGURE 2 - THE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT FACTORS FOR THE GRADUATES' RECRUITMENT PROCESS
Source: Flash Eurobarometer - Employers perception of graduate employability

2. THE ACCESSIBILITY (SOCIAL INCLUSION)

The social inclusion in the Romanian education system represents the second criteria for the educational performances evaluation. The Romanian development strategy includes the social inclusion into the forms of sustainable development.

The sustainable development is the development which follows up to satisfy the present needs without compromising the next generation's possibilities to satisfy her owns needs.

The inclusive education means the disappearance of all learning pikes and to assure that all vulnerable and excluded persons have access to the educational process. First and foremost it is a strategic approach made to facilitate all children' access to the learning process.

The first requirement of the inclusive education is to decrease the educational exclusion till elimination at least on the elementary schools (education). This program requires a successful and qualitative learning for all children to have access and to participate to it.

The inclusive school is an accessible (affordable) and qualitative school for all children with the main purpose to transform them into pupils whose have the skills to learn the essential elements they need to be socially integrated (OECD, 2008).

Even it is a large number of children included into the education system there are children, most of them very poor from Rroma communities whose don't go to school at all or give up school before they finished their compulsory education. Many people don't understand the importance of early-childhood education thereby parents don't bring their children to the kindergarten. The scholar curricula is old-fashioned (overdone) and need to be modernised to reflect the actual realities. It is also important for children to have some life (practical) skills they need to be taught to have an independent thinking, to be creative and curious.

From the factors which facilitate the social inclusion we can remember: the governmental educational politics, non-profit organization activities, teaching staff 'and children'/pupils' parents with disabilities continuous training. More and more in last period it is a tendency to improve and to increase the importance of these factors and children with disabilities to be better integrated into the school and society.

Into the factors which stop the inclusion are included some attitudes and prejudices, some schools and teachers from the public system, the children' parents without special needs, the low (reduced) financial

and material possibilities which detain schools to develop inclusion services, to improve their evaluation system or to send more teachers to the training programs .

The governmental priorities in education includes a balance between equity and quality, to focus on social facilities for the students from disadvantaged backgrounds, to trim the teaching-learning process adapted to the children' individual needs assuring in this way equal chances to education. A set of programs have been set up to faced with these strategic priorities having the hope that they could prevent the abandon and to help children who have already left school. However in the case of vulnerable, excluded or discriminated children this participation is quite low.

3. TRANSPARENCY

According to the Romanian dictionary transparency means something easy to understand, comprehensive (clear). According the National Strategy for preventing and combating the corruption from vulnerable public administrative sectors the transparency of the education system has become one the Romanian Government's priorities. Thus and so, transparency has several meanings.

Transparency is a practical value. In her absence we can't talk about diversity or personalization but neither about equity, equal chances, honesty or the right to choose.

Transparency is a tangible value which you can "feel" when you find the right answer to a simple question, an administrative one or a theoretical one.

Transparency means access to the information. In 2011, the university system was transparent (open for everyone). Each of us: student, employer, paymaster, researcher or anybody else has access to the information and more than that it has the instruments and technology to process it. Maybe more information doesn't mean transparency but more useful and bidden information does.

Transparency means communication. People and institutions whose have common values and ideals can easily find each other. Students find easier their universities and the universities can find their students. The employers find easier the wanted-employees and the latter ones choose the right job for them. The ones whose want to invest on education made it with the trust that they are doing the right thing, for the right institution which knows whom to ask for help (for the resources they need). A transparent environment helps people to be closer to one another, to "see" themselves and the others more easily and to have a tied cooperation.

Transparency means that we can easily search the information which is found on complex database and it sorted out on thousand on different criteria(s). Everything is made to help you to find what you

are looking for, to ask a question and to obtain the right answer, to set a quick contact with other persons or institutions. It is a cyberspace to meet interests with responsibilities, teachers with students, employers with future employees, ideas and their practical finality.

In the same time transparency brought with it the responsibility. It empowers the institutions to obtain concrete (noticeable) results. It also empowers the persons who rarely take a decision before they have inquired information-barely because information is now everywhere.

And lately (the last but not the least) transparency brought with it time for each of us ((person or institution). Wasted time on searching the information we needed. Time what can be used in many other ways.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES' TRAINING

Another criterion to evaluate performance in education is the human resources' training. So far the education reform has included elements which assure the quality on education but just recently the quality of Romanian education has been defined as a priority.

The European dimension of the quality has been completed with the Romanian society requirements fulfilling the request to "to think globally and to act locally".

In the postmodern society school as a institution of knowledge has a fundamental position. The development measure can be revealed not only of economic indicators and life quality but also by the ones related to education and school, respectively of indicators referring to organisation and knowledge, the type of performances expected to be achieved, the quality of educational activities and to ways of distributing (spreading) the education into the society.

The key of elementary and secondary education quality is the accommodation: to the pupils' age, their learning style, the Romanian society values, the pupils' needs and their future perspectives. A qualitative pre-university education supposes the integration the democratic values and principles, the partners' rights and obligations (bonds), being installed a transparent, responsible and involvement spirit, from the part of the school as the education supplier but also from the part of the family-student and parent-as the beneficiaries of the educational service.

The teaching staffs have a main role to develop a qualitative education. The teaching process centred on pupil supposes to know and understand the student very well, his culture, skills and abilities (leans) for a specific domain, this kind of teaching represents a present (new) method which gives the teacher the possibility to answer to the students' needs and requirements and to know how to evaluate them

correctly. In this case the fairness (rightness) of the evaluation depends on most part on imagine the teacher has of the student.

One of the possibilities to achieve all these targets is that in every school to be put into practice the problems related to the education quality: the student's multilateral development, premise to create a strong personality, to assure the minorities' rights as a guarantee of the institutions quality, to modernize the preschool education, to respect the scholars' responsibilities and rights, to assure qualitative services in the scholar libraries (this is a major requirement of the modern education) and to assure the gifted children' right to education (MECTS, 2008).

Depending on their teaching level the teachers have to have an initial training and a continuous one.

5. THE 3 E PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The performance audit represents an independent and objective examination or evaluation of the proportion of which a program or activity of a public institution functions efficiently and effectively by respecting the economy criteria.

The international audit standards, INTOSAI, define the concept as being "an audit of the economy, efficiency and efficacy and with their help the audited institution uses her resources to accomplish her responsibilities". These standards stipulate that the performance audit supposes the examination of the economy, efficiency and efficacy - the 3 E as we can see on next paragraphs:

- the economy audit: how to manage the administrative activities of the public institutions in conformity with the practices and principles of a benchmark management;
- the efficiency audit of the financial, human and any other kind of resources including the examination of the informational systems and settlements which concern the evolution's measurement and monitoring of the performance indicators and also the examination of the procedures which the institutions have been used to diminish the risks and to solve the deficiencies which have been identified;
- the efficacy audit: the audited institutions have to achieve the targets and also the factual impact audit of the institutions activities compared with the projected (designed) impact (CCR, 2005). To measure the performance with the 3 E-economy, efficiency and efficacy- is a necessity to manage the institutions (at all hierarchical levels) to have a correct imagine over the program/project/process/ activity performance.

In the performance audit isn't necessary to analyse at the same time the 3 E: economy, efficiency and efficacy (CCR, 2005).

The economy represents to cut off the allocated resources for achieving the estimated results of an activity, maintaining the quality of these results (Law no.672/ 2002). Evaluation of the economy is made by using several criteria(s) like:

- the existence of appropriate and comprehensive settlements regarding the activities from the audited domains;
- the assignation of adequate funds (assets) at the right time that the public services can do their work;
- the existence of a fixed price established by an internal politics;
- the comparison with the price used in a similar transaction.

The evaluation of the education process represents an action subordinated to the educational/teaching activity organised into a system, necessary to check up targets up-dating level, their check-in to certain periods with the setting/ auto-setting function.

The efficiency means to maximize the results reported to the resources. This is the relationship between outputs and the products, services, other results and resources (inputs) turned over into outputs. Into the practice their efficiency can be expressed as the report between outputs and the obtained results: services and resources (inputs) used to product them. It is used the next formula to calculate it:

Efficiency= Obtained results (outputs)/ Used resources (inputs)

To audit the efficiency it must be seen if:

- the financial, human and other kind of resources have been used properly;
- the programs and activities of the audited governmental institutions have been in accordance with the objectives and requirements asked by the law or other settlements;
- the governmental programs and the activities of the audited institutions have been settled down, managed and evaluated properly;
- the programs and activities of the audited institutions have been made on the right time.

To evaluate a program or activity efficiency an important element represents the report: "cost-efficacy"

The analysis "cost-efficacy" (cost-benefit) evaluates the connexions between the cost programs or activities of the audited institutions and their results which can be expressed by the cost used to obtain a benefit (the designed result)

For this reason to obtain the efficiency activity evaluation of the audited institution you must compare the obtained efficiency indicators with a set of criteria(s). From these criteria(s) can be chosen:

- efficiency standard used the audited institution (the value of the efficiency indicators can be established by an internal settlement or by the program politics);
- efficiency indicators realized by institutions with similar activity;
- efficiency indicators obtained by the most benchmark institution from that area;
- the best "practices" used when problems are complex and standards don't exist;
- control and evaluation procedures developed by the management;
- performance indicators obtained by the institution for similar activities in different period of time.

To respect the efficiency principle into the educational system from Romania it can be respected and followed some priorities and development direction presented by the Ministry of education and research for the period 2008-2011 which can be found out in the report about the state of the national education system from the year 2008 and to see in which proportion the strategic objectives has been respected and have had the wanted effects.

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