

Public policy analysis in the field of education in Romania

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Abstract: *The policy can be understood in several meanings. Two of the best known are involved in running the state or city (polis), and the art of governing people living in a society. Education policy can be imagined in the sense of action groups or political figures. A set of principles, procedures and processes actionable set in statute, code, administrative and institutional arrangements that determine the status and direction of educability population. Education is a strategic goal of all nations, and education policy orientation reflects the evolution of society as a whole.*

In the present paper I have chosen to present a national policy, the university educational system. This analysis of the university educational system of Romania will must present the educational system comprehensively and will detect the main instructions for the application in practice of the changes. For this goal it is essential a more tactical approach to university educational policy in Romania in the first stage the historical approach.

Key Words: *public policy, education, Romania, university.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Public policy is the action taken by the authorities (central or local) in response to problems that come from society. In other words, we can talk about public policy when a public authority, central or local aims, with a program of coordinated action to change the economic, social, cultural social actors.¹

Items that give consistency in public policy:²

1. A policy consists of a set of concrete measures that give substance to public policy.
2. A public policy is based on the decisions that shape resource allocation, whose nature is more or less authoritarian and that coercion is always present.
3. A public policy is part of an overall framework for action, which allows the distinction between public policy and simple individual actions.
4. A public policy targets and objectives specified set according to values, norms and interests.

The educational system in Romania is at a crossroads. Importance reforms initiated after the fall of communism must continue to improve outcomes in education. Romania is among the last places in Europe in terms of education. Recent studies show that student performance is still low compared to EU standards. Values indicators on learning outcomes approach the international media, but is below the EU, OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). Thus Romania was ranked 34th out of 42 countries participating in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Higher education in Romania dates back to the middle of the 17th century with the establishment of the Academy Vasiliene (1640) by Prince Vasile Lupu as a school dedicated to the study of languages Latin and Slavonic. Higher education in Romanian language was established in the XIX century, when they set up the courses of tonometry engineers (1824) in Moldova and Wallachia (1818). The first universities in the true sense of the word were the University of Iași (1860) and the University of Bucharest (1864). Until the end of World War I, Romania have a sector of higher education that develops rapidly. Laws passed between 1924 and 1928 were meant to regulate higher education as part of broader education sector.

After 1948, with the establishment of the Communist regime, especially higher education and universities, have become part of a more unified and centralized structures. Although, in theory, free and universal accessible economic restrictions have hindered the development of higher education in the first half of the next century. However, in the late 1970s there were 42 higher education institutions, including seven universities of Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Iași, Timișoara, Craiova, Galați, Brașov and with a total of 164 567 students.

¹ Jenkins, William, *Policy Analysis: A Political and Organizational Perspective*, 1978, London, p.56.

² Thoenig, Jean-Claude, „Les politiques publiques, Tome 4, *Traité de Science Politique*”, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1989

With the end of the Communist regime in 1989, major reforms have been set in terms of programmers and management by each institution in part, within the new educational legislation is constantly evolving. An explosion of private higher education institutions has led to the creation of an Accreditation Board, under the aegis of Parliament. In 1996, in the framework of the project for the reform of higher education has begun implementing the accreditation system

Since its inception in 1990 and with enhanced effects since 1997, new education reform has the following key objectives for institutions of higher education:³

1. Further Decentralization of budgetary funds.
2. Development of diversified curricula, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary.
3. Increased Orientation towards the market of curriculum and institutional services.
4. The introduction of information technology and quality management systems.
5. The Promotion of scientific research in universities.
6. Development of additional opportunities for postgraduate studies, including the Organization of new institutions for further studies.

This means that the funds provided by the State shall not be the subject of very detailed product uses that do not allow the institution to have hardly any say. Instead, institutions will qualify in accordance with the usual formula, at a certain level of funds and will be responsible for the effectiveness with which these funds will be used, and not a detailed record of how it's spent any amount. Although it will keep procedures for accounting and auditing to protect themselves against the wrong use of the funds, the institution will be the main decision-making factor in spending of resources.

By order of the Minister. 3132 of 19 January 1998, the State funding of higher education institutions will include the core funding and additional funding; These State funds will be supplemented by extra budgetary sources such as income from own sources, donations, sponsorships and other income and receipts from services. Core funding will be the global component and will be determined on the basis of the unit cost per student equivalent net. Core funding will be used for staff expenditure and expenditure on materials.

In a bid to ensure greater accuracy and fairness, the National Council of higher education funding will have a responsibility to investigate the unit costs and will make specific recommendations on the cost levels for the different fields and levels of education. Relative cost per domain will be multiplied by the number of students and assign in that field to calculate the sum for which the credit institution is entitled. The summation of all fields of study gives the total funding for the institution.

However, the system of funding through formula will be retained for the benefit of greater predictability for the institution, will link their students rather than Faculty (by entering such a market test for programs) and will provide a budgetary mechanism more transparent than before.

The objection raised is one that applies to all educational sectors: planning and implementation must not create a new stiffness that replacing the old one, but to create a process fluid, adaptable to the predictable and unpredictable in the future.

Because this process was perceived as being deeply incorrect before 1989, has been given more attention to designing a competitive mechanism. About 15% of the State budget for higher education will go to academic scientific research. However, we must remember that a large part of postgraduate education is intrinsically linked to such research, so this funding incorporates a significant component of teaching. There are three components of the sponsored research:

1. project based competition administered by the National Council for research in higher education (COUNSELING) and by outside bodies such as Tempus;
2. the competition based on common funds supplied by COUNSELING, the World Bank and the Government of Romania;
3. The competition for funding from additional funds of MEN. However, the selection of such centers must be carried out in a transparent and equitable manner. In fact, such centers of excellence can evolve into monopolistic or oligopolistic businesses and the benefits of competition to be reduced or destroyed.

It is important to have a mechanism to review, on an objective of these centers and to have the possibility to change the destination of Excellence, whether staff or Department does not retain the productivity level. Secondly the issues educational are multiple policy I will try to present some parts of the existing problems.

³ Educational reform of 1997.

First of all, the present institutional arrangements and poor managerial tools for the administration of education explains some faults in the system, and the lack of equality and its poor quality. Despite being profoundly centralized educational system was shaken in the early stages of the reform process remains unfinished and poorly coordinated. The education system in Romania is similar to a system of ad hoc decisions with many formal rules, poorly coordinated, often even contradictory, and therefore difficult to apply. The paradoxical result of a system with too many rules is that the sheer number of actors (for example, school inspectorates) acts in an independent manner, in the best case, according to their own interpretations of the rules.

Second University system is too cluttered and overly centralized operational decisions is overwhelmed and cannot concentrate on strategic planning and national policy issues.

In terms of internal organization, responsibilities, parallel and overlapping in the administration leading to permanent conflicting information. This aspect is further aggravated by the complete separation of the responsibilities of higher education. Moreover, hierarchic management and territorial education detract communication channels within the education system. There are no institutional mechanisms for consultation for higher education, State and private. The Ministry of national education has not managed yet to initiate a system of consultation between the parties concerned or to mobilize all the available knowledge. Decentralization of education services is based on a division of responsibilities, participation in decision-making and intense vertical and lateral communication within educational administration or with actors from outside the administration. Decentralization was deeply debated nearly eight years ago, but has made little progress in this regard.

Thirdly, all changes should be relevant, sustainable, able to be integrated into the current practices of universities, possible to implement medium and long term, to solve most of the contradictions, to have efficacy for quality, efficiency and equity of education, and the ability to accept change.

Fourth it is possible that the central leadership of the managerial functions to incorporate as much authority and responsibility. This conservative approach is the conviction that decentralization must not be an end in itself. Accordingly, it must be above political squabbles and intellectual currents. The central management shall ensure that quality and equity. The Ministry of national education and the preservation of its regional offices on a key position represents a pragmatic approach toward education reform but points of connection with the University Management to be able to be in touch with attitudes towards the University.

Development and improvement of management systems could make the University Management to become more professional. Reschedule the lines of authority and accountability and reviewing responsibilities requires the creation of instruments for better leadership. Individuals and institutions require new skills, new management tools and a new organizational culture, for the performance of their tasks in the best possible way.

In the fifth row structure, higher education sector consists of both private and public institutions of four types:

1. University the largest institutions of higher education include a large number of departments and programs and professional degrees and scientific titles combined with advanced teaching and research responsibilities.
2. Academy an institution of higher education which prepares specialists, usually in one general area;
3. Name of Polytechnic University was once the former polytechnic institutes after 1990 (the programs emphasize the areas of technical and practical study).
4. University Institutions offering College courses in two or three years completed diploma, but does not qualify graduates for admission to postgraduate studies (may be part of a University, or autonomous work).

In 1990, in Romania have nontraditional shapes quickly expanded tertiary education/post-secondary.

Education Act specifically encourages the formation of such programs, either under the leadership of an institution of higher education, or in cooperation with another organization. Currently, these programs are completed with a certificate or attestation. Though not equivalent to traditional titles, these certificates are recognized on the labor market, even though the official legislation does not provide for this.

Open and distance education in Romania is aimed primarily at adults. A major emphasis of these programs is the training of teachers in the pre-university (nearly 80 000 people are involved in such training programs at the national level).

Each institution shall draw up its own minimum requirements for each major area of study. The examinations are developed and individual schools denoted. The Rector of the institution responsible for this process and authorizes the admission of students.

At private institutions, financial concerns are relatively more important in admissions decisions and in some cases this results in a greater number of students than it can the institution to regulate effectively.

Methods of teaching in the universities and colleges consist of lectures, seminars, papers of the students, research and other activities of this kind. Each Chair, and sometimes every teacher decides the proper combination of these approaches, as well as textbooks and other teaching materials to be used. Lack of laboratory equipment and materials for experiments and demonstrations is a common problem in institutions of tertiary education and very serious in some smaller private institutions. Each University has a strategic development plan. As part of it, each institution shall prepare an educational plan.

2. NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL STANDARD:

National standards require that fundamental and General disciplines to deal with from 15 to 18% of all areas, except the Sciences where they account for 30% of the training program. Specialized disciplines represent 50 to 60 percent of the content of the program, with the exception of medicine where the courses are in the ratio of 75 to 80%. Complementary disciplines represents between 5 and 10% of all programs of study. Private institutions generally follows the same pattern in their offerings.

The highest degree within the institution is to Professor; at this level, candidates must hold a PhD degree and published original works. Teachers from colleges and universities include five degrees. Academic assistants are generally selected by competition between processors, but that person must be at least a PhD candidate. The University must also be enrolled in doctoral studies and more substantial responsibilities for teaching and research. Between the State and private sectors in higher education there is a symbiotic relationship. Many schoolteachers and taught at the State private institutions (especially in the evening hours and part-time). This gives private institutions a prestige and a far superior quality than they would be able to afford paying competitive salaries for a norm throughout. Similarly, if there is a gain in private universities and colleges, some teachers in higher education would be able to engage in another sector.

In all higher education programs, students are commonly valued their teachers through written and oral examinations. For example, universities organize three sessions to evaluate students for each academic year. The exams can be given three times, but a failure in the third attempt will require that the student to repeat the subject matter in question. Students should promote all the end-of-year exams, if they intend to continue in the next year of study. If students do not promote these exams to begin with, they may be review, but it must be advertise one month before the start of the next academic year.

Scientific association's dealings with MEN, as well as attraction and student associations and teachers' unions. However, in 1989 he took a series of measures to promote a more appropriate balance between the interests of Central and institutional. As noted earlier, the role of MEN is becoming more and more one of facilitation and coordination, rather than one of control and detailed planning. MEN is supported in his responsibilities of higher education by a variety of advisory bodies, including the National Council for Accreditation of Academic Diplomas, certificates and Titles, the National Council for quality management in higher education, the National Agency for higher education and Research, Social Agency Development for students, and the National Council for higher education Financing (including the National Agency for the management of Information). Within the institutions, there is a distinction between academic management and administration.

Academic management is primarily the responsibility of academics, in the form of Senate, Faculty Councils, with the assistance of pro rector, Rector, counsel deans and other administrators. Student organizations also participate in this form of management. At the institutional level, the Board of Directors coordinates the academic activities, while the Director-General of the University handles the day-to-day administrative matters. In 1989, new laws and regulations have tried to make the process of selecting the academic leaders, more transparent and more democratic (including participation of students).

Private universities and colleges have an even greater autonomy than the State sector institutions, but increasingly require that plans and programmes to be approved by MEN. Also by law, private organizations must be non-profit making, non-discriminatory basis through religion and national origin, and must comply with the national academic standards fully. Private institutions depend almost exclusively on school fees and other fees imposed on students and sponsors (e.g., firms that want a specific training for their employees). However, accredited institutions (those that have received final accreditation) can compete with State institutions for research and development funds and State-funded, as well as for postgraduate scholarships. Inside, the academic quality of colleges and private universities is

quite variable; some institutions are comparable to public institutions, but others can hardly qualify for national standards. Only 5-10% of the staff of higher education private works exclusively at private institutions. As I mentioned above, the majority of teachers from State institutions.

Private institutions licensed graduates (those recognized by the National Council for Academic Assessment and accreditation) may participate in examinations for the Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.

In part, complementary funding stream may balance the weaknesses in the global financial system-based formula. New allowances can be included specifically to upgrade existing programs and create new programs. This function should not be ignored in the development of the new system.

Higher education is an evolving system, and the need for a fairer financing schemes and more effective for existing programs should not become an obstacle to the process of evolution. Complementary funding categories are characterized by a competitive structure. This is true for capital expenditures for new constructions, maintenance and repair.

MEN select these proposals on the basis of priorities established jointly with its advisory councils. Scholarship funds are allocated on a proportional basis with students units equivalents. There is a problem here that merit-based funding will continue to have a predominant role. The merit is involved in the case of a student with good results also benefits from the economic point of view is highly questionable.

3. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the recommendations addressed to the University education system are numerous. I'll make some in the pages that follow.

The tertiary sector of education should be concerned about the five critical issues in the years to come:

1. Increased responsibility vis-à-vis the Government and students.
2. Effective Exploitation of the new authorities and financial autonomy.
3. Balancing the development of the State and private sectors.

Ensuring that graduates have the skills and attitudes through which to bring their contribution effectively in society, political system and economy of the nation. Tackling these problems successfully will require a continuous evolution of MEN into a center of expertise that assist rather than reorient higher education, and periodic evaluation of laws and regulations to ensure a proper legislative framework exists for higher education to fulfill its social role. Will be needed both a management reform and significant investments in information technology and management training.

Increased government accountability will require two forms of activities for institutions of higher education. First, you need to prove that they have used funds from the State in a manner which corresponds to the intention of the Government. Although it will be given greater freedom of institutions for allocating money from the Government, will be required to maintain detailed records of expenses and transparent in order to ensure both the State and the citizens, that the funds are used properly. Secondly, the institutions must collect and assimilate efficacy data to show the benefits generated by investing in higher education. It is important to remember that many of the effects of education are diffuse and delayed in time; however, institutions should be able to show the effects of training (results in school, employment, and access to continuing education) and research (financial and social effects).

Higher education cannot claim that its benefits are more incommensurable and wait to receive massive social investment. A periodic analysis of the benefits of higher education requires that the basic data to be acquired now and be completed in time with groups of data from surveys and census. Institutions must select and prepare a new generation of managers who can take advantage of the opportunities inherent in new financing schemes. Greater freedom to use the funds from the State and greater freedom to obtain external funding will not make sense if the administrators don't have the powers of the institutions to obtain and to use these funds in innovative ways. Perhaps no other task is not so challenging for higher education than to promote greater echități. The majority of educational inequities are created early in the educational system (unless somehow, even under the pre-educational of family). As we know, higher education is constrained in the sense that activities related to equity applies only to those students who have exceeded the levels of education and have gained access to higher education level. However, there are three big steps that higher education must make. Increased responsibility towards students can use the same data to provide evidence of the benefits of higher education for individuals. Student counselling should be reinforced, and the institutions should play a greater role in using assessments to identify student needs, and not simply to promote or deny students' progress. As students will have more options in the future, will realize that the liability of students is not only an ethical issue, but also a basic requirement for survival in the market.

Autonomy brings with it a new responsibility for decision making; too many managers of institutions formed as practitioners apply, and not as real managers of their institutions. The lack of sufficient funds to pay the teachers at a

level that would not require a second job is a major constraint to this rational explanations. And thirdly, higher education can work with schools to pre-university level to help these schools to pay more than their obligations towards needy students. Thus the University-School partnerships have been successful in many OECD countries and it has been demonstrated that they were beneficial to both schools and higher education. The relationship between the State and private sector was described above as being symbiotic. However, it was also noticed that this relationship has some risks for students and research activities of higher education institutions. Achieving a proper balance between State and private sectors is not a problem only in the number of students from each institution, but rather, creating incentives and appropriate information so that both sectors to function effectively (and maybe even in cooperation). The lack of sufficient funds to pay the teachers at a level that would not require a second job is a major constraint to this rational explanations. However, it is not unrealistic to require teachers to inform the institutions where they rely on their additional obligations to an another institution, or even to create a policy under which such arrangements have been officially designated as having a different status to full time teaching at the institution where they were based. If there are effective procedures for monitoring. The current payment system simply fails to provide any incentive for a positive performance and that there are no effective sanctions for poor performance on the part of teachers. Nations do not have a higher education because they want to have the students, they have students because they want to be trained graduates. The ultimate challenge for Romania is to institutionalize the spirit of reform so as to constitute a permanent aspect of the management of State and university/colleges.

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