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Didactic Material

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THE SOCIAL REPRESENTATION OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS -An exploratory study-

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Abstract

This study represents the first stage of a broader research programme, which was design with the purpose of developing the RS paradigm by analyzing the concepts associated to the RS in a manner, which could facilitate the theoretical connections between the social, and the individual poles.

The aim of this research program is to verify the internal coherence of the social representation by using an integrative and multi-methodological approach.

The representational object in our research is the Bologna process, the

implications of its implementation in the Romanian university system. The reason we have chosen this representational object is related to its social relevance and, also, to the novelty of its implications in the Romanian academic field.

General purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the internal structure of the Bologna process RS: the central node and the peripheral system and to define the dimensions that best characterize this representation.

Participants

The participants in the study were 224 people of which: 194 where students at the University "Alexandru Ioan Cuza", Iaşi in their 1st, 2nd and, 3rd year of studies and 48 professor from the same university.

Methods

A) Word association technique (Abric, 1973) - the participants were asked to give 5 words or expression that came to their mind when thinking at Bologna process and to rank them in the order of their importance.

b) Argumentative units technique (DiGiacomo, 1986) – participants were

asked to justify in two or three sentences why they chose the 5 words.

Data analysis

Our analysis has had **two basic purposes:**

a) Analyzing the data obtained through the word association technique in order to be able to identify the internal node and the peripheral elements of the Bologna process.

b) Analyzing the arguments that the participants gave in order to define the dimensions on which is structured the social representation of the Bologna process.

Results

A. We identified the elements of the internal structure of Bologna process social representation and verifying the centrality of the elements

B. We identified the following dimensions on which is structured the social representation:

- **The social actors** affected by the implementation of the Bologna system:

a) Professors;

b) Students;

c) The university;

- The general characteristics of this new system and its specific principle;

- The expectations participants have with regard to the reforms adopted in the university.

C. W designed a questionnaire divided on the 3 dimensions identified by the analysis made on the argumentative units.

Conclusions

The central node of the Bologna process RS is formed of one expression: *"3 years of study"* and, its peripheral system has four components: "innovation", "major change", "opportunities" and "restructured information".

Future research lines

- verifying the centrality of the element in the central node by using the ambiguous scenario technique;