

Habitation Thesis

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Abstract

The present thesis represents a critical reflective analysis of personal academic and research achievements, cumulated after the completion of doctorate stage (in 2005). These achievements are considered a solid foundation for further developments within educational field; significant milestones and performances are described, in relation with the minimum quantitative evaluation criteria which correspond to the habilitation domains' standards.

The thesis aims to:

- develop a self-reflective perspective by improving the ability to explore, contemplate, and analyses personal professional experiences;
- document scientific, conceptual and managerial maturity considerably beyond the PhD level;
- document research at the forefront of specific field of educational sciences in order to consolidate and further enlarge it.

In terms of text and content organization, the thesis is divided into 5 sections, equally and rationally balanced.

The first chapter is an overview presenting evidence of academic credentials, and, in the same time an attempt to provide examples of the acknowledgment by the scientific-pedagogical community. The starting point in this approach is the so called "5Cs model", combining the following characteristics essential for describing any professional performance in educational academic field: Continuity/Continuitate, Coherence/Coerență, Consistency/Consistență, Complementaritate, and Quality/Calitate. These analytical directions are referring cumulatively to the conceptual fidelity proved to the same domain - educational sciences - together with the constant need to produce consistent and coherent work which solidify the connection to the high quality type of achievements.

In the same time, some axiological and normative guidelines are described, as a prove of being reflective and purposeful about professional activities undertaken. This personal philosophy of teaching and research demonstrates stability, continuity and long-term guidance; it highlights the need for reflective practice, for competence-based learning process in a broader context of lifelong learning, for correlating theoretical approaches with practice. It includes also the personal strive for professional growth, devotion to excellence and the nurture of equity in education; intellectual correctness, engaged involvement, supportive professional behaviours can be added. This distinctive organizing and normative vision is considered a result of a professional maturity process of extracting the essential, authentic, already validated beliefs out of different experiences.

The next two chapters represents a survey of scientific research activity; the publications and associated research projects are listed, grouped in two main conceptual areas. First area refers to pedagogy of diversity/equity in education and the second one to School and its actors; the two fields include the following subdomains: interculturalism, education for children in risk situations/belonging to disadvantaged groups, segregation (pedagogy of diversity domain), evaluation of educational policies and practices, managing school as learning organisation, clustering/school and community, student and teachers profiles (school and its actors domain).

These specialization areas – proving flexibility, multiperspectivity and, in the same time, coherence – are generously illustrated both by lasting scientific contributions published in scholarly journals and books and by concrete development and research projects.

A self-reflective perspective over these professional experiences can highlight some of their characteristics: they are comprehensive and complementary to each other (academic/support for educational policy and decision making process/grass root implementation/international consultancy). They are diverse as well. For instance, the work record includes projects developed at national (Romanian), international (Republic of Moldova, Kosovo) or transnational level (research undertaken comparatively in different educational systems); it includes managerial abilities developed in governmental (adviser to the minister), nongovernmental contexts or in collaboration with different international organizations (e.g. World Bank Rural Education intervention, projects implemented in partnership with UNICEF Romania or financed by European Union).

The professional portfolio includes – besides academic activities undertaken - positions as researcher, highly dedicated to the chosen field of academics, international consultant, senior educational adviser, trainer.

In performing these tasks, some competences have been developed:

- research competences - including the ability to propose innovative research with emphasis on the ability to connect research across disciplines;
- ability to design, apply and disseminate research through significant scientific literature (including articles, collaboratively designed and sole-authored papers)
- managerial competences developed at academic institutional level (the vice dean position) or within different projects conducted;
- managing teams competences, intercultural communication ability
- training skills, capacity of professionally act as international consultant in educational field.

These competences generated a wide range of achievements which prove academic maturity, and research independence: contributions to consolidate certain research fields within Romanian education system, to internationalize and widen them up; contributions to promote innovator concepts and approaches, new disciplines within curriculum for Bachelor and Master degree at Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences (media education, reflective teacher, intercultural communication) and new educational programs (as the Master's degree on "Innovative learning Strategies" of "Learning, Innovation and Coaching in Education).

Within the above illustrated diversity a conceptual unity should be underlined: the ceaseless preoccupation to develop strategic and operational solutions for improving concrete school activity. No matter the context of intervention – international, national, academic or grass root level – a common ground can be identified. The research and projects are a prove of prompting an engaged and responsible pedagogy, offering concepts and practical solutions as well.