

Chile's Education Crisis: Part 1 of A Country Study

Dr. JoAnn Rolle

Dean School of Business
Medgar Evers College, City University of New York (CUNY)
1650 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn New York USA

Dr. Roberto Acevedo

Dirección de Investigación y Desarrollo, Vicerrectoría de Desarrollo
Universidad Mayor
San Pio X. N° 2422. Providencia
Santiago. Chile.

Dr. Miguel Jordan, Julia

Bernstein N° 1201. La Reina.
Santiago. Chile.

Abstract

This study has been carried out to analyze the current state of the Chilean Education System, focusing on Higher Education. The goal of the analyses is to assess and articulate the strengths and weaknesses of educational models. We are certain that introducing our students to investigation from their earliest years as such is critical to achieve most goals as a country. Students must be able to move from very basic investigation tasks to highly sophisticated applied investigation. In order to meet this condition, they should receive strong constant formal training in different domains.

We also address the country's challenges of unemployment and underemployment. Our study suggests the country should move to advance the state of the art of education in all disciplines so as to produce new technology and job creation capacity in subjects such as entrepreneurship and social business, since the lack of jobs continues to increase. Many people believe that a professional title and/or an academic degree will facilitate success in the proverbial life-long goal for increased long-term career earnings. This is unfortunately becoming more of the exception than the rule. Many positions are not filled in the productive sector since a great amount of product can be bought abroad compounded with less demand for labor due to innovations in robotics, artificial intelligence and other advanced technologies. The job crisis no longer discriminates between the young and old, for different reasons, the demand for labor is being squeezed at both ends of the spectrum. Eventually lack of job creation, and unemployment will impact overall domestic consumption exacerbating an already depressed economy., especially in the city's capital, Santiago which hosts 40% of the population.

KeyWords: Education, Quality, Investigation, Country Development, Higher Ed Administration

I.- Introduction.

The authors state that parents, teachers, students, and all people related and working in education are morally responsible for the success of any student as a future committed citizen, since this starts a formal training process, from primary school to college. It is advisable to discuss these issues from a critical point of view, which allows one to focus attention on the most important subjects such that appropriate decisions can be made. Chaos may occur without such an assessment of the educational system.

The debate introduced in the previous paragraph is to be made carefully, such that the work can contribute to a most fair, equal and generous society, which behaves upon intellectual thinking. Key elements concerning our commitment with education are discussed in this work. This is particularly important since any nation's successful evolution in time requires efficient, educated, and intellectually mature citizens.

II.- Methods: Theoretical Framework Concerning Chilean Society's Commitment with Education.

The debate regarding Chilean Society's responsibilities with Education has been held lacking transparency and depths by the characters, either regional or national authorities, involved in this discussion. Problems now affecting Education are not simple, but complex and diverse. Integral, thoughtful and forward-looking analysis is therefore essential to contribute in the search of solutions, anticipating any possible consequence resulting from potential changes. Accordingly, complementary data and information is to be studied by the Chilean Government's authorities hence national acceptance when it comes to quality education is achieved.

The birth of a new educational system essentially private (Non-conventional fresh resource based) took place in the country three decades ago cannot be considered an unplanned or unexpected measure. As time passes by, these Private Institutions have been gaining autonomy due to academic and administrative efforts. It is therefore a mistake to think that this autonomy has been without consequences. In order for these institutions to gain market share, a deep revision of their weaknesses and strengths has been made through time¹.

Higher Education possibilities grew significantly for students who were finishing secondary school. As a result, Chile was able to provide increased educational offerings in terms of academic programs. Consequently, and due to this new scenario, Investigation Centers and their resources appeared which added value to the general Academic Field in the country. New infrastructure was created to host material and human resources and Certification Agencies were created in order to protect and safeguard excellence and quality of the newly released programs provided by Private Institutions.

During this process new problems of form and content arose, which made the creation of a National Certification Commission mandatory. The debate concerning the quality of private education alternatives went further than just analyzing their offering, but it also reached the revision of Public and Private Secondary Education outcomes. Unfortunately, conclusions showed that issues start to take place in Primary School or earlier.

A tough painful process started in Chile: Primary and Secondary Education System, public teachers, and College Authorities were questioned in terms of their performance, as well as the conditions in which professionals related to the field were to accomplish their goals. The attention given to the discussion has been growing since all main stakeholders (parents and tutors) expect students to receive formal high-quality education so that they can develop at their full capacity, which is essential to achieve an integral full balanced life as adults. This is the most valuable heritage children are to receive in the culture. Unfortunately, we conclude based on the debates that conditions were opposed to such goal.

Activities human beings are engaged in throughout their lives are diverse. Significant efforts are made so that a stable, seductive, innovative and long-lasting professional career is developed, and this brings us back to role of education. Excellence in education first starts within the core family group, which is to be organized and good practice-driven². Chilean population living in Santiago, the capital of the country, has grown in number up to almost 7 million people since 2002, which represents the 40% of the total amount in the country. We must therefore question whether infrastructure, talents, budget, academic experts, motivated students, stable family groups and professional opportunities are suitable and enough in order to fulfill Chileans' needs successfully. We posit that the answer to this question is no. Excellence and quality standards in education are beyond expectations unfortunately. As a consequence, and to some extent, people's contribution to the country in terms of their value as public and private economy stakeholders will also lack these essential features.

Today Chile counts upon a larger number of professionals in all fields, which is partially due to private education alternatives. It is important to understand that young people's formal training and skill development is critical for the substantial steady and dynamic nation's growth, otherwise the economy will experience decline and the country will not experience optimum development.

¹ OECD (2009)

² Bruner (1995)

Under these conditions high quality education becomes a must. The question is, however: what have the Government, Powers of State, and Citizen and Professional Schools done in order to fulfill such an obligation? Has their contribution so far been enough and acceptable?

In answer to the previous questions, teachers and students must reach a full high development and knowledge acquired by them has to be transversal so that different fields are covered. These students, as part of that group and also as future experts in their areas, must be erudite, creative and well prepared so as to contribute to their community's sustainable growth. The country should not be satisfied with sub-developed milestones simply because people's needs today and in the future are and will continue to be growing while available resources are insufficient.

It is also important to study the type of professionals the country needs in order to address current and immediate future challenges successfully. Global trend highlights quality, excellence and efficient as key words when it comes to define the type of training professionals from the XXI century should receive. It is therefore urgent to apply a new paradigm to our current Educational System, which allows fresh resources to strengthen it, since societies show a wide variety of demands that can only be satisfied by involving public, and private's participation, as developed countries do. Considering Technical-professional education, Investigation Centers and universities, it is clear that changes need to be made, hence higher quality standards are attained.

At this point of the discussion and for the sake of analysis we would like to introduce an overview of the different actors' profiles engaged in the stages of the educational system.

(A) Student's Profile

- From their early year's students must be taught to consciously appreciate the benefits of learning as the basis for their contribution to the community.
- An essential part of their training, whether it comes from school, family group or teachers, must be focused on ethical, capable, skillful and critical professional development in all stages of life.
- It is expected students are guided into "creation" and restless search of answers. Investigation, formal and informal, should be a common activity when dealing with all types of questions and obstacles.
- All resources must be available according to students' needs in all stages of the educational process.
- Students should all know that freedom is possible only if constant rational responsible and committed knowledge is acquired and created.
- Acquiring a suitable first-language command plus the introduction to at least a second one, English is suggested, will allow students to overcome language barriers from their early years of school up to their professional career.

A variety of measures can be taken in order to help students who have not received suitable education while in school. These initiatives are to be holistically carried out by experienced well-respected teachers. It is important to recall that when facing a non-homogenous class group, skills, knowledge and experience are required so that objectives are met.

(B) Teachers' Profile

- Teachers must have vocation. Only highly committed professionals can develop skills in order to promote knowledge and values acquisition among their students.
- Analytical, rigorous individual training is essential for teachers to develop a forward-looking attitude when addressing current and possible threats in their students' learning process.
- The Government and other authorities involved in Education should make teacher self-evaluation tools and professional contribution awards available.

Given the conditions mentioned above, teachers can be expected to fulfill their roles successfully. Consequently, reflecting on these issues and the capacity of the country to guarantee such conditions as a way to improve education is critical to address nowadays situation.

(C) Higher Education Academic and Administrative Authorities' profile

- Higher education academic-administrative authorities are transversal well-known talented leaders in Education.
- They must be always seeking for updated knowledge and promoting innovation among colleagues and students.

- Reaching such title is to be the natural consequence of years of experience and rigorous training throughout time. No one who does not fulfill any of the conditions above should take over an Academic and/or Administrative Authority role.
- Because of their vast experience in education, these authorities are capable of identifying niche markets and innovative opportunities.
- Students and Peer work is passionately promoted and executed. Academic and/or Administrative authorities lead complex processes and they become widely recognized due to their contribution.

The focus of our attention will be on higher education and its current and future goals. Pure applied investigation and research are key words when it comes to define the best formula to improve the current system's weaknesses. To the same extent, it is believed that people who work in this type of education share the very same vision and mission which cannot be significant unless investigative work is done.

Also, suitable conditions for these experts to accomplish their goals are mandatory. "Thinking" and "doing" correctly are some people's inner talents. Therefore, giving them the time and resources to carry out their ideas is essential. Unfortunately, this discussion has not been fully addressed.

III-. Results and Discussion: What is the current situation like?

The country has several problems it must address. The basis in which the society has been settled show structural issues that have affected societal dynamics over time.

The public capitals available mostly afford financially speaking, Chilean education. Few funding is allocated toward investigation nonetheless; we believe that is one of the main reasons why the system's weaknesses continue to perpetuate. Limited natural resources, the main source of Chile's wealth, cannot guarantee a transversal steady growth as a society, consequently more investment in investigation becomes critical to build a stronger fairer Educational System that will allow the country to participate in more diverse profitable markets. Also, public policies should promote such changes as capacity building in job creating disciplines as entrepreneurship and technology transfers from the Universities. Expansions of economic development programs similar to "Start-Up Chile" should be evaluated, piloted and implemented in urban centers such as Santiago to increase employment opportunities for the wide spectrum of educated youth, and seniors.

Universities, Professional Institutes and Technical Training Centers are chosen as the starting point for dreams, hopes and with the ultimate goal of obtaining degrees that will make individuals valuable for society due to their contribution to their family groups and the country itself. This is not an easy task to accomplish nonetheless, and all institutions must work hard so that students and future professionals are benefited.

IV. Conclusions:

The last paragraphs aim to describe, define and conceptualize Chile's reality when it comes to education and its current state. A brief analysis on the early steps of students in Primary School up to College experience has been presented. Chile's population is about 18 million people, which from its origin has not been able to consolidate as a vigorous country whose intellectual human worth is fully applied to its society. Any nation's growth and sustainable high-quality life guarantees for their members are to be built on the excellence and value of the professionals available.

It is somehow troublesome having so many opinions on this matter from people who are not involved in the arts of public service since they make goals even more difficult to achieve. Therefore, the first part of this study focuses on the main problems Chilean Society deals with, and the forthcoming Part 2 of the study will present the analysis of indicators and metrics plus different proposals to address these problems.

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