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REALITIES AND PERSPECTIVES**

**The Global Dimension of Education**

**Vasilica Negru<sup>1</sup>, Jana Maftai<sup>2</sup>, Varvara Licuța Coman<sup>3</sup>**

**Abstract:** The general objective of the paper was founded on a very current topic of great interest as globalization is no longer a simple theoretical debate. It is a major process that clearly shapes the evolution of the contemporary world, opening new opportunities for development. In the information age it increases the technology importance of education, institutional performance, mass media. Not only the economy, but also the education is covered by profound changes caused by the information revolution and there have been significant, dramatic changes. Using content analysis, through a descriptive study research, this paper aims at showing a new dimension of education, the global dimension, starting from the development of new technologies and their role in the global economic growth. We thus appreciate that ensuring quality education for all citizens it will enable the EU to face the challenges, namely the globalization and competitiveness of newly industrialized countries, the demographic structure, the rapidly evolving labor market and the revolution of information and communication technologies.

**Keywords:** globalization; education; economics; development; skills

## 1. Conceptual Clarifications

In the most general terms, “globalization is the process by which the geographic distance becomes a less important factor in establishing and developing the economic, political, and socio-cultural cross-border relations”. (Brad, 2001, p. 6)

The paradigms of globalization differ from one school of thought to another. Thus, the realistic point of view argues that globalization is equivalent to the militarization of the international system and the establishment of political control model over borders. However, realists consider that, although there are affected all industries and public life domains, it is not affected the real competition between states.

Instead, the followers of liberalism identify globalization with multilateralism and with the global phenomenon of increasing world interdependence. In turn, globalists argue that it is a normal result of the development of the world capitalist system.

In the most general terms, globalization represents the almost natural consequence of its growing rate printed in the history on the meaning of human development. (Popescu, 2009, p. 3)

Globalization is a highly dynamic process of increasing interdependence between national states, which included all areas of economic, social and cultural life, being one of the most significant problems and also challenges of the contemporary world. (Ciolan, 2008, p. 8)

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<sup>1</sup> Professor, PhD, “Danubius” University of Galati, Faculty of Law, Romania, Address: 3 Galati Blvd, Galati, Romania, tel: +40372 361 102, fax: +40372 361 290. Corresponding author: vasilicanegrut@univ-danubius.ro.

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, PhD, “Danubius” University of Galati, Faculty of Law, Romania, Address: 3 Galati Blvd, Galati, Romania, tel: +40372 361 102, fax: +40372 361 290, E-mail: janamaftai@univ-danubius.ro.

<sup>3</sup> Assistant Professor, PhD in progress, “Danubius” University of Galati, Faculty of Law, Romania, Address: 3 Galati Blvd, Galati, Romania, tel: +40372 361 102, fax: +40372 361 290, E-mail: varvaracoman@univ-danubius.ro.

## 2. Manifestation of Globalization in the Economy

Economics is considered by specialists as the most legitimate domain to analyze globalization, because it was the main “artisan” of the global state, transforming the whole world into one market. (Ciolan, 2008, p. 55)

It is becoming increasingly clear that a new economy, dynamic, innovative, knowledge-based and computer networks, led by changes cannot be achieved only in a globalized and globalizing society.

Internally, there is an increase of the states’ competencies at economic level. They occur more often in shaping the savings, investments, consumptions, and also financing industries in order to cope with the internationalization process of the market and banking systems.

The economic globalization, a feature and at the same time, a vehicle of the new society, has many implications. (Niculescu, 2006, pp. 48-55)

Globalization is certainly a reality whose “central, strategic activities, including innovation, finance and corporate management, operate on a worldwide scale in real time.” (Ciolan, 2008, p. 56)

Therefore, knowledge, along with information, represent the main forces of the modern economy, the knowledge-based economy is the only mechanism for rapid economic growth. (Haralambie, 2009, pp. 245-252)

At the same time, it shows that as the economies open, more and more people are involved in the integration process of knowledge and in developing the links that are not commercial, including information, cultural, ideological and technological flows. (Bran & Ioan, 2009, p. 75)

However, the knowledge society requires a radical transformation of institutions in all fields: political, economic, and educational. Knowledge society institutions must become flexible structures, managed and serviced by professionals of high moral character that puts the public good before personal welfare. But the most felt need for transformation is in education. (Sabău, 2001)

## 3. Globalization and Geopolitics

Geopolitics is, above all, a method of analysis and explanation of political events of modern history in terms of geographical realities - dimensions, borders, layout and structure of the territory, landforms, natural resources or climatic factors - from which interaction it derives theoretical conclusions and there are developed the guidelines and directions for real policy. (Serebrian, 2009, p. 6)

Geopolitics is, in its essence, geoeconomics; it is part of the geopolitics of major geoeconomic and messianic spaces. This leads to the birth of a single market system which together with information technologies, will give “a unique and homogeneous world” and one *liberal-democratic ideology* (Bădescu, 2003, p. 37).

As Mircea Malița stated, the geopolitics of the contemporary world proposes ten thousand cultures, but only one civilization, border processes being manifested by permeability and even dissolution of the national state borders. (Ciolan, 2008, p. 57)

In the field of social reality the geopolitical phenomenon is part of the international relations that is structured in a geographical area or another.

Nowadays information revolution leads us to meditate more upon some essential components of geopolitics, namely the geographical location of the state. (Dobrescu, 2003, p. 386)

In other words, physical neighborhood does not matter as much as today, the borders that delimit territories are crossed by “continuous waves of information on which the state can carry out only a minimum or no control at all” (Dobrescu, 2003, p. 386). And this information does not remain without consequences; it has a key role in shaping values, and resetting equilibrium.

In information age it increases the importance technology, education, institutional performance, mass media, as for geography, people no longer play such a prominent a role. Not only the economy, but also the education is covered by the profound changes caused by information revolution and these changes are significant, creating huge advantages.

Globalization is no longer a simple theoretical debate. It is a major process that clearly shapes the evolution of the contemporary world, opening new opportunities for development. Although it induced a series of negative tendencies, as shown in the specialized literature, globalization “has an assertion potential still little explored”, but it will have the grades of a “fundamental geopolitical process of nowadays.”

#### 4. Globalization and Education

Economic globalization, following the transnational corporations spreading worldwide has opened opportunities to what education globalization means, whereas education and specially curriculum can not remain indifferent to these developments. Therefore, the general tendency is to bring learning from the classical discipline framework and focus it towards a globalization of learning.

As mentioned in the specialized literature, the learning globalization is not achieved just by border processes with “epistemological and social feature,” but also by extending this process throughout the entire life.<sup>1</sup>

Lifelong learning has been defined as “all learning activities completed throughout life in order to improve knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social or occupational perspective”.<sup>2</sup>

The undertaken research in the recent years on the implications of globalization in education tries to emphasize that its very foundation is deeply affected. There are theories, as the one of J. Delors, who claims that economic globalization and information revolution have radically changed the nature of teaching – learning process, leading to its deinstitutionalization. At the same time he shows that diversification and fragmentation, specific to global companies, would lead to the cancellation of the national educational ideals, whereas it would have to meet the economic requirements under the conditions of global competition.

An obvious effect of globalization was the internationalization tendency of education, transposed in the mobility of pupils, students and teachers and also the tendency of authorities to borrow models of educational reform.

The internationalization of education has been systematically supported by the international organizations such as OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), CEDEFOP OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), CEDEFOP (European Centre for

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, Brussels, 30.10.2000, SEC (2000) 1832. According to the memorandum, lifelong learning is seen "as a purposeful learning activity undertaken on as an ongoing activity, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies. Section IV outlines six key messages, each including a set of questions that need to clarify the priority areas for action. Key messages suggest that a coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning for Europe should aim at:

- guaranteeing the universal and continuing access to learning for gaining and renewing the skills needed for a sustained participation in a cognitive society;
- visibly raising levels of investment in human resources to prioritize the most important values of Europe - its people;
- developing effective teaching and learning methods and situations which encourage the continuity of lifelong learning;
- significantly improving the ways in which participation and outcomes of learning are understood and appreciated, particularly non-formal and informal learning;
- ensuring that everyone can easily access good quality information and advice about learning opportunities throughout Europe and throughout life;
- providing lifelong learning opportunities as close to those who want to learn in their own communities, supported through ICT-based facilities, wherever appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> The European Commission, The paper *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*.

the Development of Vocational Training), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation), WB (World Bank).

The educational reforms around the world are assisted by foreign experts, putting into question the national experiences in education. The educational standards are generalized as an effect of exchange of views between specialists. The International organizations promote the transnational education policies, including on the agendas their concerns of international/ global dimensions of education. However, their policies depend on their financial resources available to officials and practitioners in education domain. There are organizations like UNICEF which survive through government funding and private donations, launching campaigns for protecting the rights of children (annual report *The State of World's Children*); UNESCO, an organization that promotes democratic values, contributing to peace and world security, advocating for collaboration between nation in education, science, culture, justice and human rights, supporting the free men's right, regardless of race, gender, language or religion (*The Report on XXI century education*, developed under the leadership of Jacques Delors, 1996); the World Bank - intergovernmental organization and specialized agency of UN, with special status among those who finance educational reforms and promote the internationalization of education (first report in 1995 called *Policies and Strategies for Education: A World Bank Review*).

Also, there are developed new tools for education, there are educational products, there are developed in school programs of (natural) and social environment, leadership training, development of entrepreneurial qualities.

Young people are taught to find the necessary information, to use modern means of investigating the information, to plan a career route during their early school. The teacher will not be prepared in the sense of an encyclopedic mind, for the volume of information is no longer important to convey knowledge, but how the teacher directs its students to understanding the investigation methodologies, which corresponds to individual needs and aspirations. Thus the teacher presents a very important role on the line of training critical, lateral, complex, analytical thinking, which the youngsters will use throughout their life. Moreover, the methods of learning, teaching and assessment for learning throughout life suggest a model different from the traditional one, where the roles of teachers and students are redesigned.

#### **4.1. The Need to Modernize Education**

The rapid implementation of scientific discoveries and technical inventions make science a productive force, resulting in rapid changes in all fields of activity to which man must adapt through education. Modernizing education includes the education system and also the learning process. The system provides the necessary institutional framework of carrying out the educational process, and in turn it provides the conditions necessary to materialize the objectives of educational action. Modernization is a logical process, consisting of a series of actions, aiming at achieving a fundamental consistency, actions that take place in the social life, economy, science, technology and culture in particular.

Modernization aims at reducing the gap between education and society. This is a prerequisite for advancing the education as a whole, becoming a fundamental aspect of state policy in education domain, a fundamental concern of the central body decision, a problem that focuses the efforts of many groups of professionals: teachers, economists, psychologists, sociologists etc. Modernization and education merge into a whole, so that only a modernized education can become an important factor for accelerating the social progress.

The purpose of modernizing, adapting education to the demands of society does not exhaust and it cannot explain its internal mechanisms, hinges and pedagogical springs that, ultimately, are at the basis of this purpose.

On the content of modernization, we can mention the fact that it consists of establishing optimal relations between the structural elements of education, viewed as a whole, so that it would ensure an appropriate and stimulating framework and at the same time the implementation of educational ideal.

Modernization of education means finding and implementing solutions that would balance the negative effects of the phenomenon of “accelerated abrasion of knowledge”.

Between the two categories of factors there is a close inter-dependence. “Optimizing the relationship between social logic and education is the driving force of development and improvement” (Nicola, 2003, p. 554).

#### **4.2. The Changes on the Labor Market – A Determinant Factor of Education Globalization**

In a reference work in the domain of educational system reform (Neacșu, Ștefan, Stanciu & Mirilă, 1997, p. 27) it is stated that the educational system and in particular, that of training, integrated market economy mechanisms, involving flexibility and, progressively, the liberalization of demand, supply, training costs, salary and motivation forms for quality standards. It further points out that this means: the human resources begin to react positively to new signals of labor market; the state responds to the demand for new skills, making flexible the offer of education forms; the institutions of higher education in particular, perceive and react more quickly to the needs of labor market.

However, as a result of the internationalization it has appeared a labor global market. Business agents already use the “teleworking” in order to achieve in useful time the required activities, by involving specialists from countries with low income.

In order to achieve these results, the education must draw the new world transformations in constant motion and also to provide to youngsters new orienting tools with which they find their affirming way and their permanent development.

Raising the skills’ level is a priority of educational policy, at both national and international level. Finally it should be a tendency to rebalance between the actual professional skills and the transversal ones. The latter are particularly important in terms of exercising the profession, as they take into consideration: the achievement of professional tasks effectively and responsibly, respecting the rules of conduct in the field; applying the techniques work effectively in a team (with elements of interdisciplinarity), within the hierarchical levels; the efficient use of communication resources and sources of professional assisted information, both in Romanian and a foreign language of international circulation.

It is therefore expected on a medium and long term, to significantly increase the level of education and training, recording at the same time, the increase of the functional side of education (Ciolan, 2008, p. 63), centered on key skills training<sup>1</sup>, which have transversal and transferable feature, which is formed beyond the traditional disciplines.

The globalization is a global reality, and the changes produced due to globalization regard the increase of educational exchanges and curriculum internationalization. The international dimension of the curriculum was encouraged in many countries; the European Union boosts the cooperation in research education domain and bilingualism, in response to the demands of the contemporary world.

#### **4.3. The Role of Information and Communication Technologies in Education Globalization**

New information and communication technologies have an obvious influence on the global training approaches and on educational policies.

With the increase of the demand for training it is diversified and it complicates the concrete offers of meeting the new requirements. More and more pathways to achieve education move from classical

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<sup>1</sup> In 2006 the European Parliament and EU Council adopted a Recommendation on the establishment of key competencies for lifelong learning throughout life. These competences: are skills and linguistic skills (in mother tongue), skills and linguistic skills (foreign language) skills and mathematical skills, scientific and technological skills; learning skills (learning to learn) skills and civic, interpersonal, intercultural and social competences; skills and entrepreneurial skills; abilities and skills of cultural expression.

institutions towards the formula sustained by the new media and information technologies. Driven by the conjugate impulse of new information technologies, the education and training domain is under the sign of fundamental structural and procedural transformations.

The practice of computerizing the education involves valuing the computer in a broader meaning, in order to achieve the educational goals. The technological perspective overcomes the didactic vision that highlights the technical advantages of computer-assisted instruction.

One of the fundamental objectives of Europe 2020 Strategy is the use of new ICT tools and teacher training, an essential condition for promoting creativity and innovation.

In the Report on Key Data on learning and innovation through ICT in schools from Europe in 2011, it shows that information and communication technology (ICT) offers a variety of tools that can open new possibilities in the classroom. They can help, in particular, to adapt the process of learning to the needs of each student and also it can offer them the much-needed digital skills in the economy based on knowledge.

Information and communication technology is evolving extremely rapid, and the problems associated with their use in education are becoming more complex, according to the report.

At the same time the report also presents a set of indicators that can help policymakers in their efforts to increase the impact of ICT use on learning. (Vassiliou, 2011)

ICT is essential to support teachers in providing opportunities for innovative teaching and learning, but they have an important role in achieving an effective school management.

In this respect there are also the European Commission statements according to which “the integration of ICT systems in education and training systems require additional changes in the environments of technology, organization, teaching, learning classes, employment and informal educational settings.” (European Commission, 2008)

Developing a framework of qualifications and assessment based on skills is closely related to the current requirements of globalization, modernization within the society based on knowledge.

These changes have led also to changes in the organizational landscape of the school, focusing on: structural and functional directions.

From the structural point of view, one can speak of a new type of management, characterized by a more flexible internal organization, able to respond to economic and social requirements. From the functional perspective, school is, as stated in the specialized literature (Ciolan, 2008, p. 68), a human resource center, a provider of training (mentoring programs for juniors, training sessions at the request of companies), a center of production and distribution of knowledge, a social and education center for democratic citizenship.

## **5. Conclusions**

Ensuring a quality education for all citizens will enable the EU to meet the challenges that they face namely globalization and competitiveness of newly industrialized countries, demographic structure, labor market and the rapid development of information and communication technologies revolution. Therefore, globalization of education can be achieved by increasing the supply of education by sustainable educational programs, that would allow the formation of appropriate skills to new national and international labor market requirements, developing new and e-learning technologies, raising the information and communication level, international recognition of university diplomas, developing new models on economic support from public and private environment and partnerships with economic, social and cultural environment.

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