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STUDY ABOUT THE ROMANIAN HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATE'S PERCEPTION OVER THE QUALITY OF THIS PROCESS

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Key words: higher education, globalization, perception, employment market.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results from this study our conclusions refer to the following ideas:

- **The economic degree still is the first choice for enrollment in the higher education.**
- **Students believe that a diploma achieved in a economic faculty could help them in finding a good job.**
- **The competition in labor force market increasing and give advantages to employers in attracting good capacities and knowledge.**
- **Students believe that a work experience along the period of higher education process could be a good start for being employed.**
- **The most important weaknesses identified by graduates are: tools and methods of teaching process and the content of textbooks or study materials.**
- **The students appreciate as important for higher education system the novelty of the knowledge share in the process and the practical characteristics of the its.**
- **The graduates are satisfied by the novelty level of the knowledge and information share but the examination model and practical characteristics seems to be inappropriate.**

In conclusion the romanian higher education has to apply the reform started in this sector not only with regulation and curricula changes but also with the opportunities offer to the staff in order to become professionals in teaching and forming activities. This could improve the quality of the education process because the general attitude of people is to place in the center of the educational systems, responsible for the good performance of the students, the professor.

ABSTRACT

The increasing interdependence of national societies within a globalizing economy will bring a standardization of higher education all over the world. In this situation higher education has assumed an important role within countries and internationally in educating people for the new economy and creating knowledge. In this context we examine

the role of romanian higher education percept by the economic specialization graduates from Babes-Bolyai University from Cluj. Using a direct research, this study examines the motivation in choosing the economic specialization and the qualities aspects of the education process. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the main advantages and weaknesses of romanian higher education from the economic specialization gradu-

ates point of view. The results of this research should give us the possibility to project in the future the business and economic specialization in romanian higher education market.

GLOBALIZATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION

„The whole world is my country”
(Seneca).

Increasing globalization is beginning to have an effect on higher education all over the world, pushing nations toward a more orderly interface of their systems of higher education. The mechanism of higher education was forced to a form of standardization. There is an increasing use of common textbooks, course materials and syllabi world wide, stimulated by the expanding influence of multinational publishers, the internet and databases, as well as the growing cadre of professors who return home after their studies abroad with ideas concerning curriculum and instructional materials in their fields. An examination of the textbooks used, the patterns of translations from one language to another and the databases used reveals a similar pattern. The field of business and management studies illustrates very well the global idea. In most countries business administration is a new field, established over the past several decades to prepare professionals for work in multinational corporations or in firms engaged in international commerce. The dominant pattern of professional studies is the MBA degree, which is the American style master's of business administration. A key part of many MBA programs is the case study, again developed in the US context. The MBA model has been widely copied in other countries, sometimes modified for keeping with the local context, but the basic degree structure and curriculum remain American. Already

faculty and students are beginning to work more successfully within a higher educational structure that recognizes similarities in their workload, their course designs, and their credentials. The new economy, with its emphasis on information, is rapidly developing new technologies that are likely to accelerate cross-national standardization in higher education. The information age carries the potential of introducing significantly change in higher education. The elements of the revolution in information technology with the power to transform higher education include the communication, storage and retrieval of knowledge. Scholars are increasingly dependent on the internet both to undertake research and analysis and to disseminate their own work. Academic institutions are beginning to use IT to deliver degree programs and other curricula to students outside the campus. Distance education is rapidly growing within countries and internationally. IT is beginning to shape teaching and learning and is affecting the management of academic institutions. IT and globalization go hand in hand. Indeed, the internet serves as the primary vehicle for globalization of knowledge and communications. The internet simplifies the obtaining of information for scholars and scientists at universities and other institutions that lack good libraries. This change has had a democratizing effect on scientific communication and access to information. Effects of Globalization on higher education are:

⇒ Globalization of higher education is basically desirable because it provides diversify opportunities to people throughout the world.

⇒ This trend causes also some difficulties of assessing the content, quality and reliability of higher education provided beyond national boundaries.

„Globalization is perhaps the most fundamental challenge faced by the universities in their long history, more serious than the challenge posed to the medieval universities by the rise of humanism and later the scientific revolution; more serious than the challenge posed to the universities of the ancient regime by Revolutionary Europe or by industrialization, urbanization and secularization that followed in its wake; more serious even than the challenge posed by totalitarianism in our own century” (Peter Scott, 1999) The transformation of the old elite universities into systems of mass higher education, and the growing importance of advanced technologies in industrial production and the provision of services, has led to a paradoxical and unexpected consequence, which was the weakening of what are the effectiveness and quality of the higher education. In other words, the growth of mass higher education does not mean, necessarily, that we have more people well educated it can mean, quite simply, that we have more people studying longer.

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The conceptual study frame

The research purpose is to identify the perception of higher education's perception about the economist profession in the actual labor force market and the role of education process in preparing them for the job tasks. The study was conducted on 37 graduate's students from economic faculties from Cluj-Napoca. We focused on 3 Faculties from Babes-Bolyai University with economic profile: Economic Sciences Faculty, Faculty of Business and European Studies

Faculty. We start from the idea that the economic profile in higher education continue to attract students because of the favorable work perspective in the market. The graduates are willing to get based on education process practical knowledge and capabilities. The basic assumption regarding the following ideas:

- The economic profile still it is preferred by the students because of the labor force market.
- The demand for economists in the labor force market starts to decreasing.
- The competition among the graduates with economic degree became harsh.
- The main characteristics of the effectiveness of higher education percept by students are.

The evolution of higher education

The higher education is offered in Cluj throw 10 institutions, public as well as private. registered in the last 10 years a meaningful development related to the number o scholars. This tendency took place on the basis characterized by not so high increasing of number of professors. The result was the increasing number of students per professor from 11 students in 1991 to 16, 9 students in 2003.

This is a mean calculated for the entire faculties, with different fields and all forms of degree. We appreciate this result as a decreasing of tutorial activities for professors and a depreciation of the quality student-professor relationship. Because of that the higher education process quality are perceived at lower level.

The economic field was and remained an interesting specialization for the higher education, due to the number of high school graduates which enrolling into the faculties with this degree.

Table 1**Comparative analysis of the number of scholars and professors**

Year	Professors	Students enrolled
1990/1991	2,098	20,726
1995/1996	2,583	34,749
2000/2001	3,223	50,484
2001/2002	3,247	54,710
2002/2003	3,314	54,429
2003/2004	3,442	58,443

Source: www.insse.ro

Table 2**The evolution of students enrolled number on higher education profile**

(% in total)

Period	Economic profile	Technical Profile	Medicine Profile	Low and juridical Profile
1990/1991	12.8	62.50	10.43	2.06
1995/1996	24.9	28.05	9.59	12.83
2000/2001	24.8	25.94	6.19	12.91
2001/2002	25.0	25.68	5.63	11.87
2002/2003	26.5	25.58	5.44	10.64
2003/2004	27.7	25.45	5,32	9.76

Source: www.insse.ro

Methods used for research

This study utilized data from one data collection process focusing on the graduates from 2004-2005. Data were collected using an established survey instrument that requests detailed information organized in a 14 questions. Through this structured questionnaire the 37 graduates students developed answers around questions like: perception of the demand for the economic degree, which are the most important criteria's applied by employers in the job selection process, if higher education help them to find an appropriate job, or if the knowledge share in the education process help them to faced to job tasks and abilities. The instrument was constructed so that subjects could chose one alternative or maximum two, depending on our wish, or to evaluate the degree on a percentage

bases. The answers were analysis with some statistical tools provided by the SPSS statistical method.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In first part of the research we focused on the perspective of economist profession. We find out that almost 54% from the sample subjects if they had to choose now a faculty to enroll straightens to the economic degree. This means that in nowadays environment the economic specialization still offer the powerful opportunities in the romanian labor market. The result is in a total correlation with the statistical data showed above. Also the idea is indurated by the general perception of subjects that the romanian economy need of specialist with economic degree for development (83%). In the moment of graduation almost 60% of

the subjects examine in the research say that they are employed in a business organization. This signs the general tendency that students try to get a job before to get the diploma even if this job is not appropriate for their qualifications. Students and graduates believe that finding a job before graduation consist of advantages in the labor market. The competition in getting a job it is evaluated as stronger by a high ponders of the subjects, almost 67%. So the graduates are prepared to confront with others and they expect to have some problem in hiring process. These problems get worsen in the last period of time and it was not surprising that almost 70% from the sample graduates, asked if they intend to immigrate in a foreign country, the answer was favorable. In order to find out the graduates opinion about an ideal higher education system we addresses the following question: Select from the following the most important, 2 characteristics regarding the higher education process. Based on this resulted that the

most important features for higher education should be the practical knowledge transfer to the students, the novelty of them and the endowment. These characteristics reflect the expectations of the students from higher education system what are and reflect their perception in correlation with the requirements get from the employers. Because the first two characteristics are related with the quality of professors result that the quality of the education process is a dependent value of the capacities, abilities and qualifications of the teaching staff. In general the main competences correlated with a good professor refer to: good relationship with students, dedication to the education tasks, morale qualities, practical and education experience, exigency.

Starting from these results we intended to evaluate these characteristics for the economic higher education from Cluj-Napoca institutions. In order to do that we required to graduates to evaluate on a percentage scale their perception and we identify the following results.

Figure 1

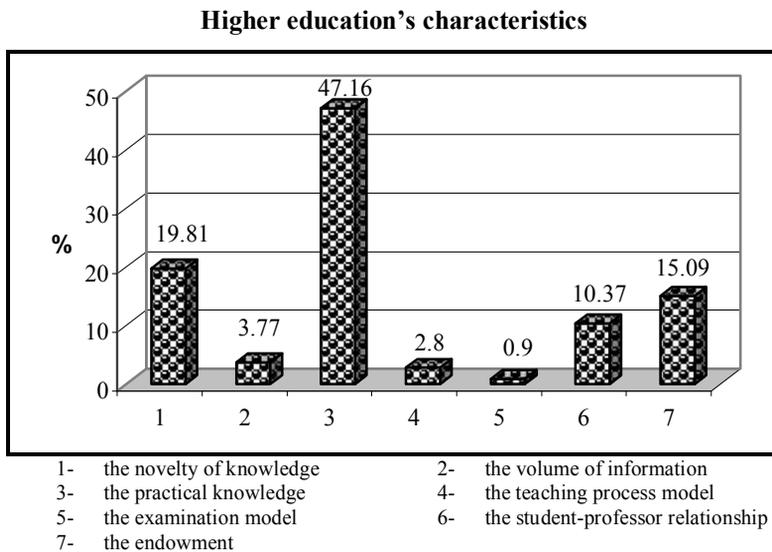
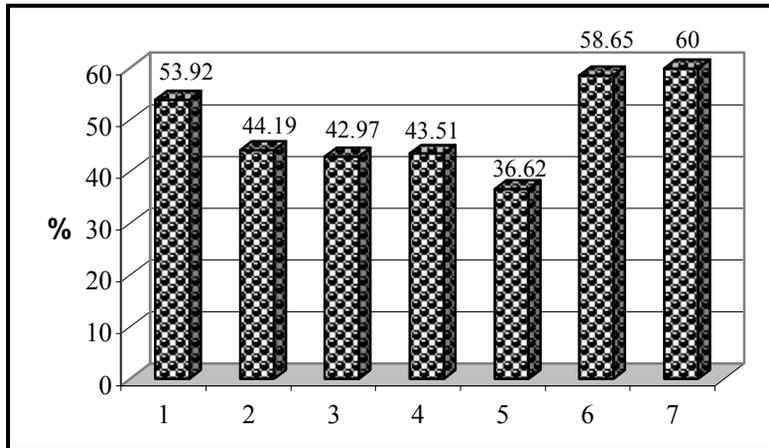


Figure 2

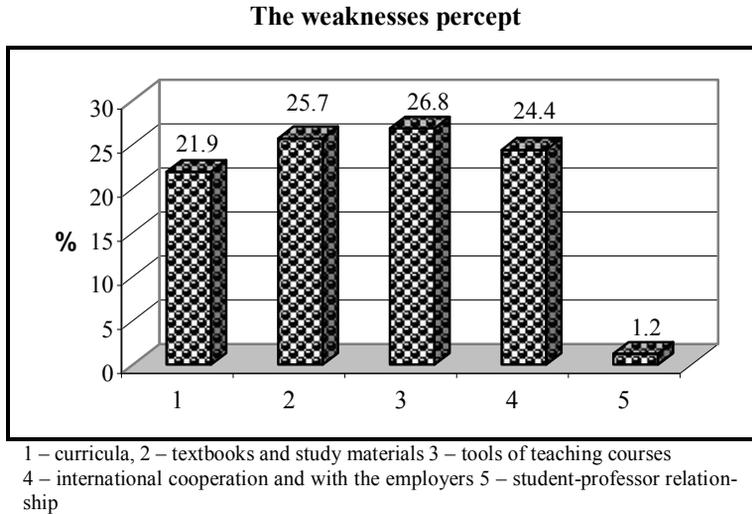
The evaluation characteristics results for the faculty of graduation



We conclude that the novelty of knowledge, the student-professor relationship and the endowment occupy a good position in the graduate's perception of economic faculties from Cluj. The 60% average for the endowment reveals that the economic faculties identify the importance role of books, computers, and presentations techniques in the quality increasing of education process and tried to make some improvement in this sector. The high percent of student-professor relationship evaluation bring us the idea that the professors are interested in maintaining a close and deep forming process of the students in the educational process, they are dedicated to accomplish their tasks with good results and they try to collaborate with the students in the knowledge transfer process. In correlation with the importance of higher education's characteristic we consider that only the novelty of knowledge benefits of a good perception from the graduates point of view. This result suggest that the economic faculties adapted their curricula to the new challenges

came on in the business and economic environment and developed the specializations and domains required by the employers in the work force market. Also we consider that the professor bring in their courses and books the most important, actual and new problems, concepts and information identified in the romanian market. Based on these perceptions the graduates evaluate the grade in which they consider that the knowledge obtaining in the education process will help them in accomplish the job tasks. The result, on a percentage scale, was 48, which reflect a good average taking in account the courses ponder with theoretical background, like macro economy, micro economy, applied mathematical methods, economic history etc. Teachers should share their knowledge and understanding in discussion only to help students to gain a personal and critical perspective on what is learned, not to show off in front of them. Based on the graduates experience in the higher education system we were interested in identifying the weaknesses percept by them.

Figure 3



The graduates indicate in the first two positions the tools and techniques applied in the teaching process and the content of the textbooks and study materials. We consider that result as a weakness process of forming effective teaching performance to the professors. The main problem with this deficient is the dependency of applying improvement methods on personal perception. In general the Romanian universities adopted a system which delivered individual evaluation done by the

students of their educational activities and now based on this system every professor has a feedback from his/her students. The system is not complete because it lacks in a general evaluation of the study and the recommended ways of skills improvement. Also we consider that these studies done on the students should lead to specific goals organizing on 4 categories: teaching ability, professional competence, interpersonal relationship and personality.

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