

MODERNIZATION OF UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND ALIGNMENT OF THE ROMANIAN UNIVERSITY WITH EUROPEAN STANDARDS

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Abstract

Due to the fact that we live in a world that is constantly changing, where technology redefines our lives, and at present the working environment is characterized by an increasingly alert rhythm, being crowded, subject to pressures, the mission of higher education. is to create leadership skills for future sustainable leaders. The educational standards of a society will dictate its degree of success in addressing the complex problems for promoting sustainable development; the educational level of its leaders directly influences the achievement of sustainable development goals. A lasting and significant change in the behavior of organizations that tend towards sustainability must involve the institutions in the education system, especially the academic environment. Higher education institutions have the role of modeling the attitudes and behaviors of leaders through entrepreneurial education, through management development programs, training and other ubiquitous aspects, but less tangible activities, such as spreading and promoting new values and ideas. By these means, academic institutions have the potential to generate a wave of positive changes, thus contributing to ensuring a world in which both businesses and societies can flourish. The purpose of this paper is to identify the role of higher education in creating sustainable leaders in order to benefit from a sustainable society. Thus, using methods such as literature review and documentation, in this article we have highlighted the relationship between leadership and sustainability for creating sustainable leadership.

Keywords: Leadership, sustainable leader, sustainability, education, competencies

JEL Codes: A20, I20, M12

1. Introduction

The 21st century comes with a series of challenges and new demands from the new generations and from the education systems as well (Calder, W., Clugston, R.M., 2003) . The mission of higher education is to prepare the first generation that is facing an unprecedented speed of social, economic and technological change. In this sense (Friedman M. 1995), the formation of socially active persons, of leaders of a sustainable society, who are able to adapt quickly to changes becomes the main mission of any education system. In the education process, the focus is shifting from the strictly learning and assimilating area of rapidly perishable information, to the development of social skills.

2. Literature review

Classic education systems have, over time, focused only on memorizing facts by applying certain working methods. This model based on the delivery of information has changed radically as a result of the emergence of new technologies that allow the access of knowledge and information to a level impossible to imagine in the past. In this context, the role of education is no longer to provide information, but to facilitate learning.

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Table 1. History of initiatives taken in society and education to maintain sustainable development.

Year	The event/the statement	Level of reporting/address
1972	Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment, United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Sweden	Society
1975	The Belgrade Charter, Belgrade Conference on Environmental Education, Yugoslavia	Education
1987	Tbilisi Declaration, Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education, Georgia	Education
1987	“Our Common Future”, The Brundtland Report	Society
1990	Talloires Declaration, Presidents Conference, France	Higher Education
1991	Halifax Declaration, Conference on University Action for Sustainable Development, Canada	Higher Education
1992	Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio Conference); Agenda 21, Chapter 36: Promoting Education, Public Awareness and Training and Chapter 35: Science for Sustainable Development	Society
1992	Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future founded, USA	Higher Education
1993	Kyoto Declaration, International Association of Universities Ninth Round Table, Japan	Higher Education
1993	Swansea Declaration, Association of Commonwealth Universities’ Fifteenth Quinquennial Conference, Wales	Higher Education
1993	COPERNICUS University Charter, Conference of European Rectors (CRE)	Higher Education
1996	Ball State University Greening of the Campus conferences were in 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, and 2009	Higher Education
1997	Thessaloniki Declaration, International Conference on Environment and Society: Education and Public Awareness for Sustainability, Greece	Education
1999	Environmental Management for Sustainable Universities (EMSU) conference first held in Sweden. Following conferences in 2002 (South Africa), 2004 (Mexico), 2006 (U.S.A.), 2008 (Spain), and in 2010 in The Netherlands.	Higher Education
2000	Millennium Development Goals	Society
2000	The Earth Charter	Society
2000	Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP)	Higher Education
2001	Lüneburg Declaration on Higher Education for Sustainable Development, Germany	Higher Education
2002	World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa (Type 1 outcome: Decade of Education for Sustainable Development; Civil Society outcome: the Ubuntu Declaration)	Society
2004	Declaration of Barcelona	Higher Education
2005	Start of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD)	Education
2005	Graz Declaration on Committing Universities to Sustainable	Higher

Year	The event/the statement	Level of reporting/address
	Development, Austria	Education
2009	Abuja Declaration on Sustainable Development in Africa: The role of higher education in SD, Nigeria	Higher Education
2009	Torino (Turin) Declaration on Education and Research for Sustainable and Responsible Development, Italy	Higher Education

Source: Adapted and updated after Calder and Clugston (2003) and Wright (2004).

3. Methodology of research

In economic science, research on education aims to identify the modalities of participation of education in training and the use of the economic resources of an individual or of the whole community, respectively of highlighting the contribution made by education to the enhancement of the economic potential of an individual or of the national economy as a complex system. In the microeconomic approach, education is considered one of the determinants of human potential, it contributing to the formation of professional competences, respectively stimulating the efficiency of the human factor. In the acroeconomic approach, the economic role of education is analyzed through the contribution made to the evolution of macroeconomic indicators (Zaccaro *et al.*, 2004). The synthesis of the macroeconomic approaches of education allowed us to present the macroeconomic impact of education through the contributions made to the formation of human capital, social capital as well as the externalities that are characteristic to it (Figure 1).

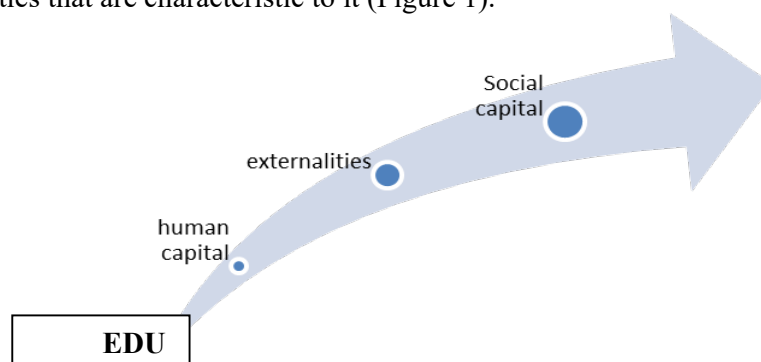


Figure 1. Contributing elements of education on economic growth

Source: Ozturk, I, 2001, *The role of education in economic development: a theoretical perspective*, Journal of Rural Development and Administration, Volume XXXIII, No. 1.

According to the figure above, the quantification of the contribution made by education to economic growth can be achieved through human, social or external capital, each element representing an aggregation of the values, skills, knowledge, competences formed in the educational process. In the last decade, leadership has emerged as a component of management efficiency, presenting a particular specificity and showing a major, often decisive, influence on the performances of organizations.

"Most specialists define leadership as a process of social influence in which the leader willingly requests the subordinates to participate in an effort to achieve organizational goals" (Tamkin and Hirsh, 2003). The leadership is presented by management specialists, such as Nicolescu O. and Verboncu I., as "the ability of a manager to obtain the effective involvement of some people in the implementation of a certain course of action" (Nicolescu and Verboncu, 2000). Another specialist, Kotter J. appreciated the leadership as "a process of orienting a group or groups of people by mainly non-coercive means" (Constantinescu *et al.*, 2000).

Of course, in the literature we meet other points of view. For example, Clement J. considers leadership the process by which a person sets a goal or direction for one or more persons and determines them to act together with competence and discipline in order to achieve them. From here comes an interesting idea, namely that the team spirit lies at the base of leadership, which is the result of the integration of four processes: building trust between the people involved; establishing a clear mission and goals for people to adhere to; the development of participatory decision-making processes; strong individual and group motivation to help achieve common goals (Cornescu *et al.*, 2003). Thus, leadership can be defined by using multiple facets, Figure 2.



Figure 2. The semantic facets of leadership
Source: Making by autors

Leadership is tied in with vision and forming, shaping what's to come in the future. (Hargreaves A., 2003). There is an earnest need in today's businesses for another kind of initiative - one that makes the long haul sustainability of our reality a top need. Business leaders have a significant part to play in settling on the privilege key decisions so as to make this economical sustainable future. Wayne Visser presents the traits of sustainable leaders as follows (Visser, 2013):

- *Systemic, interdisciplinary understanding:* meaning that they would have to understand the root cause of the problem and gear up their efforts towards creating systemic change.
- *Emotional intelligence and a caring attitude:* the ability to not only motivate but inspire people with their personal passion and care.
- *Values orientation that shapes culture:* A value-based approach is critical, coupled with the long-term vision.
- *A strong vision for making a difference:* Sustainability leaders are able to effectively communicate a compelling narrative on how their organisations can contribute to creating a better world.
- *An inclusive style that engenders trust:* A great definition of leadership is when the leader and followers work together towards their goals.
- *A willingness to innovate and be radical:* sustainability leaders recognise the complex problems which require creative solutions.
- *A long-term perspective on impacts:* the ability to plan for long-term impacts and to give directions towards this.

Sustainable leadership is based on a belief that everyone in the organization will be successful. Sustainability sees success as both sustainable and accessible to everyone.

Sustainable Leadership is made up of the key factors underlying organization, namely, long-term success and development. Developing sustainable leadership remains a key economic challenge. Leadership is the most important resource in a process of organization improvement (Judge, T.A.,2009).There are also certain models of sustainable leadership (Figure 3).

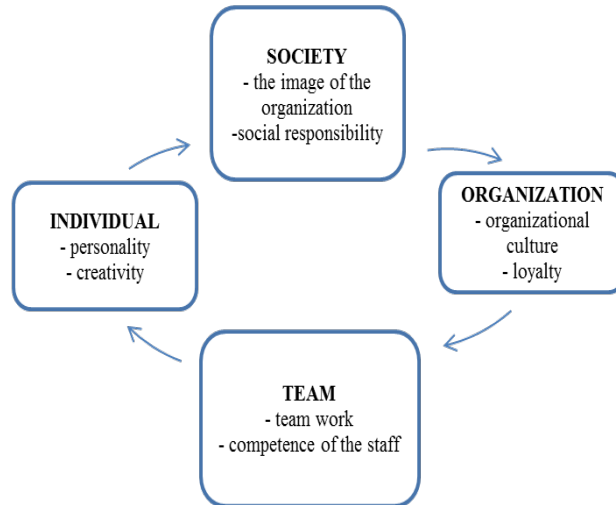


Figure 3. Model of sustainable or sustainable leadership factors

Source: Processed by: Ellen Daniēls, A. H. (2018). A review on leadership and leadership development in educational settings. Educational Research Review.

The beginning of psychological research on organizational leadership has been rooted in trait orientation and what is often referred to as the "great man" as a leadership approach (Poling, 2009). The idea that great leaders are "born and cannot be done" was influenced by the early writings of historian Thomas Carlyle, who wrote that the history of the world was recorded in the biographies of great people (Zaccaro and Day, 2007). And according to these character traits of leaders, there are a number of characteristics of leaders who are said to have been born with them. (Vagu, P., 2006). But there are also authors who contradict this and I believe that the concept of leadership is not something we are born with, but it is a human capacity that can be developed and learned. In order to support this we can say that there are people who are not born with a certain talent but because they practice, learn and become more informed they become better and better. For example, as Michael Owen said, "I don't know if footballers are born or created, but the more they practice, the better they become." (Owen, 2005).

This approach builds on the same research objectives set out in the Strategic Framework - Education and Training 2020 through Education and Investment Plan, Education and Training for Growth and Jobs, Skills Development, Recognition of Skills and Qualifications, Social Inclusion and Citizenship , through formal and non-formal learning, Digital competences and technologies in education, Education and training: policies based on concrete data, Entrepreneurship in education, ET 2020 Working Groups, Monitor of education and training.

Between March and November 2016, eight regional consultations were organized under the auspices of the "Educated Romania" project. These regional debates were organized with the support of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research and its subordinate or coordinated institutions, as well as in partnership with the host institutions..¹

¹ http://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/Dezbateri_regionale_site.pdf

Each debate aimed at obtaining contributions on the vision and country objectives of Romania for education and research, for the period 2018-2030.

The report of each regional debate is available on the website of the Presidential Administration, accessing the date of each event in the Calendar of activities organized under the auspices of the National Debate for Education and Research.

The theme of the project is "Sustainability of management in state higher education institutions", the research will be directed to the sustainability measures discussed, researched, existing and future, for higher education institutions to become sustainable both nationally and internationally.

The research gradually follows aspects related to university management, analysis and diversification of sustainability measures of state universities through activities that ensure a good implementation of the strategic framework for education and training.

3.1. Graduate profile at the transition to higher education

The main theme was the need to ensure a balance between transversal and process skills that allow the graduate to be autonomous, able to make decisions related to participation in university education and to integrate the skills acquired in the construction of personal goals. They also mentioned the important role still played by the concrete knowledge acquired in school, provided that their integration with practice and the needs of the real economy.

3.2. Graduate profile at the transition to the labor market

The profile of the graduate at the transition to the labor market was outlined as that of a responsible young person, who has social skills such as teamwork and benefits from specialized technological, digital and linguistic skills.

3.3. The profile of the university tertiary education graduate

Innovative ability was considered a key skill of the higher education graduate by 2030. This ability was understood in a broad sense, from creativity in tackling professional problems, to the ability to produce new knowledge by combining existing knowledge and / or training in collaboration with experts in other fields, up to knowledge-based entrepreneurship and even approaching individualized personal training as an act of innovation.

The Regional Debate on "Scientific Research" was the second of the eight debates announced within the **Educated Romania project**.

During the sessions, the following priorities were identified:

- 1) Predictability, stability and professional prestige in the development of teaching and research career;
- 2) The mission and functions of higher education institutions;
- 3) Collaboration between academia and research and the private sector;
- 4) Ethics, impartiality and scientific rigor in research;
- 5) Transfer of research results at the level of public policies and practice in the field.

The Regional Debate on "Internationalization of Romanian Higher Education" took place on October 25, 2017 and proposed discussing the challenges faced by higher education institutions in their internationalization, as well as agreeing on development prospects by 2030.

In the context of political, social and economic globalization, the internationalization of universities is an essential condition for the development of research, increasing the quality of education, attracting talent and creating new opportunities for Romanian higher education.

Internationalization, in itself, is a process by which national higher education systems intertwine on a global scale to facilitate the understanding, innovation and dissemination of new scientific discoveries. Among the main reasons for internationalization are: economic

competitiveness, promoting a better understanding between nations, increasing the quality of education, but also national security.

The development of a national strategy in the field of internationalization of higher education was discussed, how student services can be adapted to have universities open to globalization, the role of European mobility programs and, of course, the promotion of higher education abroad, while streamlining the process of admitting and recognizing studies for candidates from abroad. In a first step, three major country objectives were identified:

- Mobility
- Internationalization at home
- Educational Marketing / Promotion

3.4. Internationalization at home: adapting the administration and the academic and administrative / non-academic staff for an institution open to globalization

The following country objectives have been identified that reflect to some extent different layers of manifestation of internationalization at home:

- Flexibility of structures and adaptation of programs to increase the access of international students;
- Improving language skills to remove any barriers to multicultural experiences;
- Quality experiences of international and national students by changing the attitude of members of the academic community towards internationalization.

To achieve the objectives, a series of solutions have been identified as follows:

- Additional funding for international students (eg subsidized places) and increasing autonomy in the use of resources;
- Training opportunities (eg free language courses), development of several bilingual programs and promotion of administrative services in foreign languages;
- Awareness of the importance of internationalization at home;
- Adapting quality standards to the specific needs of internationalization;
- Facilitating multicultural experiences (multicultural evenings, activities, festivities, etc.).

European mobility programs have an important role to play in the internationalization of education, mentioning two more important ones:

- In each faculty of Romanian universities, at least one Joint Master Degree (JMD) program should be operational, and the diversification of existing educational programs contributes to the creation of partnerships between faculties in Romania and in other countries.
- Romania to be an attractive destination for the mobility of students and staff from universities in all countries (Romania to enter at least in the Top 10 at European level).

Promoting the Romanian higher education system abroad - continuation and development of the concept - "**Study in Romania**".

"**Study in Romania**" aims to promote Romanian higher education internationally, to attract both Romanian and international students in the study programs offered by Romanian universities.

Currently the platform includes 2990 study programs in 14 languages, completed by 31 universities.

In addition, the platform provides information about the Romanian higher education system, the advantages of foreign students wishing to study in Romania, study programs taught in foreign languages, but also certain technicalities in terms of enrollment, or other procedures such as obtaining study visa and / or residence permit.

In addition, the platform provides information on facilities and living conditions for international students in Romania.

3.5. Streamlining the process of admitting candidates from abroad and recognizing studies

It can be seen that between Romania and the other member countries of the Bologna Process there is a greater collaboration and thus a higher number of educational exchanges. This phenomenon can be explained by the mechanisms and tools provided by the key factors in this process.

Adoption of a three-cycle system (bachelor's, master's and doctorate), a European credit system (ECTS - European Credit Transfer System), and the Diploma Supplement (which provides a standardized description of the nature, level, context, content and stage of studies completed by the holder) are just some of the tools that facilitate the recognition of studies and then the admission of candidates to another level of study.

Although the current situation in the European space is favorable for Romania, the current data show that we are below the European average in terms of attracting foreign students, but we are in a continuous increase in terms of their accommodation.

In order to increase the number of foreign students of any kind, an efficient process of recognition of studies is needed, but also a more flexible process in terms of the process of admitting candidates from abroad.

Five major country targets have been identified:

- Authorization of programs in foreign languages - Authorization of foreign programs in a facilitated manner, even if there is not already a corresponding program in Romanian.
- Electronic admission platform - An electronic admission platform facilitates the admission process without the need to submit physical documents prior to receiving the decision to accept at the university and starting courses.
- Coherent / incremental evolution of the admission regulations - Currently the Romanian state does not offer scholarships or budgeted places for foreign students (non-EU, non-EEA).
- Correlation of procedures for admission and granting of study visas between state authorities - At European level there are regulations in force aimed at facilitating the process of admission and granting of study visas (eg Directive No. 114/2004 on the conditions admission of third-country nationals for studies, student exchange, unpaid training or voluntary services).

Inclusion of recognition specialists in the International Relations Departments - In order to facilitate the recognition of studies, it is necessary either that the staff of these departments be trained on recognition issues.

4. Conclusions

Education is sustainable when it is viable after some time, when coordinated well with social, monetary, political, innovative changes, and can adjust to these changes. The mission of the educational organization is of vital importance, to be responsible in terms of personal and social development. Sustainability considers accomplishment to be both supportable and available to everybody. Sustainable Leadership is comprised of the key factors basic of higher education, to be specific, long haul achievement and improvement. Likewise, higher education is the most significant component of society, in light of the fact that, with its help, the future of mankind develops, so a sustainable educational system must be created.

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