EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

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Abstract. Globalization is the event of the contemporaneity. It is the passport that makes it possible to open the doors of any structure of the society, by creating the global virtual space, which complements the physical one. Becoming immediately a catchword, a magical incantation for deciphering all the mysteries, present and coming ones, the word 'globalization' itself is all in the air, defined mostly by ubiquity rather than accuracy. In accordance with the actual tendencies to highlight the role that education plays in the socio-economic development of nowadays world, the purpose of the present scientific study is to propose an analysis of the human capital in the context of globalization, from a representative approach. In this paper, a benchmarking of the EU countries is presented. For this study, we exploited the following research means: the investigation of secondary data and content analysis of the primary reports and studies of international organizations, such as World Bank-Human Development Reports, World Economic Forum, Eurostat statistics as well as EU reports on human capital, education and competitiveness. For data analysis I applied procedures and statistical correlations of analysis. In order to bring forward the impact that education has on the economic competitiveness of a country, in this section we will focus on three important indicators: Global Competitiveness Indicator (GCI), European Indicator of Human Capital (EIHC) and European Lifelong Learning Indicator (ELLI). This study follows the analysis of correlations regarding GCI and ELLI. Education (as a defining factor of human capital) has direct effects on the competitiveness of a region/country (the correlation between EIHC and IGC). The selection of the countries for which I analyzed the indicators was based on eligible criteria, considering the particularities of each state, from geographical and cultural views. At the same time, these countries have successful educational systems as well as remarkable educational performances.

Keywords: education; globalization; human capital; macro-economic data; competitiveness.

Introduction

Speaking of the importance of economic growth, we affirm that education is a component of economic policies, which contributes to the improvement of living standards of individuals, to a higher condition, irrespective of their actual one. Subsequently, the less tactful ones take over the successful experiences of the others, who already set new tendencies and try to adapt them to their personal needs. This new and complex reality of nowadays world, whether we know it or not, like it

or not, whether we support it or deny it, it goes further and further, embracing social spaces and individual destinies. At the same time the globalisation eases the cultural transmission, especially of preferences, values and behavioural norms through intercultural dialogue as a consequence of social interactions at global scale.

"Education that is not open to innovation and knowledge will not lead to economic development" (Word Bank, 1999). In the context of creating, assimilating and disseminating knowledge at a global level, especially regarding the developed societies and economies of the world, the attention lays on the higher education and its potential to generate socio-economic development.

In any organization, there are two distinct types of knowledge: individual knowledge and organizational knowledge. Individual knowledge belongs to every organizations member and it can be accessed only with the individual acceptance. By organizational knowledge we understand all the knowledge, which can be integrated at the organization level from individual knowledge of its members and from incoming knowledge fluxes from the external environment (Bratianu, 2011, p.177).

In the economic literature education is seen as an "industry" in which one invests (it has a cost), produces human capital and has effects on economy, on the situation of the individual, the community and the society (Becker, 2008). This is what makes the educational system, on the whole, especially the public one, a subject of great interest for the elaboration and the application of adequate educational policies. An important economic aspect refers to the means in which education, as a defining element of human capital, determinates the growth of working efficiency and, in this way, the economic growth and wealth, respectively better living standards.

Globalization in education, ways of expression

Globalization is a total phenomenon, involving widened competitions at the level of all nations in different fields. Education has a significant role in any attempt to address networks communications, in these moments of explosive development, networks that make easy communication between people and through this can contribute to their proximity. Education, essential in human capital formation, it is possible to acquire knowledge and skills, either through participation in formal education systems, either through its own efforts or using informal education (participation in various training courses or personal) problematic human capital shall fall within the scope endogenous economic growth. Studies and articles have emphasized increased interest researchers in the topic having an approach that is both prized and critical. The concept of human capital formation is due to the known group at the University of Chicago, which was coordinated by Theodore Schultz, which together with his collaborators Jacob Mincer, Gary Becker and George Stigler has pursued economic growth through increase productivity determined by the investment in education and health. In his view, "attributes ... which are valuable and which can be developed through appropriate investments are called human capital. Investing in themselves, people broaden the scoop options". He is the one who has shown that investment in human capital through education and training are much more efficient than investments in physical capital: "their knowledge and skills are a form of capital and this capital is a substantial part of the outcome of a deliberate investment." (Schultz, 1962, p.18).

Education must follow direct conversions and new requirements to support the changes and future vocational training. In this aspect, a direction meant to ensure through cooperation such as potentiation represents economy so-called stakeholders, i.e. the assembly of those who, under various titles, have an interest in an economic activity: officials, suppliers, customers, banks, local communities, etc. in this direction education will be aimed at developing educational awareness of connections between the various components and participants, in whatever geographical area in which they exercise their activity, and on this basis the building partnership. A convincing argument in favor of partners would be that everyone has to win: industrialized countries can assist developing countries, offering them as a model their experience successful and placing them so technologies, as

well as material and financial resources, but at the same time they can learn from them how to pass on cultural heritage, various approaches to socialize children, and this is crucial, they may come into contact with different ways of life (Stiglitz, 2006, p.23). Education must provide efficient and widespread that volume of knowledge and information adapted new civilizations of globalization, which is not wholly overpowered by quantity, but to contribute to the development people at the individual level and community. Education transformations must draw new worlds that are constantly in motion, and at the same time, to make available to people instruments of guidance to help them find its way to affirmation and continual development (Bloom, 2006, p.83).

Understanding unique problems to be solved by education in a global society and for a global company starts at its statute of the new education. Without being isolated from other types of new education, especially of some of these (intercultural education, education for peace, education for democracy, the education system in mass-media, eco-education), the education for a global society could be regarded as representing a coherent and harmonized of those "new education" with significant impact on international dimension of training man, more exactly a cash actual in understanding and support on. He speaks of himself as one of them, irrespective of geographical territory, ethnic, religious, economic in which it lives.

In this respected fundamental pillars of education: "to learn how to do you know", "to learn how to do it", "learn rules being together" and "to learn how to be" receive new content training and impose new strategies of teaching and learning assessment. "To learn how to do you know" may be expected that, in the first instance, by creating the conditions for education specific knowledge-based society, for every inhabitant of the planet. It will take into account an understanding of own destiny and substance human beings with a view to the adoption of a behavior unbecoming, sociable and responsible. "To learn how to do" cannot be separated from the first pillar and expressed the size has primed, the practice is education behavior, placing a design, the general obligations capable of directing behavior toward establishing communion relationships are human generated, regardless of what is entered in certain relations of communication or practice activity. In this way, it will be able to make the change back to a excessive attitude personal interests and subordinated to local community or national, to conduct a specific gears openers relations with other communities in various places of the world. Moreover, the education system will form competent people in managing conflicts and establish stable relations.

Research methodology

Global Competitiveness Indicator

In order to bring forward the impact that education has on the economic competitiveness of a country, in this section we will focus on three important indicators: Global Competitiveness Indicator (GCI), European Indicator of Human Capital (EIHC) and European Lifelong Learning Indicator (ELLI). This study follows the analysis of correlations regarding GCI and ELLI. GCI is an indicator developed by Xavier Sala-i-Martin and Elsa Artadi. This indicator comprises both microeconomic and macroeconomic aspects, as well as information on the competitiveness of the enterprises. This indicator is composed of 12 pillars (including aspects regarding public institutions, infrastructure, economic environment, health, primary, secondary and tertiary education, efficiency of certain markets, innovation etc.



Figure 1. Global Competitiveness Index (World Economic Forum, WEF, 2014)

In accordance with the Report on Global Competitiveness for 2014-2015, published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), the most competitive economy worldwide is Switzerland, followed by Singapore, USA, Finland, Germany, Japan, Hong Kong, Netherlands, UK and Sweden. WEF analysis is made from 144 economies of the world, and the competitiveness indicator is calculated on the basis of a series of factors, such as the legislation of a country, its GDP, inflation rates, infrastructure quality, education and health systems and characteristics of the market of the state, on a 1(the weakest) to 7(the best) scale. Our study focuses on the selection and analysis of 5 states of Europe and Asia: Romania, UK, Sweden and Poland in the EU context and South Korea- Asia. The criteria that lays at the base of this selection is as follows: the socio-economic, cultural and political context, which support the educational systems, strategic geographical positions, strategies and policies of development for the most competitive economies in the world.

Another example, I considered to be relevant is Sweden, as it is one of the Nordic countries, where competitiveness is at home. Sweden is, at present, one of the few European successes, through economic performances, political stability, and an effective public financing system. From Asia, I selected South Korea, one of the most advanced countries in the world, with the highest rate of digital interconnectivity as well as the economic worldwide leader. All this success is based on a single type of resource: the human being, which involved consciously in accomplishing the national objectives. An overview of the scores of the European countries and South Korea is presented in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Global Competitiveness Index, 2014 (own elaboration based on World Economic Forum, http://www.weforum.org/)

Of all EU countries, Greece has the weakest GCI score (4.04), a predictable result considering the difficulties it had been struggling with lately. Romania got a score of 4.30, which means a progress of 17 positions, from the 76th up to the 59th place, in the GCI classification for 2014-2015, compared to 2013-2014. Hence Romania is above other European countries, such as Hungary, Greece or Croatia, but after Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia or Poland. Regarding the neighboring countries, Romania is below Bulgaria, positioned in 54th place, according to GCI for 2014-2015. In Figure 3 is presented a comparison of the scores of the five countries, amongst which we find Romania too, at the considered pillars of the GCI.



Figure 3. Global Competitiveness Index factors of influence, 2014 (own elaboration based on World Economic Forum, http://www.weforum.org/)

Analyzing Figure 3 regarding the 4th pillar (health and primary education) UK has the first position (6.43) of the 5th countries selected, and the 21st worldwide, alongside South Korea (21th position). We notice that Romania has the lowest score (5.51), having the 58th place worldwide. Poland managed to

keep the 39th place, with a score of 6.17. Regarding the 5thpillar(higher education and training), UK has the best place, at a small difference in Sweden, the latest managing to create an effective educational and training system. More precisely, the Swedish educational and training system is of high quality, recording very high scores in many dimensions that are essential to creating a society based on knowledge. Poland is a country that managed to develop an educational system that brought it to the top of PISA tests, having the highest economic growth in the world. The evolution of Romanian scores, afferent to the 2014-2015 period, on the pillars of GCI is presented in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Global Competitiveness Index factors of influence, in 2008-2014, Romania (own elaboration based on World Economic Forum, http://www.weforum.org/)

Analyzing from the outlook of the GCI, between 2008 and 2014, Romania obtained high scores in health and primary education, although the increase during this period has been insignificant. One cannot speak of an ascending trend when it comes to factors of support in business innovation and sophistication, the scores remaining insignificant – only 3.2 points out of 7. On this scale 1-7, in 2014 Romania finds itself amongst the economies defined by efficiency, on the 59th place out of 144 countries taken into account, with a score of 5.00 at higher and lifelong education. The results point out the correlation between the level of socio-economic growth and competitiveness of an economy, and the general performances of a country regarding primary, secondary education and training, focusing on the quality of the education, the management of educational institutions and of investments research and training. Considering the general information presented and of the data reflected by the GCI, I find it useful the Global Report on Competitiveness of the World Economic Forum, as it includes educational variables, which determined me to select these countries for this empirical study.

European Human Capital Index

In literature there are different opinions regarding the accuracy of the measurements of human capital indicator, which is very difficult, if not impossible to do in a quantitative form. Being an ambivalent concept, there are different indicators that try to approximate the level of human capital, such as the European Human Capital Index (EHCI), elaborated by the Lisbon Council. European Human Capital Index is an indicator that summarizes various aspects related to workforce available within a country. The indicator includes not only quantitative aspects (related to volume and territorial), but also qualitative aspects (related to education and productivity). The graphical representation of the scores obtained by European Union countries, and an Asian country, South Korea, is performed in Figure 5.



Figure 5. European Human Capital Index, the European Union and South Korea in 2012 (own elaboration based on World Economic Forum, http://www.weforum.org/)

The latest data on European Human Capital Index are available for 2012. According to these results, along with Bulgaria and Greece, Romania recorded a negative score while the other countries that are analyzed have achieved positive indices. On the basis of the score obtained, Romania ranks on the 69th place in the world, with a negative score of -0,176; Poland on the 49th place with 0,087, UK the 8th place with a score of 1,042, Sweden the 5th place with a score of 1,111, South Korea has the 23th position with a score of 0,640. The countries that occupy the first 10 positions in the world top is based mostly on labor and employability, as pillars of human capital index, the case of Sweden, and the pillars of Environmental and Education in the case of the UK. Poland has a relatively good score, based on the pillars of education, health and welfare, but is registered negative values on the pillars of the European Human Capital Index by Sweden, UK, Poland, Romania and South Korea is performed in Figure 6.



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Figure 4. Index of Human Capital and its components in 2012 (own elaboration based on World Economic Forum, http://www.weforum.org/)

Analyzing the index of education, we find that Romania has a value close to zero (0.077), while the UK is leading with a score of 1.031, Sweden has achieved a score of 0.977, 0.376 Poland and South Korea 0.899. At the national level, should be identified the levers through which we can become more competitive by choosing a strategic direction of development, to ensure the expected changes by developing tactics, that lead to achieving immediate results. Romania ranks on the 69th place in the world, based on indicators of human capital, calculated as an index of four pillars:

• health and welfare - from childhood until adulthood, Romania ranks in the 61th place;

• education - in its quantitative and qualitative aspects, in the initial, primary, secondary and tertiary sector, it ranks in the 57th place;

• employment and employability (low labor absorption by the labor market).

• stimulating environment - captures the influences of the legal system, infrastructure and other factors that highlight the human capital.

European Index of Lifelong Learning

European Index of lifelong learning (ELLI) is an initiative of Bertelsmann Stiftung organization (www.elli.org), which aims to assess lifelong learning. ELLI indicator includes information on the extent and quality of the courses (such as lifelong learning) of the various EU countries. ELLI Index, calculated in 2010 measure the learning performance in four areas: learning to know in an educational system (Learning to know), learning to do - vocational education, training (Learning to do), learning to be, personal Development (learning to be) and learning for social cohesion (learning to live together). Compared to Figure 7, ELLI measured only the way in which learning conditions presented in a country, facilitates economic and social welfare. The study shows that the Nordic countries like Denmark, Sweden and Finland, to which was added the Netherlands, are first. Denmark and Sweden are the European countries that have implemented the idea of lifelong learning with the greatest success.

As we can see in Fig. 8 world economies are increasingly focusing on knowledge and skills, education being one of the dominant forces for the success of people and states.



Figure 7. ELLI in European context (adapted by ELLI, 2010)

The latest data on ELLI Index are from 2010, year that coincided with a period of global economic crisis, whose strongest effects were felt in Europe. According to Figure no. 8, there is a group of four countries (Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Finland) who get high performance, followed by another group, composed mostly of Central European countries and Anglo-Saxon countries. Under

the EU average (according ELLI), are the states of Southern and Eastern Europe, the Czech Republic and Poland. The lowest level was recorded in countries like Hungary, Greece, Bulgaria and Romania. It is remarkable the success of Slovenia, which is positioned at a high-level closer to the EU average. The result of Slovenia is explained by investments in education by 1999. The success was to identify the values of education and promote them.

From Figure 8 we see that Romania has an index of 17.31, our country occupying the last place in EU lifelong learning chapter because the percentage of population with ages between 25 and 64 who participate in education and training in Romania is much lower than the average of the Member States.

Global education system from Sweden and the Nordic countries supports the performance demonstrated by the high results of PISA test. In addition, in Sweden, participation in tertiary education is free, allocation of expenditures on education is generous, encouraging as a whole and a large scale participation of adults in formal education.

UK falls into this trend because almost three-quarters of the funds allocated to higher education come from the private sector, amounts that have been doubled in the past decade. We cannot forget Poland, which has managed to develop a system of education, which led the country to the top of PISA tests, with the fastest economic growth among the developing countries of the world. Following to these numeric realities from the reports presented with value of references, it can be argued that Romania, although if has made some progress in the past few years, it is situated in the last third of the world's countries, far behind our Bulgarian, Hungarian or Polish neighbors. This statement is confirmed by international classifications published by OECD in Europe, the PISA type and TIMSS types, coordinated and rated by IEA.



Figure 8. ELLI, 2010 (adapted by ELLI, 2010)

The recent report of World's Economic Forum, which calculate the Global Competitiveness Indicator, place Romania, in the year of 2014, on the 59th global position, to the meaning of the composite index of global competitiveness- of which the education and labor market occupy a major percentage – the

index is aggregated, but the education and training component is significant. Progress of information technology that simplifies collecting and management of the data, cultivation of internationally competitive spirit and increasing interest in quality improvement were some of the reason that led to the recent development of benchmarking among tertiary education institutions. (CHEMS, 1998, p.39)

As a consequence, the education has to become the number one project in Romania for the next 10 years, because through education, the society can change, firstly, mental infrastructure and, at the same time, economic development. The adaptive change of education is a profound exercise of group learning of the entire society, based on trust, honesty, competence, performance and courage, able to generate irreversible profits on a short, medium and long time, for all the individuals and institutional actors of one nation (Delors, 2000, p.64).

The analysis of connection between European Human Capital Index and Global Competitiveness Indicators

Through the present research, I followed the analysis between European Human Capital Index and Global Competitiveness Indicators as well as the one between European Lifelong Learning Indicators and Global Competitiveness Indicators. The hypothesis set were the following:

- these are a direct connection between qualitative and quantitative characteristics of human capital, synthesized by European Human Capital Index and the level of competitiveness expressed by Global Competitiveness Indicators;

- these are a direct connection between the learning process throughout the entire life, expressed by European Lifelong Learning Indicators and competitivity expressed by Global Competitiveness Indicators.

The analysis between two variables it was made by South Korea on the basis of the data available for the year 2012 for the European Union countries, according the Table 1.

COUNTRIES	European Human Capital	Global Competitiveness	
	Index (HCI) 2012	Indicators (GCI) 2012	
Belgium	0,985	5,21	
Bulgaria	-0,048	4,27	
Czech Republic	0,387	4,51	
Denmark	1,024	5,29	
Germany	1,109	5,48	
Estonia	0,571	4,64	
Ireland	0,824	4,91	
Greece	-0,011	3,86	
Spain	0,465	4,6	
France	0,746	5,11	
Croatia	0,099	4,04	
Italy	0,266	4,46	
Cyprus	0,452	4,32	
Latvia	0,248	4,35	
Lithuania	0,360	4,41	
Luxembourg	0,881	5,09	
Hungary	0,000	4,3	
Malta	0,473	4,41	

 Table 1. European Human Capital Index and Global Competitiveness Indicators, in 2012 (The Human Capital Report, 2013 and Global Competitiveness Report, 2012-2013)

Netherlands	1,161	5,5
Austria	0,977	5,22
Poland	0,087	4,46
Portugal	0,453	4,4
Romania	-0,018	4,07
Slovenia	0,445	4,34
Finland	1,406	5,55
Sweden	1,111	5,53
Britain	1,042	5,45
South Korea	0,640	5,12
Slovakia		4,14

To reflect the connection we made a graphical correlation through the representation of index value pairs in a system of coordinated axes: index of human capital and index of global competitiveness. Based on this correlation we can estimate that there is a direct link between the two indicators. Measurement of the intensity of the relationship between the variables considered was performed using the Spearman coefficient. The Spearman coefficient is an extension of the Pearson correlation coefficient the empirical values correlated variables are replaced with their proper ranks (Jaba, 2002, p.33). The Spearman coefficient is calculated based on the equation:

$$r_{s} = 1 - \frac{6\sum d_{i}^{2}}{n(n^{2} - 1)}$$

in which: d_i - represents the difference ranks of the correlated variables; n - number of units studied. The calculations were performed using SPSS 17, values for this coefficient is summarized in Table 2.

			HCI 2012	GCI 2012
Coefficient Spearman	HCI2012	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	0,935**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0,000
		Ν	28	28
	GCI2012	Correlation Coefficient	0,935**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	
		N	28	29

Table. 1. Correlation between Human Capital Index and Global Competitiveness Index in 2012

** The correlation is the scale to 0.01 (two-tailed).

The Spearman correlation coefficient shows that in the European Union countries and South Korea, there is a very strong and positive correlation. The Sig value. 0.01 is more appropriate than allowing us to say that The Spearman coefficient is statistically significant.

The correlation between European Lifelong Learning Index (ELLI) and Global Competitiveness Indicators (GCI) in EU countries.

The analysis was based on data available for 23 countries in the European Union, published in the reports: ELLI Index -Europe, 2010 Global Competitiveness Report, 2010-2011 Table 3.

	ELLI 2010	GCI 2010
Belgium	57,32	5,07
Bulgaria	20,07	4,13
Czech Republic	42,2	4,57
Denmark	75,65	5,32
Germany	47,77	5,39
Estonia	40,86	4,61
Greece	20,07	3,99
Spain	46,09	4,49
France	53,45	5,13
Italy	36,76	4,37
Lithuania	29,71	4,14
Luxembourg	58,48	5,05
Hungary	27,11	4,33
Netherlands	66,13	5,33
Austria	53,91	5,09
Poland	29,35	4,51
Portugal	33,24	4,38
Romania	17,31	4,16
Slovenia	47,62	4,42
Finland	64,96	5,37
Sweden	71,23	5,56
Britain	56,92	5,25
Slovakia	31,17	4,25
Siovania	51,17	7,23

 Table 2. European Lifelong Learning Index (ELLI) and Global Competitiveness Indicators (GCI) in EU

 countries, 2010 (ELLI Index –Europe, 2010 and Global Competitiveness Report, 2010-2011)

In order to measure the intensity of the connection between ELLI and GCI, we calculated the Spearman coefficient values obtained being centralized in Table 4.

 Table 3. The correlation between ELLI and GCI, 2010

			ELLI 2010	GCI 2010
Coefficient Spearman	ELLI2010	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	0,891**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0,000
		N	23	23
	GCI2010	Correlation Coefficient	0,891**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000	
		Ν	23	23

** The correlation is the scale to 0.01 (two-tailed).

Analyzing data from Table. 4 we notice that between the European Index of Lifelong Learning (ELLI) Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) there is a direct and very strong connection. The Spearman coefficient is significant, the value of Sig. appropriate being less than 0.01 (Hapenciuc, 2004, p.54).

Conclusions

The economic progress depends on the use of worldwide knowledge, globally; one of the elements that favor economic and social development internationally, and in this sense, education is one of the main actors. Why do we use the value of benchmarking indicators? In order to question the policies

and development strategies of the most competitive economies in the world, to identify the proper functioning of the countries occupying important places in the rankings, investing in education, health, innovation. In this respect, indicators were used as tools to foster the exchange of expertise, supporting good practice and inspiring new approaches. In our opinion, and according to statistical analysis, education is inextricably linked to the welfare, knowledge and competitiveness. Results and statistics show that countries that have invested in the teaching over time are those who collect the fruits of development today. The role of education should be approached from a broader perspective and integrative both to capture its essential role in economic growth, but in particular and its mission to maximize the potential of individuals to foster their personal development.

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