

# **Educational management – theories and perspectives**

## **Summary**

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## **Part I. Description**

The structure of the thesis consists of four parts which include a summary of the definitions of education over time, references related to the evolution of school – the institution responsible for providing education, managerial roles in the reform processes, references to the importance of good teachers, the qualities necessary for them to be models, managers and leaders.

From the study of definitions on education, we have found great interest shown towards education throughout history. We consider that this chapter is the foundation of this thesis because it shows that we cannot really consider ourselves to be pioneers and innovators in education. That what is done today in education is not new. The technology is new, but the purpose of education from antiquity and from current times is the same. It is true that we can come up with ideas to improve the educational process from the perspective of high speed in technology development and the need to adapt the education system. But important and consistent ideas come from the past. Experience comes all/only the past. The conclusion that can be drawn is that, in education, we cannot really speak in terms of innovation. We may speak in terms of adaptation and diversification of the means of teaching and of easier learning. But nothing more.

Moreover, another chapter on which we must insist is the strong relationship between general management and educational management, the necessity of adopting good practices from general management because the goal is to get efficient results.

And in the last part, we address some rhetorical questions: How would society be without education? How would society look like if the educational system would respond more quickly to challenges posed by rapid changes in the labor market? There are areas where education does NOT intervene? How would a society with increasingly number of highly trained people look like?

And the answers to all these questions, and to many other questions about the success / failure of the educational processes, the innovative concept of educational management, with all its principles, experiences and objectives set, with results obtained as result of the exchange of good practices should provide the answer and intervene through scientific argumentation, with the answer to reality, through experience, through education and responsible training of teachers and

decision-makers in the field of education and through awareness-raising among all actors involved in the educational process about the unparalleled unique role it can have, each moment in childhood and in the education of students and of their personal and professional future.

## **Part II. The history of definitions on education**

It is unquestionable the fact that education is the domain with oldest history in the entire perimeter of sciences. Education also enters in the category of the concepts that have been given many definitions, but, whom none seems to contain the whole “immensity” and “density” of the domains that covers and in which education interferes. In this way, professor Dumitru Salade is the one who dares to establish an approximate number of definitions “although many (over 120), the definitions of education are far from exhausting the subject because each epoch puts in front of its culture and education institutions new tasks, specific objectives of the stage that reads through”.

Starting from this appreciation, an excursion in the “history” of definitions over education, following the approaches over this, may constitute a starting point in understanding “the road” and “the process” that had run over and “suffered” education, following the evolution of education made in Antiquity – approach that has as “essence” the oldness of the references over this concept, and until today.

From the etymological point of view, “education” comes from the Latin language “educatio” (sust.) = growth, education and from the “educio”, “educare” (verb) = to take out from the nature state and to uplift in culture state.

The term “education” seems to have been put into circulation along the years 1527, as an equivalent of the expressions “instruction” or “establishment” used in those times in order to designate the human formation.

Although from the concept point of view, the term “education” has been put into circulation so late, the child, and later the adult, have benefited from education from the first stages of life and from the first phases of history, but outside the institutional systems of education. School – institution created and responsible for education - has appeared much later.

In the first stages of history, until the appearance of school, education was reduced to the child's imitation of his parents and those around him, and along the maturation process, once stepping out of the house, the child learned from the behavior models or attitudes seen in the environment in which he lived, beyond the family medium, by participating in the collective life, like different religious ceremonies, movements to hunting, fishing, etc.

It may be reconfirmed, without the risk to fail, that education has represented, since very far away periods of history, a special interest and an important preoccupation for all the social categories, and this fact is reflected at least by "The Plutarch's famous opusculum" (the years 50 – 138 a. Hr.), titled "The children's education", which is considered as being "the first treaty, especially acknowledged to education, that the antiquity had sent us" as the author Ion Boboc mentioned.

In this context, from the very far historical periods, from which we can mention the great philosophers and thinkers Pythagoras, Socrates, Xenophon, Plato and Aristotle who, in their speeches and writings, often referred to education.

Referring to education, in this way, Pythagoras considers that "the supreme aim of education is to develop the body in harmony with the spirit, assuring like this the human's interior silence in all circumstance". It can be remarked the fact that the ancient philosopher gave education another role than the one we are referring today. He was referring to "the state" of the human body and the influence that this state has over the man's "the interior" and can be observed the fact that he did not make any reference to the achievement of information or transmission of information.

For Socrates education had, ultimately, a social function, as the author Cristian Stan appreciates. In this way, Socrates considers that not everyone's brightness was the most important thing, but the way in which everyone's ideas are disseminated and the way in which he can change society, in such way, so that, the intelligence and morality combine together. Approaching education to the context of real life, Socrates appreciates that its fate is, ultimately "to teach man what to do and how to do it" in the context of a lucid and entire understanding of the reality.

The importance of Plato's contribution to "the development" of education was also remarked in the XVIII century, so at a very far away distance, as time, in the history "Would you like indeed to have an idea about the real public education? Then read Plato's Republic, the most beautiful

treaty of education that could ever been written”, he wrote enthusiastically, the great French teacher, Jean Jacques Rousseau, the author of the fundamental writing of modern teaching “Emil or about education”, whom professor Ion Boboc mentions.

Returning to the philosophers from Antiquity, Aristotle from Stagiria, Plato’s most significant pupil, in the treaty “Politics”, was the one who had made a periodicity of education which attests the big trust of Stagirit in the power of education over human nature. There must have succeeded, after him, in cycles of 7 years: education in family (with the purpose of normal development and toughening of the organism), education until puberty (7-14 years) and education from puberty until young (21 years). In general, the periodicity of the Stagirit coincided with the educational practice and school in Athens of his time, but not being original.

Maybe the most eloquent testimony of understanding by the Chinese ancient thinkers, as a process of human being’s permanent becoming, is represented by the fact that the icon which express the concept “education” is made of, at its tern, from two icons: the one corresponding to the word “pain” and the one corresponding to the word “change” as, further on, to specify the fact that the Chinese educational system is “credited by the majority of specialists in the domain as being the first who introduced the official exams of graduation from a level of instruction to other and inclusive depending on the administrative functions.” In conclusion, the idea of compulsoriness in order to establish some access barriers on a superior step of education is an “inheritance” of Antiquity.

By doing a jump in history we can stop at the Renaissance period (the centuries XV-XVI), when the interest of the national states for education has imposed educational ideals which have put the impression over the psycho-moral features that distinguish different nations. In this way it appeared “The Gentilhomme”, the French peoples’ educational ideal, which was theorized still from Renaissance by François Rabelais, to whom the author Ioan Jinga makes reference. Later on, the English “Gentleman” appeared, famous for the polite behavior, the English calm and the practical spirit, and who has been created in the XVIII century in the pages of J. Locks’ teaching work. We also rediscover in this period of history the idea of necessity of achieving by man and of some moral qualities, also mentioned idea in the period of Antiquity at which the author Ștefan Meitani had made previous mentioning.

If in the ancient period the influence of education over the development of the state was surprised by Aristotle, this fact is also remarked in the Renaissance period by Erasmus, the great Dutch thinker, who considered that “the most important hope of a nation lies in the good education that assures to its youth.”

In the XVIII century, Immanuel Kant, the famous German philosopher, wrote in “His treaty of pedagogy” that “man can become man only through education”. Kant also considered that “a good education is the source of the whole good in the world.” Although he did not detail exactly what he was referring to, I consider that he was also referring to the moral side of human personality.

A century later, in the XIX century, still in the German space, in Karl Marx’s youth writings at who the author Momanu Mariana makes reference, an article draws the attention from the Rhenish Gazette from May 1842, the first, it appears, who speaks about education and develops this concept in a syllogistic real rationalism “all that is imperfect need education. Education, as a human activity, is imperfect. In conclusion, education itself needs education.” We find, in this thesis of Marx, as the author Mariana Momanu remarks, a modern and actual idea of education, that of educators’ continuous formation, which had to lead, however, in the socio-political context created through the application of the communist ideology, of Marxist inspiration, at the well-known practice of reeducating the teaching staffs.

For Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher from the XIX century, the education “represented first a doctrine about necessary – then about changeable and variable .We introduce the young in nature, we show him, everywhere, the functioning way of the laws, later the laws of civil society. Here already appears at surface the question: this has to be like this? Progressively, he needs the history to become like this. But, in this way, he learns that this could have been different. How much power has man over things? This is the question of each education.” From this observation comes out the fact that the German philosopher is counting on the help offered by man to man in his way to acknowledging education. He was also referring to the fact that this educational process could not have been made chaotically, but it has to have a foundation.

In the XIX century, the well-known British sociologist Herbert Spencer said that “to educate, means to prepare the man in order to live a complete life and to be able to satisfy all types of

activities, which he needs in life.”I believe that this sociologist, without detailing the types of activities he was referring to, was thinking both at the moral and the intellectual component.

There were and still are very many Romanian authors who have approached and tackled the educational domain.

Like this, the teacher Simion Bărnuțiu, one of the Romanian school founders of the XX century, as he is named by the authors Titu Georgescu and Emil Bâldescu, considers that “the scope of education cannot be other than to cultivate humanity in every man, and also as fully as possible”, resulting from here the role of education in acknowledging the human qualities.

The author Eugen Orhidan retained an extremely eloquent aspect from Spiru C. Haret’s writings that is the fact that “the aim of education is not only the instruction, but also the youth’s education and this second part is the most important and difficult to accomplish than the first one.” This aspect signifies the necessity to prepare and form some new qualities for the teaching staffs. In today’s society, it is obvious the fact that the accumulation of information can be made from many sources. The teacher must be more than a transmitter of information.

Still related to the influence of education over the acknowledge of moral features, the author Gabrea Maria, making references to the professor Antonescu, said “depicting the personality as a final aim of education [...] he insists with the biggest warm over the moral and ethical education, because the moral and ethical values cannot miss from the content of personality” . And these requests can be fulfilled through the teacher’s “real” implication in the class activities, hour after hour, day by day, generation after generation.

The complexity of education, the diversity of the approaches of some diversified social categories was given and is given, in the first place though the fact that its aims have been different from an epoch to another, from a country to another, from a continent to another, due to social conditions, political context, aims followed and also culture “often, culture is a crucial variable.”

I presented above only some of the most comprehensive and essential definitions, from my point of view. The list is not however limited.

By examining the approaches of education along the history made by the philosophers, professors, economists, so on and so forth, we can establish vastness of definitions, approaches

from different social categories. They prove the constant interest, the researches and attempts of substantiation of the matchless role of education. In a way it is an attempt to point out, on different historical periods, the concepts, visions and orientations that laid and that should continue to lay at the base of the approaches from “the present from today” in order to prepare the future.

We can also observe the pluralism of interpretations. It is ascertain that it cannot be about a single definition specific to a historical period, of a continent or of a country in which there was special interest for this domain or the wish to accomplish something good through education.

From the analysis of these definitions we can conclude the fact that education, with such a long history, appeared with the appearance of man on earth, cannot remain a closed, rigid domain, said and alleged as being final. We cannot also define it in a simplistic mode. It is about history, about tradition, about culture, about the political context, about the ideas of different social categories, of their professional profile, acquired experiences and conclusions after their own social or school activities, from the theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Another conclusion is the fact that a unique definition of education is not possible. Without education, without taking into account the history of definitions given to education and ignoring the past, we will not have a future. The preoccupation for education is not a new challenge. It existed from the antiquity period and it will continue to be a challenge as long as the human kind exists and develops.

### **Part III. From the general management to the educational management**

“Without clear objectives, the whole process of education is hazardous and blind”

The management, as well as education, the act of managing, has a long history and can be identified, as an appearance in time, with the very moment of man’s appearance. It is obvious the fact that, in their displacement to fishing or hunting, our ancestors, depending on the qualities that they possess, had to organize these going outs, to fulfill the act of management or to be organized by someone and in this way to fulfill the given orders. In this context, the mention of appreciation made by the authors Constantin Dumitru and Sorin Ionescu who considered that “the management exists when there are people” is a confirmation of a general observation.



From the etymological point of view, the notions “management” – “manager”, introduced by the Americans in the specialty literature, and in the current speech – with their actual signification of “leadership” / “administrator” – “leader” – has as origin, according to researchers, the Latin word “manus” which means “hand” and leads to the idea of “maneuvering”/ “piloting”.

In the Anglo-Saxon literature, for example, the notion of management designates both a practical activity, a component of the social division of work, and a scientific discipline, part of the sphere of the social sciences.

But for the scientific management, the starting point is considered the XX century. In order to motivate this statement we can take into account the following specification made by the author John P. Kotter “the management is, in a great measure, the product of the last one hundred years, an answer to the one of the most significant events of the XX century: the appearance of a great number of complex organizations”.

This concept of “management” that takes aim at newness, although with a reduced “scientific grounded” history, has benefited from very many and diversified definitions.

The author John Beckett’s approach over the new concept of modernity is the following “the management is the ensemble of the means through which the aims are achieved through the mediation of the organizations.” And the “means” through which and with which the management acts are represented by the human source, the material source and not least, by the financial source. But from all these means the defining element is unquestionably the human source.

In author Cristea Gabriela’s opinion “the management becomes a new modality of leadership all the social organizations in the perspective of growing the effectiveness and efficiency of all activities projected by this, according to their status (economic, cultural, political, pedagogical, sanitary, religious, so on and so forth). This is a type of leadership adapted to the context of the evolution of post industrialized, informational modern society”.

Like this, management is seen as an innovator element, but which is expected and which must “lead” the work and its results towards “efficiency”. Certainly, it was expected to be motivated scientifically and recommended, after the consequences registered by applying it.

The author Covey defined, at the beginning of the XX century, management as being “the process carried out by one or more persons, who coordinates the activity of other persons, in order to obtain some results that the last activities could not obtain for sure.” Like this, it is underlined, by another author, the fact that the management implies man’s action and intervention over man/ people. Only the people are the only resource that can and may materialize it.

Other authors, among whom we can mention Mackenzie defines the management as being “the process in which the leader operated with three fundamental elements: ideas, things and people, achieving the objective through others”. But in order to have ideas, it is necessary that the one who fulfills the role of coordinator has to have professional experience and information from the domain in which he carries on his professional activity, to know how to work with the human and material resources, to know and to have the capacity to appreciate the contribution.

We can easily draw a conclusion much more obvious from this presentation, which is the fact that the success and the performance of a society depend on the management. It is known that the management is “an art” and the art means a lot of effort and a lot of sacrifice; that the management is a “process of coordination”, that it is a concept scientifically grounded which is going to last as long as the world and which has an inseparable connection with society. The management depends on the social context, it influences and is influenced by society. Surely, there can be said a lot of things about management. About management, like about any other domain in which the man’s interference is decisive, we cannot pretend that we have said everything, we did not even surprise the essential.

Due to the high development speed of the society and of the new need, we hear different terms associated with management: industrial management, administrative management, operational management, management of human resources, situational management, comparative management, intercultural management, business management, so on and so forth, but it seems that none has so much “consistence” as the educational management. It seems that none combines so many activities, initiative, anticipation and actions like the educational management.

The educational management, as a study and practice domain, was obviously detached from the principals of the general management. This was at first applied in industry and commerce, as it is known so far.

In Romania, the term educational management has penetrated pretty recent and I dare say that, after the communist regime, its application in the educational domain is still outlining.

The general management differs from the educational management especially through the finalities. If in the case of the management from the economic domain we speak in terms of result about the “financial profit”, in education we speak in terms of profit about “the school leaver”, the possessor of an “informational package” – a human resource prepared for the work market and here it appears the determination connection between the result of the economic management and the educational one in the sense that in order to obtain a financial profit one must have a capable human resource to fulfill the objective named financial profit.

Going back to the educational domain, we can state precisely the fact that the problems from education are changing, principally, due to the different expectations in different moments of the work market towards the pupils’ gained competences and information. And here the management exercised at the school level is directly responsible from the angle of the anticipation obligation of the presented and future needs of the society. The needs of the society are obviously transmitted through the requests of the work market.

A very important role is incumbent to the educational management in case of crisis. But, as in the case of economic crises, but not independent of these, the crises from the educational domain are unpredictable. But as in medicine where we often hear the phrase “we better prevent than treat”, and the same in the case of education, it is better to prevent crises. We cannot state that there will not be appear crises, no matter how vigilant we would be. But the moment of crises must be “valorize” in the sense to identify the cause and to find the best viable solutions and in this way to rethink the system in order to achieve some better results than those expected or foreseen.

Like this, the management from the educational domain is put in the situation to discover concrete modes of overtaking the situations at which the organizations, the unit of pre university education, cannot cope. The school has a mission that must be touched in a “turbulent” social medium, sometimes, or other times hostile, through the realization of changes in the education

and formation mode of human resource, of the mode to approach the act of teaching and the mode to “*lead*” by each teacher of every tough hour, but without affecting in a negative way and on long term the efficiency in accomplishing the mission and touching the established aims at the school level.

The former president of France, Nicolas Sarkozy in a totally different context drew the attention on the following aspect “we can no longer wait everything from the state. We have to use all the key factors encountered at the disposal of each of us in order to have higher performances. The management is also a key factor” as further on he states “The state cannot do everything”.

Applied in the domain of educational management, we can say that education is a success only that the management to be efficient. It is indeed a domain that so far has brought an added value in the development of the educational system through the accent put on the leadership at school level.

In this context we can mention and underline the necessity that all who hold or those who prepare themselves to hold a manager function must be made sensitive in what concerns the necessity of truthfully understanding the principles applied in the general management domain, the reason for which they have been taken over in the educational management and to be aware that through the pursuit of these principles which proved their utility and efficiency, these could become fulfilled specialists in the professional domain – the type of managers that have the capacity to create successful schools, to follow up performance by establishing some high standards and to be able to let in this way as inheritance a valuable school, a superior school, “superior” pupils and to prove its superior capacity to produce wealth through the performances obtained by the school leaving pupils which they lead.

It is more than obvious that education without management will not be able to bring the value that the society expects.

**Keyword:** education, management, art, school, pupils.