

# THE POTENTIAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION IN PROMOTING LIFE LONG LEARNING

## POTENȚIALUL INSTITUȚIEI DE ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNT SUPERIOR ÎN PROMOVAREA ÎNVĂȚĂRII PE TOT PARCURSUL VIEȚII

**Lucia ȘCHIOPU**, dr., conf. univ.,  
UPS „Ion Creangă” din Chișinău  
ORCID: 0000-0001-8342-1385  
schioPU.lucia@upsc.md

**Lucia ȘCHIOPU**, PhD, Associate Professor,  
„Ion Creanga” SPU, Chisinau

**CZU: 378.01**

**DOI: 10.46727/c.v3.21-22-03-2024.p341-346**

**Rezumat.** Articolul dezvăluie caracteristicile esențiale ale unei instituții de învățământ superior pentru promovarea învățării pe tot parcursul vieții care sunt: ambiția instituției de a prioritiza cercetarea pentru a crea cunoștințe în vederea transmiterii acestora în societate; construirea, medierea și supravegherea conținuturilor cursurilor; implementarea inovațiilor și reformelor descoperite prin cercetare în programele universitare; integrarea tehnologiei în viața academică asigurând siguranța securității cibernetice. Sunt de asemenea, elucidate cele trei aspecte cruciale ale universității: educația, cercetarea, relația cu societatea prin autonomia individuală și descentralizarea puterii, care colorează alte sfere sociale ale acestei relații.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** individualism, colectivism, descentralizare, autonomie individuală.

### **1. The Core Mission of Higher Education Institution**

The higher education institution is an extremely dynamic community manifested by actions and permanent changes of image, attitude, concept, content made up by academic circles with various personal and scholastic identities. With the transition to a new educational paradigm in higher education, a series of broad areas of concern have appeared such as:

- the quality of teaching and the relationship between content quality and quantity;
- the method of content delivery;
- the development of undergraduate and master degree programs;
- attracting students to the national education system;
- the alignment of objectives-competences-outputs;
- evaluation of results;
- integration into the educational and labor market;
- the role of the government, national legislation and regulations regarding the operation of the higher education system;
- protection of confidential data;
- sustaining independent faculty and freedom of thought;
- active participation in international projects;

- the internationalization of universities represented by two-way exchanges of teachers and students;
- international cooperation, etc.

The function of higher education institution is to create knowledge through research when elaborating course contents, innovative products and services. The ambition of a higher institution is also to prioritize research to create knowledge with a view to transmitting it to society. The modern teacher is not just an individual who presents, documents, transmits knowledge, but an initiator of the research process, facilitator of the critical thinking and problem solving process. So, there are three pivotal aspects of a university that professors focus on: education, research, relationship with society.

An educational institution must become a comprehensible institution through research that develops connections with the labor market, with the professional fields. The research needs to be related to scientific innovation generated not only by theory but also by technology and by the social-human aspect. The reorganization of academic disciplines is a desire expressed on a global scale in Education.

Due to technological progress, multidisciplinary collaboration, and increased data accessibility, the sciences have advanced significantly during the past ten years in a variety of domains. In the middle of the 20th century there was an alliance between several disciplines: psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, sociolinguistics, that developed a new paradigm against behaviorism, a reductionist approach to the development of the mind. This battle was won by an interdisciplinary- transdisciplinary complex that targeted towards the integrated learning. At the beginning of the 21st century there have been major changes in the co-existences of sciences e.g. psychology developed independently without integration with other subjects, philosophy, in its turn stagnated because it could not find the means to get implementation in other disciplines. But, there has been made a great demand on observing reality with a critical look in human- environment interaction guided by blended learning. Artificial Intelligence (also known as machine consciousness that can never be conscious) was the one, who won the struggle in the context of cognitive learning.

## **2. Consciousness, Collaboration and Technology**

The creation of computer systems with artificial intelligence capabilities (problem-solving, perception and decision-making) generated the system to carry out difficult tasks and display intelligent behavior. But, the subjective experiences and self-awareness, two essential components of consciousness, do not exist in artificial intelligence (such as neural networks, robotics, machine learning, and natural language processing techniques).

In this prism, it is necessary to conceptualize the term "consciousness" within the limits of education.

Consciousness is a construct that cannot be viewed, felt, it can refer to internal awareness, to sense of self, to sensory consciousness representing the sensory functions. It measures the human behaviors in terms of sensations that are felt while experiencing the smells of food, chemicals, objects, in terms of colors while perceiving surroundings, in terms of sounds, emotions. When learning the human mind simultaneously perceives different stimuli from the external world and inner world. It has a subjective character as it is unique to each person.

Consciousness as an internal awareness deals with the learning processes, daily routines, preferences, hobbies, daily agenda, vacations, immersion in the past experiences of the inner world and their retrieval. These processes of recalling past events or imagining things signify to be aware of things. Consciousness as a sense of self is being aware of the own identity and own existence. Consciousness is formed of the following levels:

- The preconscious level is about the previous experiences that need to be retrieved and articulated at the moment of speech.
- The subconscious level (50-60% of the total mind), according to Freud, is the construct where are stored bits of information that are unretreivable out of different motives. It is built of feelings, behaviors, abilities, perceptions, values, attitudes, beliefs hidden from active consciousness due to some desires that the conscious level is not aware of. The language of the subconscious level is represented by: a) Theta brain waves (3 to 8 Hz) activated during the light sleep or deep relaxation, and b) Alpha brain waves (8 to 12 Hz) activated during the state of calmness. The ability to learn, focus, visualize, remember, and use the imagination is enhanced in this state. In the view of Freud, some information hidden in the subconscious level is so painful, distressful, aggressive that the individual is using different mental strategies to hide the unpleasant memories in the subconscious part of the brain. This is the defense mechanism of every man to protect himself throughout the life from guilt, emotional violence, and all types of threats.
- Unconscious level, comprising between 30% and 40% of the total mind, is responsible for controlling the body's automatic processes, such as breathing, digestion, blinking, swelling, growing and heart beating. This region of the mind also houses the autonomic nervous system, immunological system, and reactionary processes.
- Conscious level is about 5-10% and represents the ideas, thoughts and perspectives of every individual [1].

Teachers can no longer distinguish themselves from students only by the amount of knowledge they possess, teachers must present themselves more as knowledge managers knowing how to separate knowledge from false and fake knowledge. The teacher must understand how knowledge is formed, identify the process of knowledge acquisition and make connections with future knowledge.

The ability to work together increases the professional productivity. The partnership in the format of increased trust shaped between the teachers and the students increases the level of cooperation, improving the level of professional knowledge and creativity. In the period of liberation there is no longer any difference between opinion and knowledge.

The meaningful use of technology boosts the achievement of learning objectives through learning platforms. Exposure to technology is neither good nor bad; it comes with the package. Screen time can lead to various health issues (obesity, high blood pressure, myopia, metabolic-related conditions). However, limiting it to 2 hours (4-6 hours of online academic learning is not a problem) can become a risk of developing a cognitive gap compared to other children.

In order to promote student success and engagement, teachers make sure that technology is successfully incorporated into the teaching and learning process. Mediation and supervision on content delivery are crucial as there should be insured: quality content, safety cyber security, co-participation of an adult.

### 3. Generational Learning Differences

Reflecting on the generational learning differences it can be built a comprehension of generations' attitudes, perceptions, preferences, and barriers to effective communication. Every generation may have different learning preferences and demands that are influenced by their upbringing and use of technology. Understanding these variations enables teachers to create curricula and teaching resources that meet the unique requirements and interests of each student, improving learning outcomes [7].

Understanding the different generations is crucial for educators because it helps them to better adapt their teaching strategies, meet the requirements of their students, build teamwork, support intergenerational learning, get students ready for the future, and promote lifelong learning. Neil Howe and William Strauss brought their innovative contributions to the field of generational theory in their books "Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069" [7] and "The Fourth Turning: An American Prophecy"[8]. They presented a cyclical model of history based on recurrent generational patterns and established the idea of generational archetypes.

Neil Howe and William Strauss consider the following:

Baby boomers, 1955-1966, are characterized by synthesis, work ethics, offer themselves with dedication and responsibility, and somewhat uncertain about their religious beliefs. The characteristic question is - What can I offer? [8]

Generation X, 1965-1980, is characterized by rapid changes and uncertainty, it is more autonomous but also more cynical generation, puts more emphasis on the result than on the process. The characteristic question is -What can I get from here? [7]

The millennial generation, 1981-1996, emphasizes the process, the past does not matter, a lot has been invested in them; millennials are full of themselves, socially conscious, comfortable using technology. But they are also very vulnerable, having very high expectations from the world, they discover that the world does not give a damn about their expectations, and they are disappointed with life. The characteristic question is - What can you offer me? [7]

Generation Z, 1997-2012, a characteristic common denominator is the digital age, climate anxiety, a shifting financial landscape. They are entrepreneurial, socially expecting, and environmentally conscious [8].

The alpha generation, 2010- 2024, is still a mystery...

Millennials and Generation Z have contributed to the paradigm shift: they no longer accept collectivist principles, they no longer accept the centralization of power, they do not accept controlling behavior, they are not afraid of uncertainties and they accept opportunities [5].

The theory of Hofstede offers a structure for appreciating and contrasting cultural variations among countries, and it has applications in leadership, education, cross-cultural communication. It facilitates the navigation of cultural variety and the adaptation of methods and practices by people and organizations operating in different contexts.

The existence of Power Distance Index; Uncertainty Avoidance Index; Individualism-Collectivism Indexes; Masculinity- Femininity Indexes; Long- Short Term Orientation Indexes, and Indulgence- Restraint Indexes- dimensions of national cultures in the Theory of Hofstede influences drastically the educational systems [3].

The Theory of Hofstede explains the behaviors of students in different cultures. For example, Power Distance Index controls the way the student accepts hierarchical authority;

Individualism vs. Collectivism explains the relationship between personal achievement and collectivist behaviors; Masculinity vs. Femininity studies stress the relationship between academic performance and social adaptation; Long Term Orientation Index values planning and perseverance, while Short Term Orientation focuses on adaptability and pragmatism; Indulgence vs. Restraint dimensions focus on satisfaction of human needs and desires [3].

Integration into the European Union requires the University to reconsider two important values: individual autonomy (to develop the student into an autonomous individual who thinks critically and assumes roles) and decentralization of power. The focus is on the collectivist individual versus the isolated individual and the hierarchy of power. The new generation must bring with it not only behaviors and skills, but also old morals and values. There should be a strong focus on: the values of personal autonomy, the decentralization of power, individual liberation. The liberation of the individual means finding freedom from adverse contexts and behaviors, and personal control through rewards.

To go deeper than this, according to the logic of individualism, the best leaders are individualist leaders, because they seek common values, create innovative solutions encouraging others to do better and they are supported by all team members to win or perform. The rule of individualism is made on meritocracy with a decentralization of power; emphasis is done on individual autonomy. According to the logic of collectivism, expressed by the fact that the group is more important than individuals, discourages differences. Leaders are trained among the best, but the collectivist leaders do not encourage the team members to perform, and the rewards are shared equally among the team members, as not to offend, that leads to inconsistency and misunderstanding of co-proportion effort vs. achievement. This is the concentration of power, when the leader is not the representative of power, but the owner of the institution. So, now the control of behavior by hunting mistakes, centralization of power, collectivist attitudes are no longer accepted.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Depending on their experiences and learning preferences, different generations may react to technologies and instructional strategies in different ways. Teachers who are cognizant of the disparities across generations might modify their pedagogical approaches into more effective methods of teaching, engaging and assisting learners of different age groups. More than that, in this “adjustment period” the teachers adapted well, but not the students, because the young generation saw technology as a source of entertainment and not as an instructional process involving mental effort, discovery, problem solving. Some values and goals must be forgotten; the new beginning consists of transforming the student into an autonomous subject aware of his own learning path.

When certain tasks or goals are formulated, it is very important to articulate them in a behavioral way, to transform this goal into a competence in action. If, the tasks are articulated otherwise, then the students give up for a period of time and unfortunately not everyone completes the proposed outputs. The goals must have an implementational and SMART spirit, only then the products will be a lucrative and gainful.

Teachers need to populate the area of the task with clear and logical objectives, then the student will have control over the task. Nowadays, students must learn how to manage connections between generations and collaborate well with individuals of all ages. Teachers can

help children succeed in future academic, professional, and social environments by implementing conversations and activities that investigate generational disparities into the curriculum.

The exchange of information and experiences between people of different ages (intergenerational learning) can improve everyone's educational experience. Teachers who are aware of the distinctions between generations can facilitate chances for intergenerational learning, which gives pupils access to the experience and knowledge of older generations while simultaneously encouraging respect and empathy among peers.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. DAVID, D. et al. Rational emotive behavior therapy, cognitive therapy, and medication in the treatment of major depressive disorder: a randomized clinical trial, posttreatment outcomes, and six-month follow-up. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 2008, 64(6), pp. 728-746. ISSN 0021-9762. doi: 10.1002/jclp.20487.
2. DAVID, D., MONTGOMERY, G. H. The Scientific Status of Psychotherapies: A New Evaluative Framework for Evidence-Based Psychosocial Interventions. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 2011, 18(2), pp. 89-99. ISSN 1468-2850. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2850.2011.01239.x
3. HOFSTEDE, G. *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations*. California: Sage Publ.1980. 512 p. ISBN-10: 0803913063
4. NIELSEN, L. *Teaching Generation Text: Using Cell Phones to Enhance Learning* (2011), Jossey-Bass, 2011. 304 p. ISBN 978-0470531614.
5. RAINER T., RAINER J. *The Millennials: Connecting to America's Largest Generation*. Published by B&H Books, 2011. 304 p. ISBN 978-1433673754.
6. SEEMILLER C., GRACE M. *Generation Z Goes to College*. Jossey-Bass, 2016. 320 p. ISBN 978-1119143451.
7. STRAUSS W., HOWE N. *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*. William Morrow and Company, 1991. 538 p. ISBN 978-0688119126.
8. STRAUSS W., HOWE N. *The Fourth Turning: An American Prophecy*. New York: Broadway Books, 1997. 400 p. ISBN 978-0767900461.
9. THORSON J., HANSON J. *Understanding and Engaging Under-Resourced College Students: The Role of Generational Perspectives*. Stylus Publishing, 2016. 302 p. ISBN 978-1620363316.
10. WATTS J., *Generations at School: Building an Age-Friendly Learning Community*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2008. 159 p. ISBN 978-0807748682.