PAST EDUCATIONAL CULTURES INFLUENCES ON PRESENT PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION

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Abstract. *The paper tracks old educational cultures influences on the perception of today's education utility, by identifying the main core concepts which are preserved, across geographies and across time, when it comes to defining the virtues of education. A sample of business administration students from Romania is questioned related to the usefulness of the subjects taught to them and the appropriateness of the teaching methods used in university. Regression analysis enables us to find the links between preferred types of contents, by subject groups, and, respectively, preferred characteristics of the teaching methods, and the perceived usefulness and appropriateness. The conclusion ilustrate a pattern of continuity, in a field of reforms and changes, especially considering the Romanian context.*

Keywords: educational cultures, higher education, learning.

1. Introduction

Educational cultures (Biesta, 2011; Belz, 2002) are defined as cultural contexts enabling a particular understanding of what *good learning* means. Learning achievements are valued differently in different societies and cultural groups (Claxton, 2002; Li, 2002; Walker and Dimmock, 2000), which influences the way in which education is structured and managed (Hallinger and Leithwood, 1996). As the focus moves from the cultural citizen, educated to serve the national state, to the cosmopolitan citizen (Skrbis et al., 2004), cross-cultural approaches to education are brought to front, in either educational administration (Dimmock and Walker, 1998), or as far as cultural differences in learning styles are concerned.

Our approach refers to the tacit influence of the educational cultures of the past on the educational preferences of the present. While speaking of European education (Grek et al., 2009; Witte, 2006; Corbett, 2005; Lawn, 2003; Magalhães and Stoer, 2003; Coulby, 1996) and mainly of its convergence (Dima, 2011; Dobbins and Knill, 2009; Ertl, 2006; Keeling, 2006), we can't ignore its multilayered structure. Our attempt, then, is to identify what is retained in today's students perception of education quality from the well defined educational systems of the past, European or non-European.

Past educational systems are generally seen as obsolete, or preoccupied only with the performance of the few, at the expense of the performance of the many (Garraway, 2005). However, as they perpetuated cultural values, their influence extends into present times. Modern Europeans may use not the famous phrase by Bernard of Chartres, that we see further because we stand of the shoulders of the giants, but the words of the colonist quoted in Winterer (2004): We have only changed our climate, not our minds, our nature and dispositions remain unaltered. Is it really so? This is the hypothesis to which the present research attempts to answer.

The structure of the paper includes a synthesis of the ancient educational cultures, including Greek and Roman educational systems, as the "cradle" of European thought, and Chinese, Jewish and Islamic systems as 'exotic' influences. Based on the specific characteristics of *good education* in each of these cultures, we developed a questionnaire which was applied to students in Business Administration, in Romania, in order to see which the perceived characteristics of good education are today, and to what extent are they linked to tacit remainders of past systems. The discussions and conclusions advance a possible model of standards' permanence, in education, at the European level, adding a new flavour to the convergence-divergence debate.

2. Educational principles in Ancient Greece and Rome

Although Greek education is to be discussed separately for each *polis*, as rules and standards may differ, its profile is captured by two characteristics: *rigor* (Sparta's *agōgē*, the extreme discipline turning school boys into warriors – see Kennel's (1995)

approach to the *gymnasium of virtue*), and *apprenticeship*. Greek education, especially in Athens, was fulfilled in the presence of a master. Apprenticeship, as Nussbaum (2002) points out, in analyzing Aristophanes' *Clouds*, has at least two stages, in the evolution of Greek education: *hard apprenticeship*, based on military virtues, on obedience and self-control, and *soft apprenticeship*, as preached by Socrates, based on influence and critical thinking. The modern idea of respecting other cultures and taking what is worthy from them, together with what is valuable from your home culture, known as geocentric behaviour, has its roots in the Socratic questioning of what is good or wrong. The narrative understanding tied, as well, with the Socratic method (Nussbaum, 2002), enables the apprentice to become a citizen of the world, qualified for 'reading' cultural scores which are not his own.

Thus, the standards of Greek education, in the Socratic period, form the premises of multicultural liberalism, as it was discussed by Feinberg (1995) and Loobuyck (2005). Saran and Neisser (2004) quote Kant's *Was ist Aufklärung?*, arguing that the core assertion of European Enlightenment was 'have courage to think with your own mind'. This idea, which will further become the principle of the teaching-learning dialogue, was inherited from the Socratic Method, as a way to bring theory and practice close, and reason about one's own life. Active learning, nowadays seen as a factor of sustainability in education (MacVaugh and Norton, 2012) is a principle acquired, in European education, from Socratic times, as well as the essence of apprenticeship, which is human interaction, in the form of a role play between a professor and a learner.

In ancient Rome, as well as in Greece, education was everyday life focused. Children could taste real life even before the age of seven, when they formally started to attend school. Their parents would take them to the Forum, or to the Curia meetings, in order to familiarize them with adults' responsibilities. Gender bias existed in education, as girls, after the age of 12, could marry, and they were educated to become good wives, while boys from rich families were able to continue their education. Students' selection was based on socio-economic status, as well as on merit, as the most promising of them could be supported by the school. Bloomer (2011) acknowledges 'the school of Rome' as much more than a colporteur of the fading Greek tradition: as a promoter of diversity education (among other things, Romans have introduced bilingual education), and of the idea that the learned individual merits respect. School was difficult, but its purpose was excellence. The structure of the Roman school, from easy lessons taught by a *magister ludi*, to complex rhetorical exercises, was thought to prepare the child for real life roles. It was based on a continuous attempt to improve, by applying various types of corrections, the skills and knowledge of the apprentice.

The main values we retain for analysis from these two briefly outlined European systems are: teacher-learner dialogue; multiculturalism; competitiveness. It is obvious how enduring they are, in the modern and post-modern history of European education, up to our days.

3. Educational principles in the Orient

Going beyond the lasting stereotype *ex Oriente lux, ex Occidente lex*, we take here the more integrative approach of the *ab Oriente ad Occidentem* (from the East to the West, as the sun moves), finding educational principles that migrated to today's West from the ancient Eastern schools. For parallelism reasons, we distinguish between two 'schools of the East': the Middle East and the Far East. The Middle East excurse includes old Jewish and Islamic education, while Far East is seen through the lenses of Chinese education.

Jewish education comprises two periods: before 64 A.D., when education was mainly the responsibility of the family, and after, when public education is set (Drazin, 1979; Gamoran, 1975). During the first period, the main characteristics of education were its connectedness with everyday life, as future adults, for boys, as well as for girls, its religious essence and its severity. Parents were preoccupied to teach the Law to their children, to educate virtuous and disciplined citizens. The preoccupation for religion existed, as well, in the few schools in place in this period, the schools of the prophets (founded by Samuel), which taught religious poetry and music, and the superior schools intended to prepare rabbis, which were also focused on the interpretation of the Old Testament (Fox and Scheffler, 2003).

After 64 A.D., each town was asked to support at least one school, whose organization was surprisingly modern: no more than 25 pupils per class. If the school had between 25 and 40 pupils, the master had an assistant, and when their number exceeded 40, the town should pay for two professors. Children were attending public school from the age of six. As compared with the previous system, this new one was still focused on religion, as reading and writing were taught on sacred books, but punishments were regarded as the extreme solution. Professors were asked to be tolerant, patient, to give explanations whenever needed and they obtained, in exchange, the respect of their students and of the entire community.

In the Islamic tradition there are, as well, two periods (Anzar, 2003): the one prior to the setting of the Islamic schools, and the period of the Islamic schools (*madrasa*). From the very beginning, scholarly activities were highly praised in the Islam, as a source of self-fulfilment, in the spiritual sense. Learned people were supposed to transmit their knowledge to others, as the Prophet himself used to do with his followers, in Mecca. In Medina, next to the praying room there was another room, *suffa*, dedicated to random or systematic, formal or informal educational activities. The Prophet did not know to read or write, but soon after Mecca was conquered, the alphabetized population there was asked to educate the Arabians, in order for them to be able to understand the Koran.

There were several levels of Islamic schools, tightly connected to the mosque: the *kuttab*, which was equivalent to the grammar school, with a master teaching his disciples, sitting on a carpet in a circle around him, basic notions of school and life. The essence of this school, who survived successive rules of the region, was religious. Boys and girls were in separate classes. The second school was the mosque itself,

where students were free auditors to classes delivered pro bono by professors. They would stay several years around (in the proper sense) a professor, and then leave to another town, to grasp some more of this orally transmitted knowledge. A third educational space was constituted by the homes of the scholars (‘*ulema)* and by the bookshops, serving also as libraries, because books were very expensive, at the time, and could be consulted on the spot. The University was created in Bagdad by Abbasid caliph Al-Mamun, in the 9th c. (Shepard, 2005). It was known as “the house of wisdom”, and it functioned, during the 9th and 11th c. as a place of intersection of different knowledge sources: Hellenistic, Indian, Persian and Arabian. The freedom of spirit was its guiding principle. By the end of the 10th c. public education emerges. It was a high school education, were students where fully supported. Some of these colleges had a university-like curriculum, as it was the case with college founded in Bagdad, in the 11th c., by Nizam al-Mulk (Makdisi, 1970).

If we regard the two systems of the Middle East, a very modern and European idea emerges from both, and to a larger extent from the second: the student-centred learning of today, with the student being enabled to learn, and not forced, and having the freedom to choose his or her own educational path (Talbani, 1996). Of course, the modular concept of modern education is still far away, but its roots are set by these freely set voyages from one source of knowledge to another. Also, despite its religious core, the school of the Middle East is, essentially, a ‘school of tolerance’, confluent, not competitive.

In as much as Far East is concerned, we took China, and its Confucian education system as a landmark. During the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties, all children aged eight went to school, regardless of their social background. The focus was on the knowledge needed for everyday life, and on moral principles, teaching them to be tolerant. At the age of 15, the best students would go to the university, to learn the principles of proper human behaviour, allowing them to act as mediators, as counselors, as fighters for the common good.

As the Chinese society moves from slavery to feudalism, the education goes private. The intellectuals called *shi* set the first private schools (Changxing, 2007). One of the most renowned school founders was Confucius (551-479 B.C.), who was followed in his wanderings by about 3000 disciples. He edited the first (and most used) textbook, introduced the heuristic method, based on questions and answers, and contributed to the appearance of the first didactic work, *Xueji*. He was the one to systematize a wide variety of schools and concepts, to publish and consecrate the six classical books (*jing*) as textbooks, and to open his school to everyone interested. The finality of education was to educate the worthy man (*ren*), able to sacrifice himself for the common good, and to act empathetically.

As it may be seen, echoes of a collectivistic culture are obvious in the Chinese education, centred on the service to others. The Latin principle of the *do ut des*, which somewhat resists in today’s European education – society invests in learning to later benefit from it, is applied, *avant la lettre*, in Chinese education. In summary, the ideas which we assume that modern European education retains from Oriental schools are:

the school of tolerance, or the student-centred learning; the freedom of will and the direct master-disciple relationship; the common good.

By putting together the two approaches, one competitive and multicultural, the other tolerant, but deeply enrooted in one's own culture, we are left with the very modern debate: *which knowledge, for which life?* The school of experience, and of informed choice, preached both by the Western, and by the Eastern old educational systems, may provide an answer to this question. Based on the traits we have identified, we formulate the following research hypotheses:

a) students evaluate positively the freedom to choose and the pedagogical alternatives;
b) students evaluate positively the teacher-learner dialogue;
c) students evaluate negatively tolerance and positively competitiveness.

These hypotheses will be, further, tested, based on the data we have collected.

4. Research methodology

The research was questionnaire-based, and targeted a convenience sample of 50 master students in Business Administration, who returned 46 valid questionnaires. The sample composition is 71% girls and 29% boys, 55% having taken their bachelor from the same faculty, and 45% coming from a different faculty, out of which 48% from a different profile.

They were asked to assess: a) the subjects taught, and b) the methods of teaching, in terms of their usefulness for their education/ future profession.

Both disciplines and methods were ranked using a 5-points Likert scale. We used PCA to reduce the number of the variables for taught subjects, from 16 items mentioned as having a positive impact on professional life, to four components. The resulting new variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Principal component analysis of the list of subjects taught
Component Matrix[a,]

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Important for profession: Entrepreneurship	.562	.062	.444	.115
Important for profession: Economics	.627	.183	.402	.090
Important for profession: Business Management	.548	.136	.113	-.115
Important for profession: Fundamentals of enterprise management	.521	-.283	.009	-.104
Important for profession: Marketing	.650	-.341	.119	.192
Important for profession: HR	.587	-.167	-.107	.218

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Important for profession: International business	.233	.609	.338	.302
Important for profession: Cross-cultural management	.121	.578	.072	.067
Important for profession: European business environment	-.034	.591	.212	-.087
Important for profession: Strategic management	.129	.502	.307	.004
Important for profession: Accounting	.305	.201	.708	.402
Important for profession: Finance	.167	-.107	.669	.391
Important for profession: Economic analysis	-.401	.315	.556	.207
Important for profession: Informatics	.042	.105	.312	.552
Important for profession: foreign languages	.059	.011	.098	.599
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				
a. 4 components extracted.				

It may be seen that the first component refers to variables related to running a business (*operational subjects*), the second component refers to variables related to expanding a business (*strategic-global subjects*), the third component refers to variables related to controlling a business (*control subjects*), while the third component groups variables related to general professional skills (*general*). The same method was applied for the teaching methods mentioned, and the resulting components are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Principal component analysis of the teaching methods

Component Matrix[a,]

	Component		
	1	2	3
Important for education: case studies	.114	.098	.812
Important for education: simulations	.502	-.141	.692
Important for education: projects	.355	-.077	.563
Important for education: field visits	.341	-.132	.705
Important for education: internships		.191	.721
Important for education: discussions	.249	.574	.121

	Component		
	1	2	3
Important for education: students' presentations	.102	.601	
Important for education: students' feedback	.527	.724	-.268
Important for education: assigning tasks	.627	-.348	.094
Important for education: contests	.562	.367	.004
Important for education: teamwork	.701	.258	-.123
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.			

a. 3 components extracted.

The first component of the matrix refers to items related to teaching methods stimulating competitiveness (*competitiveness*). The second component refers to items related to professor-student dialogue (*dialogue*), while the third component refers to items related to practical activities (*practice*). The four components extracted from the list of subjects evaluated, and the three components extracted from the list of teaching methods will serve as inputs to the further analysis. We used linear regression in order to assess the dependency of the variables *usefulness of subject taught (ust)* and *appropriateness of method (apm)* on the independent variables identified. The results of the analysis are presented in the next section.

5. Results and discussions

The list of dependent variables for *ust* includes:
- Practical relevance (*pract*);
- Global coverage (*glob*);
- Relevance for national context (*natc*);
- Novelty (*nov*);
- Accessibility (*access*).

The regression coefficients, for the first group of subjects (*operational subjects*) are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Regression coefficients for operational subjects

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.544	1.063		1.453	.154
	pract	.275	.151	.267	1.820	.000
	glob	.227	.138	.253	1.640	.009
	natc	.345	.203	.312	1.699	.005
	nov	.551	.217	.480	2.540	.015
	access	-.113	.138	-.118	-.820	.017
a. Dependent Variable: *ust*						

It may concluded that the *usefulness of subject taught*, for the first group, of the operational subjects, is seen as highly depending on the degree of novelty of the subject, and negatively influenced by the accessibility. In other words, students think that subjects related to starting and operating a business should bring new insights and not be taught at a basic level, repeating information already known. The acceptability of the model is shown by the ANOVA (Table 4).

Table 4

ANOVA coefficients for operational subjects

ANOVA[b]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	46.537	5	3.307	52.070	.005[a]
	Residual	46.457	40	1.597		
	Total	80.435	45			
a. Predictors: (Constant), access, nov, glob, pract, natc						
b. Dependent Variable: ust						

It may be seen that the sums of squares are approximately equal, for regression and for residual, meaning that half of the variance is explained by the model. The significance is lower than 0.05, meaning that the variation the model explains is not random.

The model summary is presented in Table 5**.**

Table 5

Model summary for operational subjects

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.753[a]	.567	.506	.764
a. Predictors: (Constant), access, nov, glob, pract, natc				

The value of the R indicates a strong correlation, while the value of the R square indicates that the model predicts about half of the variation, over time. If we compare the model summary with the descriptive statistics for *usefulness of subject taught*, presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Descriptive statistics for *ust*

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ust	46	1	5	3.11	1.320
Valid N (listwise)	46				

we see that the prediction error using the regression model is significantly lower, of only .764, as compared with 1.32. This proves the model's acceptability.

The regression coefficients, for the second group of subjects (*strategic-global subjects*) are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Regression coefficients for strategic-global subjects

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.096	.485		.199	.044
	pract	.299	.156	.251	1.914	.003
	glob	.329	.145	.324	.889	.000
	natc	-.077	.092	-.080	-.839	.007
	nov	.488	.130	.493	3.761	.001
	access	.090	.112	.090	.803	.027
a. Dependent Variable: ust						

We notice that, in the case of this second category of subjects taught, novelty is still the most important determinant of the perceived usefulness of the subject, while the dependent variable is correlated negatively with the national context, which was to be expected, considering the global orientation of this group of subjects. The ANOVA coefficients are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

ANOVA coefficients for strategic-global subjects

ANOVA[b]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	51.586	5	10.317	15.358	.000[a]
	Residual	26.871	40	.672		
	Total	78.457	45			
a. Predictors: (Constant), access, natc, pract, nov, glob						
b. Dependent Variable: ust						

It may be seen that about two thirds of the variance is explained by the model, accounting for its acceptability. The model summary is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Model summary for strategic-global subjects

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.811[a]	.658	.615	.620
a. Predictors: (Constant), access, natc, pract, nov, glob				

The value of the R indicates a very strong correlation, as well as the value of the R square, signaling that about 60% of the variance over time is explained of the model. The decrease in the error is also significant. The regression coefficients for the third group of subjects, *control subjects*, are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Regression coefficients for control subjects

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.244	.467		2.662	.011
	pract	.387	.150	.414	2.572	.014
	glob	.010	.163	.012	.061	.051
	natc	.193	.098	.258	1.972	.056
	nov	.111	.135	.132	.824	.415
	access	.059	.109	.081	.539	.593
a. Dependent Variable: ust						

The usefulness of the control subjects seems to be better predicted by their practical orientation, while their novelty and accessibility are not significant in the analysis. The ANOVA coefficients are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

ANOVA coefficients for control subjects

ANOVA[b]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	22.040	5	4.408	6.210	.000[a]
	Residual	28.394	40	.710		
	Total	50.435	45			
a. Predictors: (Constant), access, natc, pract, nov, glob						
b. Dependent Variable: ust						

It may be seen that the model accounts for about half of the variance, and it is statistically significant. The model summary is presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Model summary for control subjects

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.661[a]	.437	.367	.843
a. Predictors: (Constant), access, natc, pract, nov, glob				

It may be seen that the model is less fit than for the other two groups of subjects, as shown by the values of R square and of the standard error. This may be explained by a biased perception of students onto financial subjects, leading to a more dispersed evaluation. The regression coefficients for general subjects are presented in Table 13**.**

Table 13

Regression coefficients for general subjects

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.298	.475		.626	.035
	pract	.232	.166	.226	1.396	.070
	global	.111	.156	.117	.713	.080
	natc	-.025	.103	-.027	-.240	.012
	nov	.204	.156	.193	1.305	.099
	access	.324	.145	.339	2.244	.030
a. Dependent Variable: ust						

It may be seen that accessibility, which is negatively co-notated in the other subjects groups, seems to be important here, general skills being preferably taught at a more comprehensive level. Practical orientation and novelty are also important, as predictors of usefulness. The ANOVA coefficients are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

ANOVA coefficients for general subjects

ANOVA[b]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.787	5	8.757	9.251	.000[a]
	Residual	37.865	40	.947		
	Total	81.652	45			
a. Predictors: (Constant), access, natc, global, nov, pract						
b. Dependent Variable: ust						

It may be seen that the model predicts about half of the variance observed, and it is statistically significant. The model summary is presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Model summary for general subjects

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.732[a]	.536	.478	.973
a. Predictors: (Constant), access, natc, global, nov, pract				

The model summary confirms the strong correlations and the prediction of about half of the variance. The independent variables used as inputs for characterizing the *appropriateness of teaching method* (appr) were:

- Practice orientation (*pract*)
- Interaction (*interact*);
- Feedback professor to students (*fbps*);
- Feedback students to professor (*fbsp*);
- Tolerance (*tol*).

The regression coefficients for the *appropriateness of teaching method* are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Regression coefficients for appr

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.512	.442		1.160	.050
	pract	.227	.154	.230	.173	.003
	interact	.245	.150	.262	1.631	.011
	fbps	.105	.109	.129	.961	.042
	fbsp	.442	.148	.495	2.980	.005
	tol	-.061	144	-.068	-.427	.012
a. Dependent Variable: appr						

The dependent variable, *appropriateness of teaching method*, is best related to the feedback from students to professors, as well as to interaction and practical orientation. Tolerance is negatively correlated to the dependent variable. This tells that students prefer an interactive, real-life focused, open dialogue and feedback based teaching model, as compared with a traditional teaching model. Tolerance, as we supposed in the hypotheses, is not positively evaluated, as far as the appropriateness of

the teaching method is concerned, competition tending to be privileged. Students need to be empowered, and appreciate dialogue, which confirms our other two hypotheses. The ANOVA coefficients for this model are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

ANOVA coefficients for *appr*

ANOVA[b]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.321	5	6.064	7.569	.000[a]
	Residual	32.049	40	.801		
	Total	62.370	45			
a. Predictors: (Constant), tol, fbps, pract, interact, fbsp						
b. Dependent Variable: appr						

It may be seen that the model explains about half of the variance, and it is statistically significant. The model summary is presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Model summary for *appr*

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.697[a]	.486	.422	.895
a. Predictors: (Constant), tol, fbps, pract, interact, fbsp				

The model summary confirms the strong correlation existing between predictors and predicted variable, as well as the model explaining about half of the variance. If we compare the standard error with the descriptive statistics in Table 19.

Table 19

Descriptive statistics for *appr*

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
appr	46	1	5	2.76	1,177
Valid N (listwise)	46				

We may see a significant reduction of the error (from 1.17 to .895), accounting for the usefulness of the regression model in predicting appropriateness of the teaching method.

6. Conclusions

Our research, both as historical excurse and contemporary analysis, revealed the existence of some educational *universalia*, influencing the perception on the usefulness of subjects taught and on the appropriate of the pedagogic methods used. All our initial hypotheses were confirmed, in the sense that the surveyed students prefer dialogic and competitive teaching experiences, a mixed pattern inherited from both old European and Oriental traditions. Tolerance in examination is not positively evaluated, and the business background of the students may influence this choice. There are, also, slight differences between the predictors' values for the identified groups of subjects. If, for subjects related to starting and running a business, the adequacy to the national context and the practical orientation are very important, for strategic-global subjects the degree of novelty and the global perspective become prevailing. The novelty of the content taught is recurrent throughout the analysis, signaling that students need updated information, rather than accessible information, which is not challenging for them. The only disciplines which, in their opinion, need to be taught at an accessible level are general subjects, that is, foreign languages and informatics. The group of the financial subjects is less well characterized by our regression model, given the relative inconsistency of answers regarding this topic. As far as teaching methods are concerned, the most important predictors are students' feedback to the professor and interaction, confirming our hypotheses.

Given the small size of the sample, and its composition, including only students in Business Administration and from only one faculty, the limitations are obvious. The research should be extended cross-disciplinary and cross-culturally, in order to better assess the inheritance of some educational cultures. We also did not test the gender effects and the teaching language effects, which may yield interesting results. For the moment, this paper is a starting point in assessing the influence of past cultures on the present perception of today's students in an educational system aiming to become European, and competitive on a worldly scale, but historically bridging East and West.

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