

The PhD thesis of István Kádek

The socioeconomic turn that took place in Hungary in the late '80s and was labelled the change of systems placed the aspects of economic functioning into the focus of attention. Most actors of the education system recognized that the principles of economics and basic business skills (such as weighing, computational, decision-making and organizing skills) can not solely be considered as components of specialized economics training, but they should also be part of the general education subject-material. This created the demand for the availability of the aforementioned knowledge and set of competence for all youths between the ages of 13 and 16. The changes certainly exercised an impact on the secondary (high-school) level of economics and business vocational education. New elements of modern business studies had to be incorporated into the curricula and the theoretical foundations of the training had to be cleansed from former rigid ideological biases. Changes were induced in adult education as well.

Economics education came to the spotlight at several different levels with well-outlined and modern content, but barely or undeveloped methodological guidelines. Recognizing such deficiencies this present research principally aims at discovering effective methodic procedures in economics education, especially focusing on theoretical economics. The findings are presented in the following dimensions:

- student's age
- type of education (general education, vocational business education)
- historical dimension: which elements of the experience related to economics education between the two world wars can be adopted now?

Apparently, the research combined temporal and cross-sectional analyses and essentially operated in four dimensions. Firstly, experience from between the two world wars was compared to present-day approaches to shaping economic thinking. Secondly, in both time periods, special attention was paid to the trends of vocational economics/business education and economic aspects embedded in the general education core.

The methods of research, thus, were chosen to suit the demands of the multidimensional analysis. In addition to library research, a survey was conducted with auxiliary interviews. The author also relied on the records and documentation of experimental teaching projects he took part in and his 25-year teaching experience.

The most practical achievements of the four-chapter dissertation

are the following:

- it is the first work to provide an overall summary of the experience of economics education in Hungary between the two world wars.
- by virtue of the detailed analysis of the National Curriculum and curricular guidelines it may contribute to curricular development efforts currently undertaken.
- the paper may serve as the basis of a methodology textbook useful for both students in economics education programs and practising teachers instructing economics and business courses.
- it outlines possible directions of future research and development in the field.