Personal and organizational development in education in the context of the economical and technological changes

Romita Iucu *, Magdalena Platisb

aUniversity of Bucharest, Bd Mihail Kogalniceanu 36-46, Bucharest, Romania

Received October 15, 2009; revised December 24, 2009; accepted January 8, 2010

Abstract

This paper aims to reveal the new principles of the contemporary management on both individual and organizational level in the context of the new environment and stimuli. The objectives include the analysis of the individual and organizational behaviors and of their development capacity through decision-making process. How people should manage their life from the perspective of costs, needs, and time is very important. Therefore, in the context of the new economy, the decisions should be made according to the elasticity of development. The starting point is the development in education, the area with the capacity of modeling the people and preparing them for life competition. © 2010 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Personal development; organizational behavior; sustainability; competitive positions; decision-making process.

1. Introduction

In the New Economy, economic activity continues to be developed on the basis of the traditional inputs – labor, capital and nature, but the new production factors like entrepreneurial ability, technical progress, and innovation and technology become more and more important and visible in the outcomes.

The contemporary society consists of a huge dynamism that changes too rapidly all the processes that must be managed; it is a new global, national and local context in which individuals and organizations face new threats from the environment, parallel with new opportunities for their own development. Not all individuals and all organizations understand the sense and the speed of the changes and make them be successful, less successful or not successful at all in achieving their goals. Therefore, the decision-making process must be re-considered according to the new internal and external stimuli.

The new decision-making process in education has to be organized taking into consideration the following aspects:

* Romita Iucu. Tel.: +40 744 491 457; fax: +40 21 310 4920.
E-mail address: iucu@unibuc.eu

1877-0428 © 2010 Published by Elsevier Ltd. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.994
a) understanding the new context; b) recognizing the features of the new development for individuals and universities; c) constructing the scheme for the decision-making process.

2. The New Context

The new context in which people and organizations act is a very complex, dynamic and uncertain set of factors that create the environment a very unpredictable system from the economical and technological perspectives that takes into account the changes in the legislative, cultural, social and ecological domains.

Therefore, some of the most visible characteristics of the current environment consider the following:

- the inefficiency of the market mechanisms that leads to global financial crisis;
- the inequity of many public interventions and social policies that generate the increasing differences among the individuals in the process of income distributions;
- the need of cooperation on both bilateral level and multiple level such as networks for organizations and individuals, as well;
- the huge difference between living styles in developed countries and in developing or in transition to market economy countries;
- the growing less-socialized society in the sense of subordinated all activities to new technologies of information and communication;
- the changing relation between preparing or planning a process and its implementation in the sense of shorten the former and earlier beginning of the latter, with many consequences;
- the certification fever for many organizations in all areas of activity, especially according to quality standards;
- the individual rush in getting not one, but several diplomas;
- the global heating which is considered an effect to the human activity and generates profound natural disasters;
- the huge difference between administrative capacity of different public administrations and governs that generates different perceptions of state involvement in the economies.

The description of the contemporary context can further go on. The context of the university is based on internal and external stimuli. The internal context consists of all the conditions and behaviors of the higher education institution: human resources, materials, technological inputs etc. The external context of the university consists of many stimuli from the environment that influence directly or indirectly the higher institution.

Therefore, the contemporary environment, so complex and dynamic involve also the universities as units which look for capitalizing the intellectual capital in order to gain a competitive advantage and create value. Numerous indicators take into consideration the member of students, the number of professors, and the situation of sponsorship from the economic area and from the alumni side, the relations between public and private funds etc. All these prove the necessity for the academic management of being more strategic and more efficient.

3. The New Development

People and organizations face new challenges in the current context, so that the traditional perception of success and prosperity as the main goal has to change toward the New Development (see figure no 1).

In relation to the new development, a new concept of “elasticity of development” can be defined as the variation sensitiveness of development (D) to the variation of an influence factor (F):

\[
D_0, D_1 \text{ are the level of development achieved in the periods } t_0 \text{ and } t_1 \text{ and } F_0, F_1 \text{ are the level of the influence factors in the period’s } t_0 \text{ and } t_1.
\]
The level of the development can be quantified in several ways. Thus, for organization such indicators are: the level or the value of production, the revenue, the profit, the number of branches, the number of clients etc. A developed organization looks for a sustainable position on the market, which means a long term approach on its needs and possibilities in connection to cost, customer and competition. At an individual level, the development is different measured in the new context, since the simple possession of material objects and goods does no longer fully satisfy the individuals. This, because the huge difference between “having” and “being” make people to reconsider their way of acting, their system of values and attitudes. Therefore, some efforts of measuring the human development have taken into consideration national aspects like life hope, living standard, education level; an example is the Human Development Index (IDU), calculated every year by the Development Program of the United Nations and published in the Rapport of Human Development.

More than that, the human development, although is considered a process of changes that includes physical, psychical and social variables during the evolution of a person, it cannot measure the ability of active and creative adaptation to the environment.

The New Development for individuals is not an economic development anymore expressed by the state of wealth, but a “total development” which considers an internal indicator. In other words, material goods, and such properties are still needed in the context of their continuing evolution through the progress of the science and technology. A real individual development expands the level of using, having and possessing economic goods toward a special dimension of development which is a personal-internal dimension. Therefore, we can explain why less wealthy people may be happier or more satisfied than wealthier ones who concentrate only on “having” without understanding themselves.

The factors of development can be considered in the relation of the elasticity either for the organizational or individual development such as in the figure no 2.

Figure 1: The change of the traditional objectives
All these factors can be integrated into an entrepreneurial behavior both for organizations and individuals. A correspondence between the elasticity of development and organizational and individual behaviors can be identified (see table no 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elasticity of Development</th>
<th>Organizational Behavior</th>
<th>Individual Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elastic Development</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inelastic Development</td>
<td>Follower</td>
<td>Lazy Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitary Development</td>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>Constant Individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect Elastic Development</td>
<td>Hyper active</td>
<td>Super dynamic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfect Inelastic</td>
<td>Total rigid</td>
<td>Total Inflexible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the new context of the economical and technological changes, individuals and organizations live and act under specific conditions of the environment. Individuals, who accept the change as it is, act normally before an event happens; but those who refuse to adapt to the rapidly changing environment tend to lose opportunities. At the same time, organizations run by flexible and adaptive managers are innovative and constantly growing on the market; on the contrary, the organizations managed by rigid people tend to only survive for the best situations. Therefore, the relation between technical progress and personal and organizational development is becoming more and more important for the subjects themselves and for the society.

4. The New Decision-Making Process

In the real life the decision-making process follows certain steps like: identifying the problem, defining the objectives, collecting the information, selecting and analyzing the necessary information, identifying the alternatives of actions choosing the best alternative, implementing the decision.

In the context of the new development, the decision-making process should integrate in the classical system of decision, answers to questions like:

How much flexibility is an organization ready to accept in order to conclude to some specific contracts or cooperation’s and is able to become sustainable? How much an individual is willing to give up in order to be able to remain happy? Which is the equilibrium point for an organization between capital and labor orientation? Which is the equilibrium point for an individual between the working time and the leisure time?
5. Conclusions

We live in a continuously changing environment. Economic constraints and technological changes affect more and more the decision-making process. Either it is an individual or an organisation, the management of their evolution in the new economy reveals the complexity and the increasingly difficulties which must be faced.

In the new context, a new set of management principles reveals as important as the classical principles of efficiency, discipline, labor division, authority and responsibility and so on. The management new principles for a “sustainable” organization consider:

- Principle of implementing best strategies, which includes abilities that take into consideration the client orientation, the business vision, the resource administration.
- Principle of developing the employees’ capacity which means abilities of communication, team working, coaching, negotiation, organizing and relating.
- Principle of personal efficiency which involves self knowledge, initiative, motivation, learning, self control, time management, optimism, creativity, integrity, conflict and emotional management.

The management new principles for a “happy” individual consider:

- The principle of equilibrium that takes into consideration the ability of well-balancing the working time with the labor time, so that he or she eliminates the dependency of working over some limits.
- The principle of fully devotion to one activity which means that the efficiency of involving in a certain activity should count more than the duration of doing that; in other words, better “less + devotion” than “more + absence”.
- The principle of flexibility in order to understand the differences among people and their behaviors, motivation system, way of doing, skills and competences.

The development must be considered a variable that people have to face. A constant development means development at the personal and organizational level, which in the New Economy will generate no capacity of adapting to the so much changing environment.

The changing ability of individuals and organization is dependent of the type of elasticity of development:

- elastic development high changing ability; • inelastic development low changing ability; • unitary development constant changing ability.

The sustainable personal development can be achieved only by individuals with a high ability for changes.

They accept the challenge for development as something which cannot be avoided. The higher the progress is, the better the people can succeed in taking advantage from the opportunities. In other words people looking for sustainable development must behave as leaders and they will continuously progress; they are individuals:

- motivated, who can motivate others; • preoccupied by the learning process which becomes a way of life and not a temporary stage; • enthusiastic, ready to consider any end as a new start.

The sustainable organizational development can be achieved only by organizations with a high ability for changes which is shown by the managers; such an organization:

- is able to manage the resources effectively and efficiently; • runs the activities toward people management which means that it realizes the full potential of its people; • turn the policies and strategies into plans and action.

To conclude, the new context creates opportunities for organizations to develop toward sustainability and for individuals toward happiness. Seeing and taking advantage of the environmental opportunities is a matter of “elasticity of development”. The higher the elasticity of development is, the better the opportunities are taken into action.

References
Adair, John (2007), Develop your leadership skills, Kogan Page, London.


Purcell, J, Kinnie, K, Hutchinson, S, Rayton, B and Swart, J (2003), Understanding the People and Performance Link: Unlocking the black box, CIPD, London.
