

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES MARKET IN PRESENT

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Abstract. *Education was assimilated many times to alphabetisation and with optimization programs of the human resources and human capital. The education concerns the groups and collectivities, which is more than the individual and his personal development. The schools, especially, can be considered as public places of democracy or as public cultural regions, in which the pupils or students acquire social skills, such as management or regulation of conflicts. The schools are preconditions indispensable to a peaceful coexistence in multi-ethnic and multicultural societies. There is no exclusive meaning for what is called education. Its principles vary from one time to another, from one place to another, depending on conditions, on ideological and politic concept from a certain point, being expressed through an educational plan.*

Keywords: *education, educational services, educational services market, human capital, supply and demand of educational services.*

With the passage towards the knowledge economy, it was questioned the social purpose and the responsibilities of education being outlined a range of key requirements, among which we mention:

a) the pronounced social purpose of the education – the school is the institution invested by the community with the mission to send a certain system of social values ranked in the name of an autonomy and specific actional responsibilities;

b) the opened character of the new, system of education, designed to ensure equal opportunities of training for all members of the society;

c) the affirmation of lifelong learning, which lies in the need for people with studies to return systematically to school (continuous training);

d) the exceeding of the actual scope of the educational institutions – it is necessary in the future that every organization should be more concerned about education and training of their own employees, using its financial resources.

Education is really efficient - for individuals and society as a whole - given that it is inserted and offensive manifested in competitive market structures, the free initiative really works and it is supported at government level, decentralization and functional- decisional autonomy of economic agents are realities, not just options. All these remain only aspirations/ electoral promises unless it is not interfere at the level of psihoatitudinale and romanian mentalities structures (child, young or adult). One of the most beneficial ways of normalization of the individual life, of changing the optics and the way of perception of reality and elimination of distortions produced in the the value system and in human behavior, is the increase of interest for training and education.

The educational programs are important and it should be invested in them as much as necessary because it helps, especially, young people (but not only) to understand what market economy means, what the purpose of competition in personal and social development is, what the relevance of education at workplace is and for adaptation at work, respectively what the impact of economy over their future is. Higher education practically helps the individual to realize that between economy and education partnership relations exist, which, on medium and long term, have significant effects both on the initial and continuous training system and over the entire life of the individual. The market represents the form of organization of the exchange of goods and services, based, especially, on the existence of the price (the assertion is valid, mostly, for the education-learning services, too).

The educational services market represents that consistent and coherent ensemble of educational components that constitute a national system, that allows the members of society the solving and / or satisfaction of some needs, interests, desires, individual or collective searches. In this market the law of supply and demand of human capital works.

Like any other market, in education (especially in the formal and partially non-formal), apart from supply and demand, we can speak about the existence of at least two defining elements, respectively the price and competition, which we associate legislation, regulations, traditions and prejudices. The specific of educational market is called quasimarket, because the client chooses, but the monetary resource is allocated, usually, by different levels of education authority (state, family, local community etc).. Also, the concepts " demand ", "offer", "market services", should be used with maximum caution in education, because the intervention of the state in this area is extremely active, as the desires, expectations, prejudices of people (although different from individual to individual) fulfill an important part.

The education market is in relation with the labor market probably the most important market of contemporary economies. The labor market captures, intensifies and remunerates the investments made in the education market; it uses the skills achieved in school, validates the efficiency of the programs of training and education and offers to the individual the possibility to insert himself socially. In the specialized literature is accepted the idea that, nevertheless, it exists a relative lagging of the education market compared to the labor market, because the structure of school demand can remove itself from the requirements of a structure of production of an economy due to the fact that the demand for schooling is the result of an aggregation of some independent individual decisions, whose motivations are very different.

Any educational product, identified in formal educational services market, shows the following components:

a) Proper educational services, respectively teaching- evaluation didactic activities materialized in courses, seminars, workshops, lectures, projects, theses, tests, exams At the level of this component, educational service providers are teachers who help shape consumer behavior and personality directly from educational programs. Educational product has – at the level of the essential and defining components - specific features to each link of the educational chain, functions illustrating foreign and private educational effects generated by the type of educational product. For example, preschool education has the primary function of language and database fundamentals providing social behavior, while higher education, university level, aims to transfer and deepening of knowledge and skills specific to a field of activity with a direct effect on individual productivity level and, therefore, over money earnings;

b) Auxiliary educational services- they identify themselves with general management activities for all the normal management of education and material resources necessary for actual teaching activity;

c) Educational human capital - it is consisted of all knowledge, skills, abilities and competences achieved of direct consumer of educational services. This type of capital raises the production capacity of the economy develops over time and can have long term effects, being subjected to depreciation; therefore, the decision to invest in human capital is not simple, this being often collective decision.. Educational human capital is formed through a relatively lengthy process of perception, introspection, reporting to their own value system, transformation, adequacy and use of educational message by the scholar, who is, himself, a productive factor. The scholar is subject and object of education, is receiver and transmitter of ideas, knowledge.

Under these conditions, scientific delimiting the scope of the educational product, ensures educational services market conceptualization, ascertaining the existence of multiple and interconnected markets. These include market education programs (so-called curricular market), market research, market ancillary services, etc. There can be identified, simultaneous, labor markets for the teaching profession, too, as well as markets of the educational human capital acquired by graduates of different links in the educational chain, such as: market of economists, of lawyers, doctors, engineers, graduates of secondary and / or high school and vocational schools market, which do not continue their studies, but integrates professional. The question is the extent to which educational product corresponding to each stage of the formal educational system presents public good characteristics. Measurements take into account the presence or absence of non-rivalry and nonexclusivitate characteristics.

The non-rivalry characteristic is highlighted by the fact that every consumed good by an individual can be consumed by other individuals, not being affected in any way the good availability for the others. In the case of the educational product, only the educational component of human capital has this feature, as the knowledge, skills, values that are assimilated by educated subject to which it relates on, can be shared with others (even learning are multiplied by), and, in addition, they are nonrival consumption, being available to any applicant in case of the other two components - the actual educational and auxiliary services - which is in support of educational capital; the rivalry may occur if consumed in excess. Nonexclusive feature is its own only to the link basic education, respectively general obligatory education which, in extent, becomes a public good.

In contrast, in tertiary education (university) the access is selective and, logically, exclusive. Educational product can no longer have public good character, but, rather, it is a private good or quasiprivat. The owners of university educational services (universities, colleges) as well as the university human capital owners - graduates - are able to exclude those who wish to benefit, but refuse or do not accept to cover the price of services. University may direct educational services to students who meet university regulations. College/university graduate, with a higher qualification, will provide his professional services to the one that pays better, incurring costs of his professional benefit.

Determining whether an educational product has or not character of public good is important both in sizing educational policies, as well as in establishing responsibilities in education market. In the literature are circulated several names for carriers demand for learning, which is inserted and act on market education. Some analysts use the term "client" even if it has commercial tint, others adopt the term "owners", they are educational capital owners and consumers of educational services, others call them neutral students, graduates and others. However named, they are beneficiaries of the educational product, representing a diverse group.

The education is acquired, therefor, in the first place, through consumption of educational services, which means that the education market should be analyzed by reference at supply and demand for primary and auxiliary education services. More, the educational services are considered, in economic theory, goods and services consumed

by primary customers to achieve a certain personal level of education, so to store, the purpose of future use, the human educational capital. From this perspective, the education is considered a good of capital or investments.

Supply and demand are components of any type of market, including a possible educational services market, and their analysis make sense, only if the market itself does exist or its existence is recognized or studied and conceptualized. The problems raised here about the reality of a market for educational services, with the social conditions and economic mechanisms which form the supply and demand for education, with the limits within which education is or can be treated as an economic good or a merchandise and subjected to economic and financial transactions.

To respond appropriately to such problems it is necessary to submit to the process in which learning needs of individuals and society are converted into demand for education, and education in request of studies, process by which the request of studies becomes the real social form, concrete and perceptible, in which the needs of education externalize and by which these needs perform direct pressures on school institution and education system as a whole.

It should also be revealed, how, in response to demand for education, educational institutions, school managers, teachers tend to adopt or are obligated to behave as suppliers of educational services, that they dispute the demand, trying to attract it, adapting to it influencing it in a similar way, in essence, to that practiced by bidders on any other market. We believe that is credible the claim that the phenomena that occurred after 1989 in the Romanian educational field were, actually, apparent manifestations of a real much deeper process, namely the establishment of market and market mechanisms in education area. Initially, the sizes of the demand for education were so great that any new structure or educational institution easily found its beneficiaries, even with a poor quality offer, and the emergence of new bidders did not bother almost anyone, however, gradually, supply and demand were balanced, and in some areas the demand has already exceeded supply, which led to another type of relationship between the agents in the educational services market.

Competition, which occurred at the beginning almost exclusively in the area of demand, gradually emerged between bidders, and the further actions to stop the emergence of new institutions, the dissolution or restructuring of some existing ones can not be dissociated from these new mechanisms of educational services market.

It is required with the power of evidence that the educational services market exists, and that, beyond the variations in taking attitude, the only rational approach is to recognize its existence and to see the particularities and the mechanisms by which it constitutes itself and by which constrains the action of the involved social actors (agents), directly or indirectly, in this market. But, like any other social phenomenon, by scale and intensity, affects the condition (destiny, interests) of each and everyone, educational services market is also a social representation, is a mental object, an explanatory model, a mechanism to build theories about the social environment, a way of thinking practically the context, style of behavior, a filter, a screen between the pressure of the social and personality system, not only a perceptible reality or identifiable at the level of some specific indicators in the market. Both the physical, objective reality of the educational market as well as the representation of this reality have a determining part in the formation of the social context and must be considered together, especially when the educational services market research aims at an institutional socio-pedagogical finality, rather than a macro-economic purpose.

Particularly interesting occur the characteristics of the demand when it is regarded as a request for information during the consumption of the product in education. This kind of demand is expressed throughout the duration of the studies, is fluctuating and has powerful psychological, subjective and objective influence. Educational institutions not only provide and deliver education services; they can assume a role of intermediation between owners and beneficiaries of its workforce. It should be underlined, at the same time, that the elasticity of demand for educational services in relation to income is higher than one.

The problem can not be reduced, currently to accept or not accept the existence of a market for educational services, market mechanisms already reaching the proportions that can not be ignored. Remains open the issue of the most appropriate attitude to be taken towards the market phenomena in the field of education, whether and to what extent, in what sense and in what way should be stimulated or stopped the not very delicate mechanisms and not always beneficial that accompanying the the functioning of a educational services market.

This attitude also has, however, so-called attitudinal components, of interests and value options nature not only scientific and technical components. The issue is the extent to which is necessary the control of market phenomena in education and how possible the guiding this kind of phenomena is, which, often, have a natural manifestation that escapes the human possibilities of intervention. However, there also stands the issue of the measure in which is allowed the manipulation of the natural tendencies of demand and supply for education, as long as the education still remains an activity essentially associated to the unalienable attributes of the human individual.

The solutions must not be looked for, of course, in adoption to extreme positions, of unconditional approval or rejection, and the market mechanisms in the field of education should not be removed or out of control, which could lead to a wild capitalism and the disintegration of the education system itself, but not restricted or overdirected at the level that the adaptive feed-back would be canceled, and the educational system would re(enter) under the rule of the arbitrary and voluntarism.

It should be considered, also, the fact that in the social and educational field there are not perfect solutions and no systems that work strictly and exclusively towards the followed objectives. Any solution and any system, no

matter how good they are, have necessarily unwanted side effects or unintended, in such combination that the benefic effects can not be isolated from the negative side of the functioning of the system or application of the solution. To this laws subscribes also an educational system that allows or developes market mechanisms and should be considered in more or less favorable attitude to the educational services market.

The first and most frequently invoked argument against the phenomenon, and also the idea of the market in education field, is of moral-philosophical nature and accuses bill mercantilism that might install itself in an area that is or ought to be guided by noble purposes and moral values. The existence, and particularly encouraging some mechanisms of type supply-demand in education field, which is associated, in the end, both economic and financial relations which tend to make the objectives and content of education itself, are seen as threats, as attacks on education and axiological vocation - something rather paradoxically - as a way to degradation the quality of the educational process. On the background of these arguments, largely based, but not always choosing their correct target, the acceptance of market mechanisms is perceived as a void imix in the autonomy of the educational and a curtailment of the social prestige of the educational institution and the statute of teacher.

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