

BUREAUCRATIC DYSFUNCTIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY

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The bureaucratic organizations also have, besides the indisputable advantages in their functioning, a series of major disadvantages, known under the syntagm bureaucratic organizational dysfunctions. The attempt to reform the managerial system at the level of the academic education must necessarily go through a descriptive, diagnostic stage to highlight and eliminate the existing deficiencies. This paper is an attempt to point out and raise the awareness of those interested ones that in a world based on change, innovation, technology and mind power we must define and supply differently education and formation. Using a malfunction model of the bureaucratic organizations as a theoretical paradigm of institutional analysis, we tried to identify some of the limits of the current educational management opening the path for some corrective steps².

To diagnose the managerial structure, we elaborated a special questionnaire called in other models too Academic Organizational Dysfunctions. This questionnaire was applied to some managers of state universities and subsequently analysed. The results obtained offer a credible answer to the question - which of the deficiencies of the bureaucratic organizations are present dominantly and negatively in the Romanian academic system.

Key words: *bureaucracy, malfunctions, educational management*

The hypothesis of this study starts from the consideration of universities as classical bureaucratic organizations. Consequently, they are susceptible to generate dysfunctions specific to the non-functional bureaucracy among which avoiding responsibility and passing it under the „umbrella of the institutionalized suspicion” by postponing, „the ostrich policy”, the policy of the arriviste, destruction of authority, political concentration or subordination, redundancy of laws, orders, licences, notes and boards that hold a special place in the Romanian educational system. The appearance in a significant proportion of the dysfunctions mentioned previously confirms our initial presupposition that form the organizational viewpoint, universities are still functioning in a dominating bureaucratic manner and partially anachronous and political.

² Everad, K., Morris, G., „Management in schools”, Blackwell, 1972

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The subjects of the study were represented by 26 members of the teaching staff having managing positions in state universities from Romania. The questionnaire was applied in some training courses on public management organized by the Department of Management and Information Technology, the Faculty of Medical Bioengineering, The University „Gr.T.Popa” Iași, and the respondents were strongly motivated to answer as correctly as possible.

The questionnaire Academic Organizational Dysfunctions was elaborated for this study, in two stages and is made from samples of the situational type. Each item describes a concrete situation, plausible in the activity of an academic manager. For each of these situations we propose a series of behavioral decisions, the subject being asked to choose the one they consider the best. Among the proposals, only one is correct, the others are the expression of the bureaucratic dysfunctions mentioned previously.

In the first stage, we proposed a number of concrete situations asking for the adoption of a managerial decision. Subsequently, for these situations they identified some correct solutions as well as several possible behaviors corresponding to dysfunctions. Initially the number of situations was 14 and the total number of variants was 122.

In the second stage, a group of 6 experts (management specialists) were asked to evaluate these items establishing which is the correct solution and to what organizational malfunction corresponds each of the answer variants. They kept only the situations where the correct answer variant was identified unanimously. Among the malfunctioning variants they kept only those that met at least 4 identical identifications. The final form of the questionnaire comprises ten situations having all in all 46 answer variants. From these 10 are correct and the others fall into the following categories:

1. Avoiding responsibility	7
2. Institutionalized suspicion	5
3. Ostrich policy	4
4. Arriviste policy	2
5. Destruction of authority	8
6. Concentration of authority	9
7. Political subordination	1

Some types of dysfunctions were hard to operate under the form of behavioral variants (arriviste policy, political subordination) because, due to their negative connotation, their evaluation by a self-applied questionnaire is almost impossible.

We give now 1 from the items of the questionnaire Academic Organizational Dysfunctions:

1. There is the issue of the number of optional and facultative subjects that should be introduced in the curriculum of the next academic year.

- You consult the ministry and the members of other universities and evaluate the theoretical-applicative need of these subjects;
- On account of the previous experience you may estimate correctly the number and type of optional and facultative subjects;
- On account of the number of students that might benefit from these diplomas and the number of candidates from the last year you propose the introduction of an optimal number of subjects;
- Since 5 competent professors are available next year, you consider that it would be the students' advantage to benefit from these;

- You propose that this issue should be discussed in the Professor's Board and the university Senate and the decision will be made by voting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A first analysis of the results was made at a primary level of frequencies. You may notice from the beginning a very low frequency of the non-functional answers (32%), whereas the answers expressing dysfunctions of the bureaucratic type registered a high total frequency (68%).

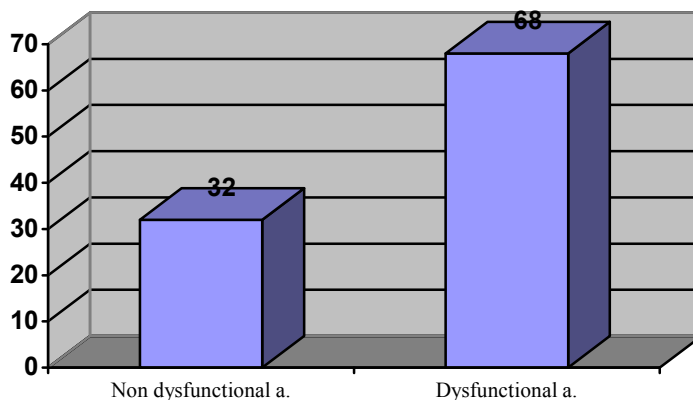


Figure 1 Bureaucratic dysfunctions in the academic education

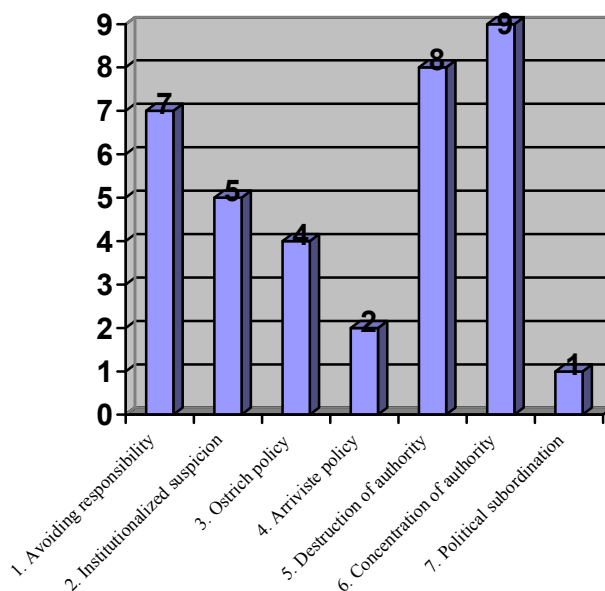


Figure 2 Frequency of the dysfunctional behavior

We may notice that the are the most important dysfunctions are related to authority and responsibility.

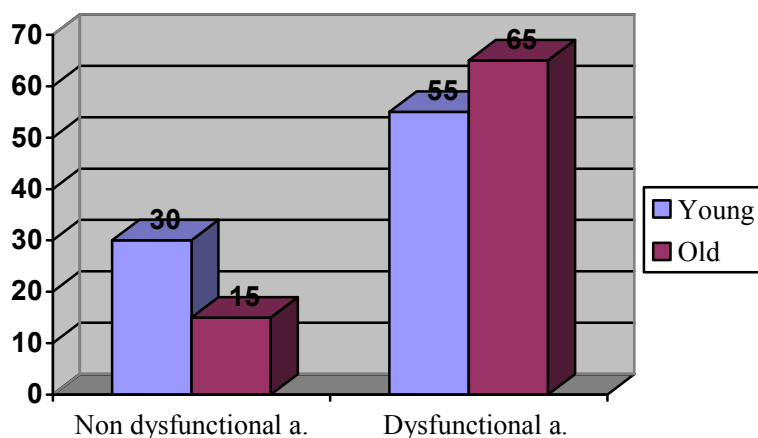


Figure 3 **Dysfunctions by age categories**

Interesting results were obtained by comparing the subjects according to age. We made two groups of respondents, one made up of subjects aged over 45 (15 subjects) and one with respondents ages under 45 (11 subjects). Generally, the younger subjects gave less dysfunctional answers.

Comparing the frequencies obtained for the different types of dysfunctions we may say that young ones significantly gave more dysfunctional answers in terms of avoiding responsibility and destruction of authority whereas the older ones gave more dysfunctional answers in terms of concentration of authority.

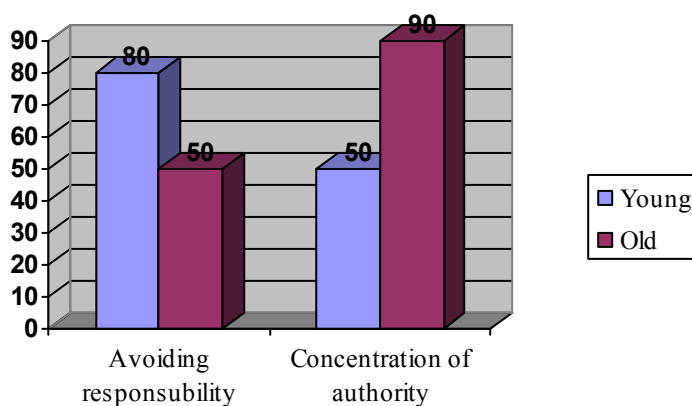


Figure 4 **Frequency of the most important dysfunctions**

We could not notice significant differences according to sex. However, we must say that the number of female subjects was quite low [7].

The main hypothesis of the study was confirmed. We obtained a large number of dysfunctional answers of the bureaucratic type, a fact that confirms the bureaucratic nature of the academic education institutions.

Among the different types of dysfunctions, the ones related to responsibility and authority predominate. These results have a special importance because they may fundament the elaboration of some programmes of managerial refresher courses for the managers of the educational institutions. Such a programme should first focus on the clarification of the decisional competences, the limits of authority and responsibility.

The comparisons in terms of age revealed a series of differences, easily to explain by means of the subjects' different experience. We did not have sex differences, a thing that contradicts the frequent affirmation that the managerial position is more adequate for the masculine sex than to the feminine one. The dysfunctions highlighted were similar for both sexes.

CONCLUSIONS

The management from the Romanian academic education goes through a deep crisis, though formally, it tries to harmonize with the modern scientific principles. The study presented is a discrete warning on the phenomenon created by the failure of the educational policies as well as by the average of the individual behaviors of those within the system. The analysis of the major dysfunctions from the Romanian bureaucratic academic system demonstrates, beyond graphs and numbers, some deficiencies of the Romanian educational process and we consider that assuming and understanding them is an important step towards the process of coming back to the real academic requirements. Avoiding responsibility or passing it under the „umbrella of the institutionalized suspicion” are consequences of a formal, political and quantitative reform that permanently masked the sub-financing of the education and research in Romania. The management of the state universities tried to survive under the pressure of the thriving private education, by eliminating entrance examinations, introducing the paid education, attracting students in number and not in value. The research made joins those who persisted in believing and fighting for the Romanian authentic school circumscribed to real values. We propose the unmasking of the systematic falsification of the manner of distribution of the quality education by attracting the ones who takes responsibilities and convince for a relative bureaucratic functional but flexible system, proper for the young that chooses freely and takes responsibilities associated to their choices. There are young courageous people with personality, that want to train for a global amazing market where win only those who have and disseminated the quality information. Amending the major dysfunctions demonstrates the understanding of the fact that science may no longer be confined within universities led bureaucratically. The today cultural model is atypical and in

its center there is the cultivated individual learning continuously even outside the traditional course room. The analysis of the bureaucratic major dysfunctions to diminish them is a condition of the education reform that becomes personal, within some modern entrepreneurial institutions that contaminate by ideas.

Our approach wants to attract those that suffered due to the bureaucratic dysfunctions, to invite them to organize in forms that might militate for academic quality and integrity. We must mobilize and draw the attention on evaluations, the administrative and financial correctness, the real democracy and transparency. There are real chances of using universal instruments to reduce the arbitrary, corruption, the lack of responsibility or suspicion. The only problem remains to do something and not only to complain that things go wrong and the system is to blame.

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