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Learning Organisations and Advanced Services for Users: Knowledge Management Applied in Academic Libraries

Habilitation Thesis

Abstract

This thesis presents my scientific contributions in recent years in the context of the current state of research in the field of information sciences and the research directions on which I will focus in the future.

After submitting my doctoral thesis on knowledge management and info-documentary structures at the University of Bucharest under the scientific supervision of Prof. Ion Stoica PhD and obtaining my PhD in 2006, my research work was focused on several directions. Some were initiated early in my university career, immediately after graduating from the undergraduate and master's programmes at the Faculty of Letters, University of Bucharest, Library and Information Science specialization, others studied thoroughly during my doctoral studies, while others were explored during the postdoctoral period. These include: the study of information users, knowledge management implementation in info-documentary structures, medical information services, university libraries transformation in learning organisations, development of tools for organizing knowledge. The results of my research work were disseminated into journals, books and at international scientific events in the field of information sciences.

In Section I of my habilitation thesis I succinctly expound the most important directions of my research work and its results, as well as my professional path with respect to the teaching activity, and coordinating students, master students and research teams.

One of the main directions of research is represented by the study of information users in terms of access to services provided by academic libraries in general and access to electronic information in particular, but also of user training (Porumbeanu 2008b; Madge & Mihăilescu 2012). The category of sighted out users has been that of academic library users (Porumbeanu 2003; Mandea & Porumbeanu 2004a; Mandea & Porumbeanu 2004b; Madge 2013a; Madge 2015b) and especially that of medical information users: students, medical doctors, researchers, and patients (Porumbeanu 2008a; Porumbeanu 2009b; Porumbeanu 2009c; Porumbeanu & Madge 2009). My interest in medical academic libraries and their audience was motivated by the fact that these structures are among the most dynamic, with a significantly faster evolution and implementation of innovations in their activity compared to other libraries, aspect due to the specifics and usefulness of the information they manage, but

also motivated by my contiguity to this type of libraries during the six years spent as a student of the Faculty of Medicine and later during my residency in general medicine and my doctoral studies in general surgery. My experience as a user, but also the assessment of services provided by medical academic libraries in Romania and abroad have been underlying the model which I proposed for information services based on a partnership between information specialists and biomedical users (Madge Porumbeanu 2012b) and of the project pending the immediate development of an information literacy guide for the same category of users.

The cooperation at the Romanian academic libraries level (Porumbeanu Madge 2012c; Madge2013b, Madge 2013d) and the use of applications based on new technologies for better communication with users (Madge, Coşerea & Modan 2014; Madge & Coşerea 2014; Madge 2015c) constitute other issues addressed recently during my research.

Knowledge management in info-documentary structures and the implementation of this process within the Romanian academic libraries is another main research direction. During the early 2000s, I managed to introduce the theme of knowledge management in the Romanian info-documentary sphere (Porumbeanu 2005a; Porumbeanu 2005b), while in 2003 I have introduced and taught the first course of knowledge management in higher education in Romania (Porumbeanu 2009a). The research conducted by the undersigned between 2001-2009 in the Romanian academic libraries has resulted in the development of a strategic model for implementing this process (Porumbeanu 2006; Porumbeanu 2010; Porumbeanu 2011; Madge 2012) and, later, a framework of action for creating a culture of learning and knowledge sharing in these structures (Porumbeanu Madge 2012a), as well as analyses of the organizational culture in Romanian academic libraries (Porumbeanu 2010; Porumbeanu Madge 2012c).

The published results of this research have been quoted by authors from different parts of the world in articles published in ISI, Scopus etc. indexed journals, and also in other publications.

The research directions specified in Section I are exemplified in the scientific papers presented at international conferences and world congresses that I attended, in the articles and studies published by important journals in the field, in the books I published and which received laudatory reviews and quotations in prestigious journals and books published in the country and abroad, as well as in the courses taught over time to undergraduate students and master students in the Information and Documentation Sciences specialization.

My plans for future research include deepening the aspects regarding users and their information behaviour in the digital era, transforming Romanian academic libraries in learning organisations (Madge 2013c), improving the cooperation between such institutions, as well as the further development of knowledge organisation tools, namely bibliographic tools within Romania's bilateral relations area (coord. Madge 2014; Madge 2015a). These issues are showcased in Section II of the habilitation thesis dedicated to professional, scientific and academic career development plans.