

# **Contributions of the School in Providing Quality Educational Services, Products, and Goods**

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# Contributions of the School in Providing Quality Educational Services, Products, and Goods

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## Abstract

### Keywords:

educational services, educational products, educational goods, the theory of educational goods

This paper focuses on highlighting the results of some theoretical investigations regarding the contributions of the school from the perspective of providing quality educational services, products and goods. In the first part of the study, we bring to attention a series of terminological clarifications regarding the main concepts used, namely educational marketing, services, products, and educational goods. We allow ample space for the analysis of contemporary views of what exactly is meant by educational services and what is expected of the services provided by the school. We approach critically and analytically both the actual educational services, represented by the teaching-evaluation activities, as well as auxiliary services and the concept of human educational capital. Being a subject strongly connected with the current educational reality and practice, we consider it necessary to clearly delineate the concrete possibilities of ensuring quality educational services and products, both for students, parents, and the community. Therefore, this paper presents multiple types of activities and directions of approach to ensure the educational goods that students need in order to meet the current and prospective demands of society are provided. Finally, we bring to attention the theory of educational goods, on the basis of which the study can be further expanded, as well as some directions for the optimization of the efficiency of educational services offered by the school.

## 1. Introduction

Marketing is a scientific approach that requires not only knowledge of consumer requirements but also anticipating said requirements and continuously adapting to the needs of the beneficiaries. This approach requires a set of scientific methods and techniques that can quantitatively and qualitatively analyse the phenomenon as well as predict market trends. Therefore, marketing becomes a management function.

Educational marketing represents the design, implementation and evaluation of a strategic educational plan that considers the exchange relationship between the school and its beneficiaries and the achievement of the educational objectives of the school institution. It is desirable that the school is prepared to adapt its educational programme to the changing needs of the direct beneficiaries (students), while respecting two functions: a primary function consisting of the delivery of educational services to the students and products to society and a secondary function providing the population of the area with attitudinal, behavioural models, moral norms, etc. As such, the school maintains itself as an open system, an approach that is in line with contemporary educational paradigms.

## 2. Current perspectives on educational services

Educational services represent "forms of educational activities designed and provided by institutions, structures, groups, and specialized persons through which educational/psychopedagogical interventions are carried out, psychopedagogical assistance activities are organized, educational support and counselling are offered, opportunities for affirmation, (self) education, and personal and professional (self) fulfillment are provided" (Bocoș et. al., 2019, p. 354). Educational services have a high degree of addressability, being oriented towards satisfying the needs and interests of a wide audience, starting from preschoolers and students of different ages, up to parents, teachers, and other members of the community. Considering the subject of the present work, the focus will be on the educational services provided by the school.

Any educational product present on the market of formal educational services includes the following components:

- *The actual educational services, respectively the didactic activities of teaching - evaluation, embodied in courses, seminars, laboratories, lessons,*



projects, theses, tests, exams (which verify and value the student's yield and performance). At the level of this component, the providers of the educational services are the teaching staff who contribute to shaping the behaviour and personality of the direct consumer of the educational programmes (the schoolchild, perceived as a subject to be educated).

- *Auxiliary educational services* are comprised of general administrative activities concerning the normal development of the educational process and the management of the material resources necessary for the teaching activity itself (economic-financial activities, managerial activities, secretarial activities, administrative activities, extracurricular activities that support and/or complete the didactic activity).

- *The human educational capital* consists of all the knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies acquired by the direct consumer of educational services. This develops over time and can have long-term effects, being subject to depreciation; therefore, the decision to invest in human capital is not simple, often being a collective decision. The whole family participates in the adoption of such a decision, balancing the perspectives offered by different alternatives, the efforts and effects involved, the costs and benefits (expenses and results).

The educational services that can be offered in a school institution are: courses, seminars, conferences, communication sessions, debates, performances, cultural activities in libraries, extracurricular activities.

The system of forms of organization of instructive-educational activities is a vast one and allows the existence of a multitude of possibilities for organizing and carrying out activities, respectively delivering the educational services offered by the school. The various forms of organization can be combined in a flexible way, which supports the successful implementation of instructional-educational activities and the fulfilment of the objectives that are of interest to the direct beneficiaries (students).

Considering the criterion of the weight of the activity (Bocoș & Jucan, 2019), we can distinguish three main categories of activities that the school can offer as educational services, based on the specialists available in the school and on the collaboration with the community. Thus, the school institution can facilitate the implementation of:

- *Frontal activities* (frontal instructive-educational actions are predominant), in the form of

lessons, activities in laboratories/workshops/school offices, activities in sports spaces (sports halls/fields), visits and excursions for didactic purposes, viewings and analyses of artistic performances.

- *Group activities* (group instructional-educational actions are predominant), in the form of school circles organized and carried out in a monodisciplinary or interdisciplinary manner (by reference to the education framework plan for each individual education cycle), consultations with a remedial, recovery, stimulation or development purpose, study visits carried out in small groups, school competitions, debate sessions/scientific communications/reports, editing school magazines, meetings with people of culture/scientists/writers/specialists in various fields, etc.

- *Individual activities* (individual instructive-educational actions are predominant), in the form of study in the library, additional/supplementary readings, independent research, carrying out practical-applicative and experimental works, solving exercises/problems/scenarios, elaboration of projects, defending scientific communications, etc.

We have analysed the essence and specific elements of educational services, capitalizing on some theoretical foundations from the specialized literature related to the curriculum. Starting from the general idea that this "refers to the educational offer of the school and represents the system of direct and indirect learning experiences offered to the educated and experienced by them in formal, non-formal, and informal contexts" (Bocoș & Jucan, 2019, p. 33), we emphasize that the curricular offer is subject to periodic transformations, restructuring, and reorganization. The educational services and the school curriculum should follow at least one of the recent trends/innovations in curriculum development, namely flexibility. A modern, student-centred, adaptive, and flexible curriculum is one that is accessible to students, one which offers them "the possibility of choosing a field of interest, and allows teachers to make the didactic approach more flexible in order to be better adapted to the different classes of students" (Albulescu, 2024, p. 69), and thus permitting a reconsideration of the manner in which they teach school subjects, consequently leading to an increase in the quality of services and educational products delivered.

Formal education transcends the limits of national requirements and values and tends towards

universality, accessing and respecting a valuable heritage common to humanity. As such, the school must further develop its curricular offer and the range of services and educational products it delivers, as it is increasingly evident that a unitary curriculum, even if it is flexible, can no longer respond to diversity alone (Jucan & Ungurășan, 2022).

In addition to the subjects included in the Educational Framework Plans and in the School-Decided Curriculum, extracurricular activities can be designed and carried out, namely educational events of the non-formal type. These primarily consist of academic, artistic, sports activities that are planned, carried out, and evaluated at the school and class level, outside the hours included in the normal school timetable. Extracurricular activities are forms of organizing educational activity with an interdisciplinary character, led by qualified people, that facilitate the delivery of useful educational services and products to complement the instruction and development provided by formal education.

A separate category of extracurricular activities, with obvious formative values from the perspective of collaborative learning, is that of group extracurricular activities. Extracurricular group activities, as an integral part of the educational services provided by the school, can be carried out either in the educational institutions, but outside the classroom, by the specialized human resource in the school or by other institutions with educational functions (e.g. science clubs, cultural/artistic-plastic/musical circles, choral/instrumental/theatre groups, charitable/greening actions, thematic meetings with outstanding personalities in various fields/specialists), or outside the educational institutions but with the involvement of them or other institutions with educational functions (e.g. study visits, educational trips, thematic activities included in inter-institutional projects, etc.).

The educational services offered by school institutions must facilitate the preparation of students for their integration and adaptation in society and respond to the current and future needs and requirements of the younger generations. Educational contexts and learning/training activities provided through school-based educational services can promote valuable actional and cultural models. Given that educational services and, implicitly, educational activities place an obvious emphasis on socialization among students, it is possible to approach them with some “techniques of interaction and social integration,

compatible with certain essential requirements and expectations from the perspective of living in the community and society in general” (Muste & Ungurășan, 2022, p. 307).

In the process of updating the curricular offer and educational services, it is essential to take into account the learning objectives that must be met, the contents that must be transmitted, the means available to the school to provide the educational services, as well as the needs and particularities of the main beneficiaries (students). It is continuously desirable to be aware that educational services are “activities provided for the benefit of education consumers, with or without their direct participation, with the aim of fulfilling certain needs and producing the intellectual satisfaction of the consumers” (Cebanu, 2020, p. 315).

### 3. Categories of educational products and goods provided by the school

*Educational products* can be understood at the theoretical level and at the level of educational practice from the *perspective of the educational offer of the institution or the educator* on one hand and from the *perspective of the result of the educational process* on the other hand (Bocoș et al., 2019). The perspective of the educational offer brings to attention a category of educational products proposed and designed by an educational institution or a specialist in the educational field that can significantly influence the quality of the educational act and the educational services provided by the respective institution or the qualified person (China, 2015, apud Bocoș et al., 2019). The perspective of the result of the educational process (as a whole) refers to a category of educational products that is represented by the graduates of an educational cycle/ an educational programme/ a form of education/ an educational institution

#### *Educational products and goods for students*

The educational products offered by the school are developed starting from the principles, vision, and mission of the school and are in close relationship with the educational products provided by the teachers, which are composed primarily of their knowledge and professional training, corresponding to their education/self-education/instruction (which allows them to ensure an appropriate/optimal level of understanding of the content they present). Other elements are added to these, such as the mastered communication techniques and the non-verbal messages expressed (voluntarily or involuntarily) by the teacher through their attitude, gestures, language,

etc., which complete the educational product provided by each individual teacher.

The term educational goods refers to the knowledge, different skills, attitudes, and perspectives that children develop for their own benefit but also for the benefit of others. These educational goods are varied and include, among many others, cognitive abilities, the ability to cooperate with others, and the recognition and appreciation of beauty. In this context, we consider cognitive skills and socio-emotional skills as educational goods because they generate value in the present period for those educated while also contributing to their future, and thus to their overall well-being. These educational goods also benefit others, whose lives are improved by the actions of the educated. The acquired attitudes and perspectives or outlooks that enable and incline the educated individuals to participate in a responsible manner in the democratic process will benefit the individuals themselves, although sometimes they may only benefit other members of their community. In both such cases, they are educational goods, regardless (Brighouse et al., 2016).

In the specialized literature, various perspectives have been put forward regarding the educational products and goods that the school, by its very nature and through its representatives, should provide to the students. A relatively recent view is the one supported by the *theory of educational goods* (Brighouse et al., 2016). This theory posits that there are six capacities that children should develop, and which are seen as educational goods required by the current generations, namely *economic productivity, independence, democratic competence, beneficial personal relationships, the ability to treat others as equals, and individual fulfilment*.

From what was presented previously, we deduce that educational goods also have an immaterial dimension, referring to qualities, attributes, virtues to the formation of which the school has a significant contribution. These are aspects which the school as an institution attempts to further develop in order to provide the students and, consequently, society as a whole everything that is useful and valuable for ensuring continued thriving and well-being.

#### *Educational products and goods for parents*

Educational goods consist of knowledge, skills, dispositions and attitudes that exist in people and that have the potential to contribute to their own development and to the enrichment of the lives of others. The term *goods* refers to personal attributes

that are positive and which can contribute to valuable outcomes for the individual who possesses them or for other people they may interact with, either now or at any point in the future.

Adults are capable of deliberately influencing the educational goods that children develop simply by how they raise them or how they educate them. The way parents talk to their children, the manner of disciplining them, the degree to which the children are involved in social activities are all just as relevant to the development of educational goods as the experiences children acquire in kindergarten, school, and other formal contexts outside of the family. The educational process begins long before the children ever enter their formal education years and will continue long after they have finished their schooling. Most people will continue to acquire knowledge and skills throughout their lives and, similarly, their beliefs and attitudes are able to change as well (Brighouse et al., 2016).

Naturally, school remains the central focus in the formation of the younger generations as it is designed specifically to produce educational goods at the level of students. Educational institutions specializing in different age levels have the capacity to work with the families of the students and provide parents with informative resources, including parenting advice, helpful perspectives on the stages of child/adolescent/youth development, and recommendations on relevant literature on this topic (Harini et al., 2023). To ensure that the beneficiaries have access to these products, the educational institution or the teacher/specialist can opt for various delivery methods, starting from sessions/meetings with physical presence and direct participation to blogs/web pages/social platforms, which can constitute viable channels for the dissemination of educational content. Providing educational content in this manner can enhance the school's reputation as an educational institution that places great emphasis on both the academic development and the personal fulfillment of its students.

## 4. Conclusions

Educational practice has generated *directions aimed at optimizing the efficiency* of the educational services provided by the school.

*a. Developing a high-performing, fair, and efficient educational approach*

Specific objectives:

a.1. Optimizing educational efficiency indicators – promotion rate, school progress and discipline;

a.2. Ensuring a dynamic educational offer in accordance with the needs, interests, and expectations of the beneficiaries;

a.3. Promoting remedial education, facilitating access to education and school inclusion of students from socio-cultural environments with educational risk;

a.4. Capitalizing on the abilities of the students for school performance. Increasing the degree of competitiveness at the level of Olympiads and school competitions.

*b. Integrating digital education into current teaching practice*

Specific objectives:

b.1. Supporting teachers in the development of digital skills and their application in various educational contexts;

b.2. The integration of OER (open educational resources) in the teaching-learning-evaluation activity;

b.3. Promoting the internal and external educational partnership by capitalizing on digital technology and the virtual environment.

*c. Development of institutional management from the perspective of implementing a learning culture and creating an organization based on effective communication*

Specific objectives:

c.1. Reconsidering, at the level of the mentality of the teaching staff, the role of the educator as the main variable of change in the school environment and facilitator of knowledge/learning for students;

c.2. Focusing the interest of the teachers on providing attractive and motivating school experiences for students;

c.3. Increasing the visibility and educational impact of the school in the community.

We advocate for the fulfillment of these directions for optimizing efficiency through the complementary actions on the three main dimensions, guided by the specific objectives mentioned previously.

**Authors note:** The authors have equal contributions to this article.

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