ECONOMIC HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE COMPETENCES TRAINING PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract
Based on the current socio-economic realities of training and professional development, the paper aims to present the concept of competence, in the knowledge-society, that has become a key concept and especially how the competences training, is regarded as a major solution to global socio-economic problems. Competence training is regarded, at the European level, as a major solution to global socio-economic problems. In this context, higher economic and business education, assigned the multiple tasks to them, which can solved using effective and flexible sources like material, human and capital, that could overcome the well-known inertia of higher education systems.

The paper presents some current guidelines in education, training and related competences development, training models from the perspective of university economic education, examples of definition, development and assessment of specific economic field competences. Examples were made in the context of the marketing field at the potential meaning of this qualification, which is currently discussed and is still in its early recovery in the economic and business. This field it is still considered by the Romanian business environment like an expense rather than as an investment.

Keywords: competences, economic, marketing, higher education, assessment

INTRODUCTION
The current global economy is based mainly on the development of global markets and exchange of mobility of capital, goods and services, developing new concepts and philosophies like: the knowledge society, knowledge - based economy, sustainable development etc.

Mihai Drăgănescu, summarizing the main features of the knowledge society, considers that it involves “an expansion and deepening of scientific knowledge ... use and management of the existing knowledge in the form of technological knowledge and organizational knowledge, production of the new knowledge - based on technology by innovation, an unprecedented
dissemination of knowledge to all citizens through new media..., a new economy where innovation is crucial ... the society ecologically sustainable ...”(Drăgănescu, 2011).

European institutions, as a result of the global crisis, put a warning on the imperative need to act on training and human resource development. It requires professional competences upgrading and ensure a better match between offered competences and labour market demand.

Romanian reality in specific areas is even more complex. Romanian marketing field, for example, is marked by counterproductive practices related to mimicry, the misconception that the domestic application of the techniques and methods can successfully through business environments abroad, have the same effect in Romania (Pop, Vlădoiu, 2009, 9-17). The development through training, through educating intelligence and imagination of the workers in economic and business fields can be opposed to this approach.

Initial training in the field, is the task of the economic and business educational system. Opening the economy to permanent training, towards life-long training, is another matter of the education system, in a changing environment. Continuous training approach is mainly conditioned by the individual’s personality, its training needs and opportunities offered by the environment as a whole and business environment in particular.

The mechanism of formation is triggered by the labour market demands, which periodically and in a very dynamic environment often requires specialists in new areas, such as marketing and trade which are intended to be trained in a relatively short time. Their training should be flexible enough to allow, on the fly adjustments to new market requirements, shifts in the industry or even exchange field area. The new requirements of the labour market is reflected by new occupations, new jobs and new posts (for example the key account manager, healthcare marketing, cultural marketing or sports marketing), some developed from the old occupations (brand or product manager), while others not. In this context, in terms of occupations and functions (at least), higher education system and business field are most knowledgeable to manage change, through the generation of specialized training, through high quality expertise at senior level, who then transfer to lower levels of training.

Responding to the request of the labour market towards renewal occupations, trades, (such as the marketing qualification skills) or position in a company (e.g., the marketing manager, head of marketing department, chief marketing officer, professional marketing, marketing researcher) has to follow several steps: developing the occupational standards, skills and competences development for achieving the higher level of standards, development of the training programs, the assessment programs, the employability programs etc.
The task of the development of professional standards is related to the economic policy makers. Competences development, training programs and evaluation programs are concerns of those in charge of educational policies from academia and beyond. Benefit for the labour market as a direct beneficiary, but also for the individual aspiring to a place on the labour market, or listed in this market, as organization with a role in human resource training, to possess the expertise needed to adapt to fast changes in education systems, to labour market needs.

DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

In pedagogy, the term competence is much controversial. However, it imposed itself in the economics, as an important operational milestone in establishing the aims of training human resources that are ready to be framed in the labour market and promote the workers on different position.

During the '80s, the British group of psychologists Working Group on Vocational Qualifications makes the definition of competence as "the ability to do a certain activity to a predetermined standard". Consequently, competence involves an activity for which there is one context and a result of the activity of a person, so it does not describe the process of learning experienced by that person. To measure a person's ability to do something, it defines performance standards in advance regarding the work that will be done. Competence expresses what one person can do, at a certain time.

Bernard Blandin believes that talking about competences, we actually talk about "the ability to carry out certain activities, to produce a result expected in a given context" (Blandin, 2011). These can be measured.

The same author believes that there is a difference between "competences" in the plural and "competence" in the singular. Competence in the singular means how to be an act of an individual in a given situation. It develops through accumulation of experience. Competences, in the plural, are capabilities to produce desired results in a given context. They can be measured. Competence is competences subsume, but it does not identify with them. Competence cannot be measured; it can be appreciated globally for each individual.

Vincent Carette shows that when addressing the issue of competences it is actually talking about tasks that are required to be completed. Completion of the tasks implies, among other things, "declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, automatisms, reasoning, data retained in memory, senso-motor schemes, or combinations of those" (Carette, 2009).

A brief analysis of the "distinctive features of the entrepreneur's sales" related to the task dimension, by L. V. Dinu Tâchiciu (Dinu, Tâchiciu, 2009, 25) leads us to understanding of the requirements formulated by Vincent Carette.
The feature "A high level of training, knowledge and skills, especially in relevant areas such as market research, sales techniques, cost-benefit analysis ... a good knowledge of the particular context of its work ..." fall within the declarative knowledge. They have the “back” general statements such as: "High level training" knowledge in the areas mentioned point on.

The feature "A special ability to perceive / imagine and value - through efforts and actions taken promptly - opportunities" is made in the manner of procedural knowledge, but also in the senso-motor schemes by reference to the perception and imagination.

Council of Europe launched in Lisbon on 2000, the strategy whose aim is to achieve knowledge-based economy. The main characteristics of the knowledge-based economy can be synthesised: competitiveness, development and support dynamic economic growth that will have to provide more jobs and greater social cohesion. European Commission calls for a European framework for defining the fundamental skills (basic skills) formed in the manner of continuing education (lifelong learning). After trying several times on 2002, the Council of Europe meeting in Barcelona has adopted a development strategy in education and the list of fundamental skills that are required to be formed.

In this context, the tasks of higher education in general and research in particular, addressed regardless of the areas (economics, engineering) are related to problems of the inventory of required for each member of society competences and to the content of the competences, from the perspective of lifelong education. The inventory of competences and its content for adults are linked to the areas where they work. Training based on competences, in highly skilled professions, is made through higher education.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme in 2008, defining and selecting key competencies (Definition and Selection of Competencies - DeSeCo), provides a conceptual framework for long term development of training based on competences and provides the possibility of extending them to new levels of competences. Research has defined three key competences that are required to be trained and developed for every activity fields: actively using the mechanisms and instruments (language, technology), the possibility of interaction in heterogeneous groups, the ability to act autonomously in any context.

Defining and selecting key competencies reveals some general features of these: transversally in relation to social, mental, multifunctional and complexity. These key competences, formed in a holistic manner, continuously, but not with the same intensity throughout the entire life, in which each individual is directly involved, they overlap in various stages of training (lifelong learning) and specific competences of business and profession-specific competences (e.g. training of marketers increasingly...
complex marketing requires the integration of knowledge management and development of a wide range of communication and decision-making skills).

![Diagram: The structure of the individual competences]

**Fig. no. 1 - The structure of the individual competences**

Above representation explains the formation of individual competences as interaction of the key competences developed throughout the entire life, by formal, non-formal, informal education systems and self-education, and domain–specific competences and to the specific profession, which are formed during maturity, especially by formal education and self-education. The intersection of those three categories of competences generates cross competencies with a high practical value as a basis to address complex problems that are solved in a more effective and creative way.

The tasks of higher education system in economic competences training (including marketing) occurs at least two directions: defining-redefining their powers and development of them to economists. Defining-redefining economic powers (competences) is the result of the research in which, in addition to the institutions of higher education economics and business, labour organizations are involved and benefit. The task of defining-redefining the powers (competences) is an action that can be successfully completed by the higher education institution based on the highest expertise in the area it has. Tripping defining-redefining approach is a response to new challenges of the changing economic reality. This is followed by the systematic observation of new phenomena emerged, synthesizing information, profiling "of the final product of training" as it is required by the new economic situation (new occupation, profession or function/position) and then training and developing new competences.
Please note that the model outlined approach is not only recommended the institution of higher economic education. For internal purposes, less general, the model applies to labour organizations, especially in relation to new occupations and functions which the organization needs.

**ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Tasks: - defining-redefining the domain-specific competences and the job/position specific competences  
- developing the domain-specific competences and the job/function specific competences  
- individual competence-training

**LABOUR ORGANIZATIONS SYSTEM**

Tasks:- framing the organization formed by individuals with expertise in education systems  
- ensuring the organization, the conditions for applying the competences acquired  
- defining-redefining of occupation/position - specific competences  
- developing of occupation/position - specific competences  
- individual competences-training

**Fig. no. 2 - Tasks of several systems involved in the development of competences**

The representation above shows the bidirectional link between higher education and economic organizations, indicating for each of its, the tasks arising from the perspective of construction the competences, in one of their development and that their application. It stressed that the scheme fails the relationship between the medium level education system, the university education and the economic environment. This is intended to explain the correlations between academic environment and economic environment.

The bidirectional link is a real link between the two systems presented in fig. no.2 and is based on some mutual relationships. The emergence of technological change in the economic environment has consequences for human resource, providing additional training needs. Managing this is the responsibility of the labour organization, if it has expertise. It is the case of new occupations such as those in marketing. More complex situations, in which occupations are expressed through trades
occupations or functions, are treated in the academic system of education. The academic education system should take command of the economic environment, through research to develop and make operational the purpose of human resource training. Trained and competent, the human resource component returns in the economic environment. As a result of feed-back, the competences can be redefined, the university training programs can be reconstructed, the training strategies can be adapted or changed, as required by the economic environment and not only by it.

The model presented in fig. no. 1, can develop, leading to models in economics and business competences. If we refer to competences developed in higher education, then, the approach of writing competences will have the structure of university training stages: university degree, master degree and doctoral studies. Thus, they will be described gradually from low complexity competences (degree level), to the high complexity (doctoral level).

The paradigm of the key competences is to define and redefine them. Sub-competences are parts of competences and can be structured based on key competences for each area. The competences attributes can be expressed by capacities.

Below is presented a possible referential of the competences expression, which depend on the field and level - marketing our case, can develop general or specific competences. Then they can be formed, developed and evaluated based on the referential.

1. Sub-competence "actively use the mechanisms and tools" means:
   - General scientific knowledge
   - Scientific knowledge of economics and business (including marketing)
   - Ability to use computers
   - Ability to use foreign languages
   - Ability to integrate economic and business knowledge that already exist

2. Sub-competence "ability to act autonomously in any context" means:
   - Ability to learn and continuously improve
   - Ability to self-assess
   - Creativity (taste and creative imagination)
   - Adaptability
   - Confidence in one’s strong points
   - Ability to motivate and involve
   - Memory capacity (visual, olfactory, auditory, gustatory and tactile)

3. Sub-competence "interaction in heterogeneous groups" includes:
- Ability to work as a team (spirit of cooperation, mobility of mind)
- Ability to communicate
- Ability to manage conflicts
- Ability to evaluate
- Culture of enterprise and management skills, including project management
- Ability to manage and operate teams.

Depending on the level and domain for which the competence is built, on the objectives that need to be achieved in workforce training, submitted referential may be completed or simplified.

Once completed, attention to training and developing leaders of competence focuses on the design, implementation and evaluation of the training concept and research on the representative of the competence. Consequences on the quality of work performed by possessing the competence (conclusion drawn from the final evaluations of the training school or university) are crucial for a possible redefinition of it.

Planning concerns in higher education are directed towards the development of competency-based curriculum. Designing the teaching process, the competences are formulated on an operational tier involves specifying declarative knowledge (facts and laws), procedures (ways of achieving results) and validation of results.

SYSTEMS OF TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT. ECONOMIC MODELS

In human resource training, the relationship between quality and cost has the attention of everyone interested in training, whether part of the public, whether in the private sector.

International experience in higher education leads to the classification of the training devices into two broad categories, built on two different paradigms.

Device based on the teachings of "face to face" with the central position education. In this case, the device is based on the work performed by the student and the trainer. The second device, based on maintaining the distance between the trainer and student, is centred on learning and using modern communications technology. This device requires large investments in communication technology.

The graph of type I device expressed by fig. no.3, shown below, indicates an increase in training costs proportional to the number of students. The graph of type II device suggests, on the first level, gently increasing costs proportional to the number of students, until a critical number followed by a sharp increase in costs to achieve it.
The first level corresponds to the first phase of training, when the number increases of the students depend by the educational marketing that takes effect. Increasing the number of students has the effect of higher costs for facilities and technology, not only that they require. Surge at the end of a landing is the answer to the costs expressed in quantitative accumulation of the large number of students.

A new training starts at the second level, high quality training, with better facilities and a growing number of students. It ends with a new surge in costs due to device development and reaching a second critical number of students.

The last level shows, reach a maximum level of saturation of the facilities, materials and human resources (costs) that can satisfy the theoretical training needs of a large number of students however. On this level, virtually there is no cost increase. The cost of the device two may increase or decrease contrast, beyond those recorded in level three, where resources become more expensive or cheaper.

Comparing the two graphs, the vertical axis, we see start-up costs for each individual device. Device I, a classic one, has lower start costs than device II began. The explanation is related to advanced technology, which uses two devices much more expensive than conventional equipment used by the first device. Not incidentally, in the public educational systems, especially in the secondary, two type devices are rarely used.
Training devices mentioned above are present in higher education both in America and Europe. Its developing and training competences, in accordance with labour market requirements changing especially in economic area.

A major paradigm shift in higher education is linked to student-centred training. Human nature possesses an inclination towards learning that means pursuing objectives with a predominant personal significance, implying the discovery, construction and reconstruction of some information structures and not only. They are filtered through their own individual perceptions, thoughts and emotions.

Environmental context consists of factors of culture, technology and practices instructional, it is very important. Meeting propensity to learning with favourable environment leads to successful training. Putting student training in the specialised centre is an effective policy in whose achievement the university is involved. It is the first called to create a favourable environment, both in terms of the resources and methodology.

Student-centred training provides an ideal framework for competences training. The interests of students to maximize their chances of entering the labour market are intertwined with the interests of organizations in need of skilled graduates. Education is oriented towards the formation of such competences.

In other words, economic practice in Romania nowadays recognizes that the conditions have matured like professional and academic experiences to interact more. For example, the effort is appreciated toward diminishing the distance between academic and practical marketing specialist. Such an effort "required understand by an infusion not empirical approach academic endeavours but also by extending the implementation of scientific rigor reasoned approach applied field activities. This is facilitated by promoting consistently between the economic agents of their own strategic vision on developments, in the context of the environment, becoming more complex and on a global market. Such an approach will trigger a business real demand for marketing studies with the character of periodicity, able to base future developments on the market of competitors in an increasingly random universe decision" (Pop, Vlădoiu, 2009, 15). Higher economic education (particularly in the field of marketing) is becoming better "anchored" in inter-disciplinarity as a result of market dynamics, that lead to the development of interactivity in teaching work with students.

Here below, a competence training methodology, in three dimensions: cognitive, identity and institutional (Blandin, Guillot, Ouarrak, Pallado, Wiart, 2011). This approach is useful because it produces a simplification of competence content and therefore a possible modelling of training based on competence.

By developing representations and algorithms that can organize an activity (schemes, procedures), the individual builds it cognitive dimension.
Identity dimension is developed through inter-human relationships within the team where the individual operates (important in marketing is the ability to communicate), and institution building in the area where the individual is employed, where it may occupy a position tree (important in marketing is decision-making ability).

**Table no. 1 - Indicators of competences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Indicators of competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Individual (Micro)</td>
<td>Represents the expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Organised activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Collective work (Meso)</td>
<td>Sense of competence of the individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The affirmation of individual ownership</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive feedback from others</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Integration in community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Organization (Macro)</td>
<td>Occupy position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level of remuneration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Action field prescribed / real</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The indicators included in the table no.1 are formulated in the most general. They cover the entire active period of an individual, beyond the period of training in the university, but can be adapted easily to it.

Micro level of skills being developed in universities, through the accumulation of specific activities, alternating with periods of analysis and reflection. Storage activities can be approached from the perspective of project pedagogy (active pedagogy) by "specific missions" that may be performed individually or in groups (group of students, the research team) in the university or place of practice. The projects are "evidence" that is carried out either with a specific purpose, ending after reaching the goal, either as a means of achieving the main project. Such training is built through a series of projects; that aim for "biographical project" (Blandin, Guillot, Ouarrak, Pallado, Wiart, 2011, 3), specific to each student. Time of university graduation is similar with the moment accumulated knowledge and recognition skills and personal effectiveness. This is when the person is motivated to acquire new competences.

Competence is not known, if it is not articulated in the socialization process. She can count, however, in private life, away from the eyes of others. Stages of a training program at the graduate with the master license can be summarized thus: the graduate with a degree-> an opening to the change in status -> a new approach to training new acquisitions regarding autonomy skills to elaborate projects->....-> master .

Chain of training can be adapted, for example, graduate from high school to graduate degree and beyond.
Gaining new competences and identity development is a clear correlation. Tague colleague is made collectively, where the individual has managed to accumulate a level of expertise comparable to the average level found in the organisation. Team mate, is the label assigned to a person employed in a collective, which shows a comparable level of competence of the person assigned the label.

ASSESSING COMPETENCES

Assessment of knowledge, the classic problem of higher education systems in all areas, including economic and business, until recently, meant "return" generally dispersed knowledge, point to evidence that they exist. Evaluation of competences "... focuses on diverse situations is interested in all cognitive resources (knowledge and skills) ..."(Perrenoud, 2004, 2). The difference between the two assessment approaches is obvious.

Meso and macro level, university and educational system, the assessment will have to certify the presence of learning-centred competences and renew assessment knowledge by using their context. An authentic assessment complying with several requirements: including only the tasks contextualized, complex problems, use of disciplinary knowledge in the functional manner, excluding the arbitrary constraints of time in terms of competence assessment, knowledge prior to the assessment of the requirements, encouraging collaboration in solving tasks. In addition, assessment of products, results of evaluation must take into account the cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies used by students (Wiggins, 1989, 703-714).

University education system, formed specialists for the real economy and therefore it produces, along with research centres, high expertise. Competence is often means more than a diploma. They are assessed regularly in social and economic system and it count a lot in this system.

Higher education has available human and material resources to develop competence to students in a serious way. Competencies are observable, recognized and measurable only during activity. For this reason assessment of the competencies is an approach whose success, especially in higher education economics and business, depends on its relationship with practice, with economic activity.

Using information technology to assess competences is already common practice. Designing a competences assessment is made through several phases. Study of the area characteristics leads to the conclusion that the evaluation should include analysis of behaviour and personality of candidates, assessment of language competences and computer use, the extent to which candidates possess the commercial competences - sales, results of some internal and external satisfaction surveys, general knowledge, abilities and skills, intellectual skills, memory skills and
qualities related to the effectiveness of actions taken. Criteria that could lead to appreciation "responsible" (or contrary) could be related to how the candidate is creative, able to adapt to different situations and elastic in the decision.

Evaluations based on competences used direct observation as tools, simulation, oral and written assessment, project, portfolio, self-reports from competent people and informed about work of evaluating persons. The assessments based on competences are used, usually several assessment tools.

CONCLUSIONS

Competences integrate personality, ability, skills, qualifications plus mobilization, motivation, commitment, implication. Being extremely complex, they are formed over time, in schools and universities, in economic and social environment. Concerns about competences training and assessment are a common practice especially in economic and social environments. Higher education has specialized human resources and materials for further effective development of a different education system - one focused on competences.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


