

INNOVATION AND EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

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Abstract: *The identification of the motivation to stimulate creativity in the university environment, as well as the main objectives and characteristics of these activities, represents the starting point in the development of a strategy for the implementation of innovation in educational management. All the changes that have appeared in the external environment in recent years have generated the need to adapt the methods of teaching, evaluation and control, so as to provide a new, innovative environment for the development of study programs. In order to be able to integrate the concepts of innovation and development in the strategy of the educational environment, it is necessary to analyze and interpret the current state of the environment in which we operate, so that all those positive aspects can be maximized in the future strategy. Also, following the analysis, the critical factors must be reduced, even eliminated in order not to generate risks in the future. The process of adapting the university educational environment to the needs of new generations must be a continuous one based on the use of the stimulating factors of innovation. The actual innovation begins with the identification of innovation opportunities and the impact they can have on the interested parties. Starting from the presentation of the current stage of the integration of innovative strategies in university management, this paper aims to identify and detail a series of proposals and recommendations that can constitute alternatives in carrying out activities specific to university education.*

Key words: *innovation, development, management, education.*

Classification JEL: *O32, M10, I2.*

1. Introduction

At the international level and implicitly also at the level of our country, all institutions with a role in the educational process must go through a process of evolution and adaptation to the new requirements. In this context, universities, more than ever, must be an integral part of the innovation process in the educational environment.

The promotion of teaching methods based on creativity have the role of encouraging students and young researchers to become entrepreneurs, to acquire the ability to identify innovative solutions to the problems in the environment in which they carry out their activity.

The process of adapting the university educational environment to the needs of new generations must be a continuous one based on the use of the stimulating factors of innovation. The actual innovation begins with the identification of innovation opportunities and the impact they can have on the interested parties.

At the European level, the creation of the European Education Area is a commendable initiative. Its main role is to create an interaction between the member states of the European Union in order to identify modern, creative methods, based on novelty, which can result in the development of modern education systems with a permanent capacity to adapt to the needs of society.

Identifying the motivation to stimulate creativity in the university environment, as well as the main objectives and characteristics of these activities, represents the starting point in developing a strategy for implementing innovation in educational management.

All the changes that have appeared in the external environment in recent years have generated the need to adapt the methods of teaching, evaluation and control, so as to provide a new, innovative environment for the development of study programs.

The identification of innovative solutions to increase the quality of the educational process must become a priority for all parties involved in the act of education.

All education systems, and implicitly the one in Romania, must be able to find solutions to deal with both the weak points in the system and the threats that can influence it

from the outside, as well as to make the most of all internal strengths and the opportunities generated by the external environment.

Approaching creativity as an integral part of the educational process, the permanent accumulation of new knowledge regarding digital education, new teaching methods existing internationally, must become a major concern of universities, in order to implement, develop and improve quality in education.

2. Innovation in education

The development of the entire educational process and especially of modern teaching methods must represent a major objective at the level of all educational institutions, especially at the level of universities.

Starting from the identification of the current stage in the practice of the educational process, it can be stated that there is a special need to identify, implement and use a series of modern methods to help develop the methods used.

The introduction of new, modern methods that lead to the increase of the quality of the educational act, the creation of premises for the integration of the new in the current activity, must represent strategic objectives for the university management.

The innovative approach to education must be implemented both at the level of teaching staff and at the managerial level. All the factors involved must be aware of the need for a creative approach and contribute to the definition of innovative activity in the space of the university environment.

In general, innovation has always accompanied the educational process. At any level, various approaches can be identified with a role in identifying solutions, methods that lead to the development of the field.

The role of a quality education is to prepare students for the labor market, by providing the necessary information and knowledge, well structured and easy to accumulate.

In order to stimulate interest in learning, to succeed in motivating students in order to accumulate new knowledge, it is necessary to achieve a synergy between human, material and financial resources.

The accumulation of new knowledge, the approach to teaching methods based on digitization must become a strategic, major objective of university management. In these conditions, the continuous improvement of the quality in education can take place (figure no 1).

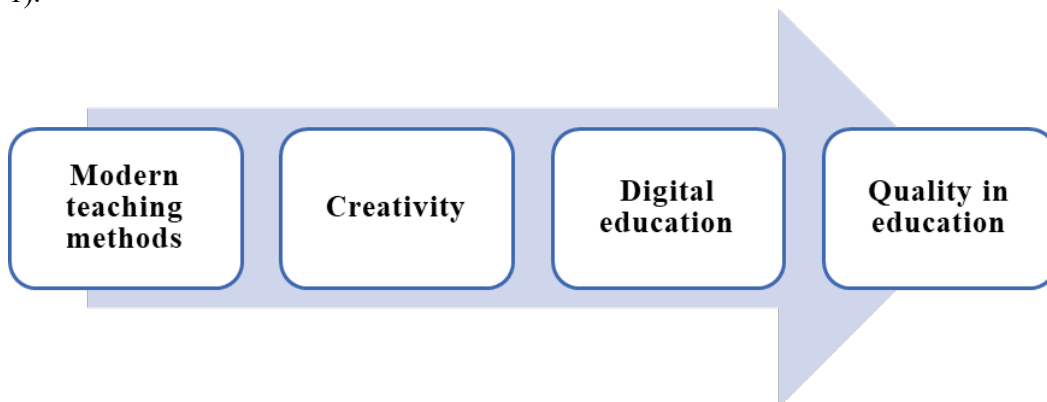


Figure no. 1. Strategic objectives in education

In order to respond to the new requirements in the field, teachers and education in general must approach new, modern, creative methods. At the organizational level,

institutions, universities, must demonstrate an educational management that creates opportunities in the modern approach to the educational process.

The implementation of a digital education, the use of creative techniques and methods, the use of new teaching methods, are arguments in favor of a modern education that stimulates and captures the attention of students.

Achieving a synergy between innovation and education must become a common practice of all factors involved in the educational process. An important role belongs to teaching staff who must constantly improve their level of information and training in modern teaching methods.

The process of adapting the university educational environment to the needs of new generations must be a continuous one based on the use of the stimulating factors of innovation. The actual innovation begins with the identification of innovation opportunities and the impact they can have on the interested parties.

3. Determinants of innovation in education

In order to identify the set of factors with a role in the triggering, manifestation and evolution of the creative attitude in the educational environment, especially in the university environment, but also to determine which factors can inhibit the innovation process, it is necessary to analyze the context in which the process takes place educational.

These factors cannot be analyzed and interpreted on their own, but they must be seen in full connection with the ability of teachers and educational institutions to adapt to the requirements of the field.

The analysis and interpretation of certain fields related to the educational process can lead to the identification of stimulating and inhibiting factors of innovation in education (figure no 2).

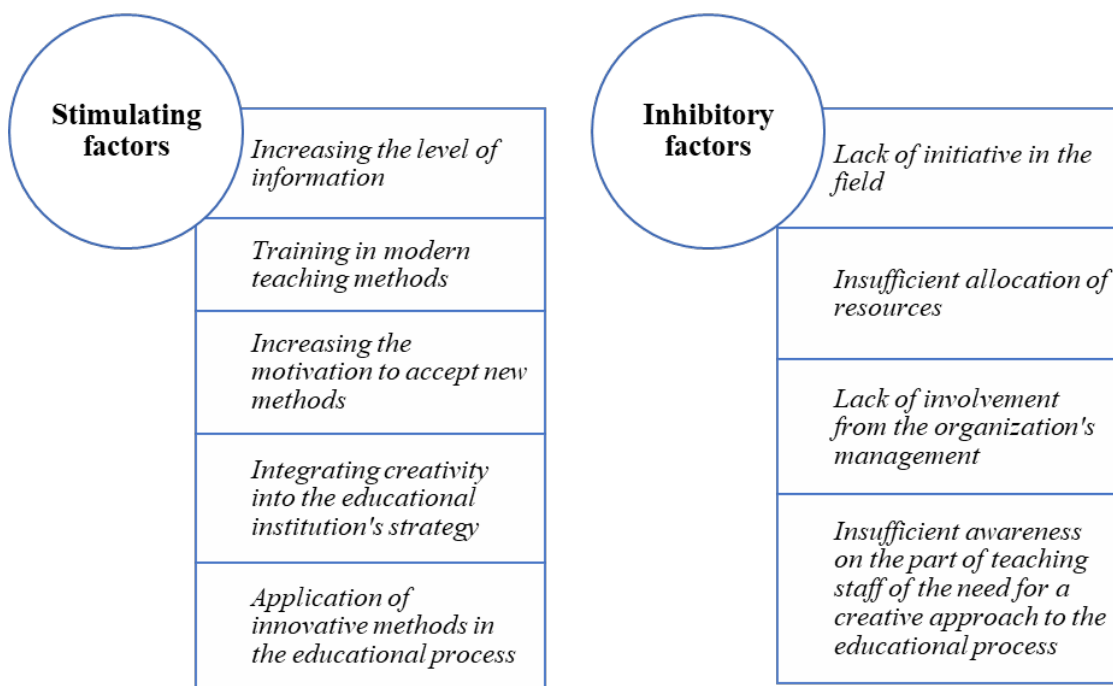


Figure no. 2. Stimulating and inhibiting factors of innovation in education

The areas where these factors can be identified refer to the teacher-student relationship, the work climate at the level of teaching staff and the existing organizational culture at the university level.

The integration of deeply innovative teaching methods can be achieved based on the proactive attitude of teachers and university management towards creativity. Regardless of the methods used, human capital is the one that must make the connection between methodology and practice. From here, from the attitude towards modern, creative methods, factors can appear that have the role of stimulating the creative attitude, but also factors that slow down or even inhibit this initiative.

3.1. Stimulating factors of innovation

At the level of the educational process, there are a multitude of factors that can generate the stimulation of creativity. Understanding, increasing the capacity to interpret and integrate them determines the innovative level of education.

Among the main factors that can determine the stimulation of creative activity in the educational process can be listed:

a. *Increasing the level of information and training in modern teaching methods*

The development of personal creativity and knowledge in the field is an effective way of assigning modern teaching methods. This fact can lead to the stimulation of the creativity of the entire collective of teachers.

Information about creative, innovative methods in education is both the qualities and capacities of each individual, but also the offer on the educational market.

To inform and then train yourself in the field of creativity and novelties in the field must be a permanent education requirement.

b. *Increasing the motivation to accept new methods*

Making discussions, conferences, manifestations that promote the importance of integrating into their own activity of creative teaching methods, represent factors that can cause these news to assimilate.

The acceptance of each teacher of ideas according to which by assimilating news in the field is growing and improving the image of the university internally and externally, it can also be an effective way to develop creativity.

c. *Integration of the concept of creativity stimulation in the strategy of the educational institution*

The adoption of the methods of stimulating creativity in the educational process is a complex phenomenon that must be in a multitude of approaches. In itself, innovation in education must be viewed not as an objective to be achieved but as a condition of modern educational process, permanently adapted to the global requirements of society. In order to integrate the concept of creativity stimulation in the strategy of educational institutions, it is necessary to develop integrative strategies, with a role in promoting innovative methods in teaching, managing and transmitting information.

At the institutional level, the implementation of creativity in education must manifest and rely on the ability of organizations, universities in allocating the resources necessary to address the educative process through the prism of modern methods.

The implementation of strategies for developing creativity in the general strategy of universities has the role of creating a creative environment throughout the institution.

d. *The ability to identify and apply innovative methods in the educational process*

In general, progress in teaching methods is based both on the ability of teachers to be receptive to the news in the field and to the institutional ability to ensure the necessary tools.

Most of the creative methods are based on technical news. These must be supported by new programs, courses, teaching techniques as well as new methods of approaching the interpersonal relationships.

The use of interactive teaching methods, the use of interactive boards, the implementation of digital educational methods, are only some of the methods that, by their implementation, can become stimulating factors of innovation in education.

3.2. Inhibitors of innovation

At the opposite end of the factors that generate creativity, those determining factors of stagnation, inhibition of development and creativity can be identified.

Among them can be listed:

a. *Lack of initiative in the field*

The way in which the teachers as well as the management of the universities approach the innovative activity is closely related to the way they have an initiative in the field. An innovative approach to teaching methods cannot take place without a change in the way of thinking and attitude towards innovation. The reluctant reactions to the new have directly related to the personality traits of the teachers but also to the way in which the university management addresses the innovative process.

b. *Insufficient allocation of resources*

The development of a modern educational process, based on modern teaching techniques and methods, must be supported by a constant and well managed allocation of resources. When this work does not manifest itself, regresses, decreases of the progress made initially and a reluctant approach from the teachers can occur. Insufficient allocation of the necessary resources can lead to a defensive attitude from all involved parties, both teachers and students.

c. *The lack of an organizational culture that favors the occurrence of innovation in education*

The management of the educational institution plays an important role in the development of an organizational culture that promotes innovation. Often the lack of involvement from the management of the organization leads to a stagnation of development, a defensive approach from the teachers and implicitly of the students. The formation of an organizational culture favorable to the development of teaching methods based on innovation is based on the professional motivation of teachers. When the degree of professional satisfaction is low and the level of interest to the new, innovative approach in teaching activity can be decreased.

4. Conclusions

At the level of the education system, innovation can be viewed from two perspectives. A first aspect refers to the identification of solutions, opportunities, strategies, by which the objective of the educational process is achieved. A second perspective refers to the approach of innovative teaching methods meant to develop students in a modern way as efficient.

Innovation refers to both the educational process itself, to the development of new teaching methods based on new digital technologies, as well as to how interested parties, teachers, students, relate to news in the field.

In order to be able to have access to the news in the field and to integrate them into their own activity, it is necessary to create and develop the necessary conditions for maximizing the contribution of stimulating factors.

By identifying the opportunities offered by the integration of innovative methods in education and in the university managerial practice, the road to an integrated approach is opened, meant to stimulate all the factors involved.

The implementation of creative methods, in the educational process, is not every time a simple activity. Therefore, between all the interested parties there must be a relationship of collaboration, exchange of ideas and knowledge, in order to obtain the expected results.

The development of partnerships, the realization of exchanges of experience between various universities within conferences, symposiums, are methods by which innovation can be known and developed in education.

The appreciation of the individual results of the teachers, but also of the study groups of which they can be part, represent managerial methods by which the implementation of innovations in the educational field can be achieved with maximum results.

The allocation of resources necessary and sufficient for the application of modern teaching methods is an important factor, a stimulator of promoting innovation in the educational system. It should be mentioned that all this cannot be done without a continuous training of teachers in the field of innovative modern methods of teaching and approaching the educational process.

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