The Intelligent University’s Conceptual Model

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Recently, when globalization processes become apparent and get stronger, the distinction between organizations’ groups become less noticeable, because organizations involve more and more aspects of life but the same principles are used for their management, irrespective of their preservation and juridical status. Existing perception, that management novelties and new ways of management are relevant not only for business organizations, but also for non-profit or public organizations, foster to analyze and to go deep into demands of these organizations and relations with external environment.

Non-profit organizations can be discriminated considering such resources as power, knowledge and skills, information, management nature, so their possibilities and readiness to use organizational intelligence also are different.

The classification of non-profit organizations contains private and public sectors. The management transformations of organizations in private sector are simpler with respect to minor legal regulation than the management transformations of organizations in public sector embittered by national reglamentation and far – gone traditions.

One of the oldest non-profit organizations, which recently experience bigger and bigger pressure from the external environment, is university. Universities have to change their point of view not only to relations between university and society, but also to management that indicates cultural changes inside the organizations.

Traditionally, universities were not considered as organizations. More likely, researchers referred to them as either institutions, carrying out a prominent social role or communities, that is, “families” of people brought together, which were accepted for service in a certain social ceremony.

Considering these peculiarities of universities, the viewpoint of society and exciting practice in dispute is an intelligent university. Universities have to find innovative methods in order to survive and prosper in conditions of global economy. The paradigm of organizational intelligence seems very attractive in university’s management from theoretical point of view, however, deep rooted individualism and competition in university’s culture does not create conditions to transform into open and modern organizations. This article not only strives to answer the question if university can become intelligent, but also how the processes of intelligent university should look like.

From the practical perspective, it can be stated that first of all university has to be eased from too overwhelming national regulations. Also, university should overcome psychological breaking up into faculties, departments, laboratories and other administrative units and should determine spheres in which it would be able to concentrate its activity. An intelligent university should open to environment and to collaborate with business structures and cooperate with society creating society of knowledge and changing traditional management and administration into more modern and congruent to environment needs management and administration.

Keywords: non-profit organization, organizational intelligence, university, intelligent university.

Introduction

Recently, when globalization processes become apparent and get stronger, the distinction between organizations’ groups become less noticeable, because organizations involve more and more aspects of life but the same principles are used for their management, irrespective of their preservation and juridical status. Existing perception, that management novelties and new ways of management are relevant not only for business organizations, but also for non-profit or public organizations, foster to analyze and to go deep into demands of these organizations and relations with external environment. But such – like organizations’ legal reglamentation of activity and manegement is one of reasons of low adaptation and accommodation to environmental changes.

Some organizations are still centralized and bureaucratic. Of course, some of them are trying to adapt to globalization processes, but because of far – gone culture and traditions, it is not easy to change. The readjustment of such organizations is blocked by the other important factor – governmental regulation, which is typical to public and non-profit organizations. The existing structure in these organizations is not suitable to form organizational intelligence because of bureaucratic processes. With bureaucracy, organizational intelligence is fragmented by coordination from a few heads at the top of the chain of command. By contrast, higher organizational intelligence is an outgrowth of everyone’s collaborative choices. (Brown, 1994).

Non-profit organizations could be differentiated in terms of availability of resources such as power, knowledge and skills, information, rewards, and the nature of leadership and the existence of instructional guidance mechanisms (Sillins et al., 2002). So both their possibilities and readiness to use organizational intelligence also are different. It is easier in small organizations, because there are more possibilities to create informal communication networks for transferring knowledge. Organizations facing a flat and unchanging environment may not need much intelligence, but organizations facing diverse and turbulent
environments may need much higher degrees of intelligence. To the extent that organizational intelligence costs something to develop and maintain, this investment may be justified in the latter case, but not in the former case (Veryard, 2000).

The classification of non-profit organizations contains private and public sectors. The management transformations of organizations in private sector are simpler with respect to minor legal regulation than the management transformations of organizations in public sector embitted by national reglamentation and far – gone traditions. One of the oldest non-profit organizations, which recently experience bigger and bigger pressure from the external environment is university. Universities have to change not only their point of view to relations between university and society, but also to management, indicating cultural changes inside the organizations.

The scientific problem dealt with in the article is the situation of universities in globalization processes, their management practice and environmental needs determining a new approach to university and its management.

The goal of this article is to analyzing processes by which university could become an intelligent one.

The object of the article is an intelligent university and its processes.

Research methods used are scientific literature and law documents analysis.

The analysis of foreign (Veryard, Birnbaum, Dixon et. al.) and Lithuanian authors, researching the management processes and its influence on organizations is used.

University within globalization

Traditionally, universities were not considered as organizations. More likely, researchers referred to them as either institutions, carrying out a prominent social role or communities, that is, “families” of people brought together, which were accepted for service in a certain social ceremony (Prejmerean, Vasilache, 2007).

According to Baldridge et al. (2007), universities have vague, ambiguous goals, and must build decision structures that grapple with uncertainty and conflict over those goals.

Universities are becoming so oriented toward the global economy that they no longer address the part of their traditional mission that views community and social needs as a major responsibility (Oliver, 2006).

From the management viewpoint, a higher-education institution may be regarded as a global system composed internally of interacting subsystems and involving complex interactions with the outside world. First of all, a higher-education institution interacts, in various ways with the meso - environment (the local and national settings), which imposes on it certain requirements (for example, civil service status, regulations, etc.) and provides it with certain resources (such as a variable proportion of its funds). But it also exists in a macro-environment which acts as a vehicle for certain geopolitical phenomena that exert pressure on it. While these environments exert various pressures, the higher-education institution in its turn influences these different environments, especially through so called “educational income”. What is increasingly needed by higher-education institutions is a model for forward management: there is a need for forward management of tasks in the face of an ever more rapidly changing world; for forward management of training structures in order to meet the compelling requirements of life-long education and the necessity for a more regional and international vision; for forward management of research structures in the light of the necessity for more interdisciplinary research in networked teams; for forward management of financial, material and human resources in order to better carry out tasks and respond to trends; for forward management of sub-cultures inside and outside the institution so as to create an innovation-oriented culture serving the construction of harmonious and sustainable human development (UNESCO, 1998).

The main differences between universities and other non-profit organizations

Despite many resemblances to other non-profit organizations, universities have some features, which distinguish them from other organizations.

First of all, it is the nature of services – studies and scientific researches, that is creation and implementation of new knowledge.

Secondly, universities distinguish from other organizations by their framework of government. It means that the board, senate, rector and others authorities of academic departments are elected for some term. Such management is inconvenient because after the term of office the changes can be just begun and the new elected board or senate or rector may not be concerned enough with continuing changes.

The third difference is bounded with university’s activity indicator. In other organizations activity effectiveness is stated by qualitative and quantitative indicators. At university these indicators are more or less derivative. For example, quality of studies is reflected by the number of graduates, employed by the specialty, scientific research quality is reflected by the number of articles, patents and so on.

Considering these peculiarities of universities, the viewpoint of society and exciting practice in dispute is an intelligent university. Universities have to find innovative methods in order to survive and prosper in conditions of global economy. The paradigm of organizational intelligence seems very attractive in university’s management from the theoretical point of view, however, deep rooted individualism and competition in university’s culture does not create conditions to transform into open and modern organizations. This article strives not only to answer the question if university can become intelligent, but also how the processes of intelligent university should look like.

The intelligent university

The move of the university from a service profile to a market profile has caused significant concern and dilemmas for academics and university policy makers. Universities are seen to be forced into the market place in ways that are reshaping them in their purposes and in the
knowledge they create and disseminate (Apple, 1999; Carnoy, 1998; Marginson, 1999, 2000; Meek, 2000; Neave, 2000; Osborne, 2002; Pratt & Poole, 1999; Singh & Gale, 1996; Standish, 2002; Welch, 2001; Dixon, 2006).

The changes in management are necessary in order to regulate and coordinate the other spheres of university’s activities, the distribution and balance of material and intellectual resources by pointing out the priorities and goals, the university and its departments according to their needs and possibilities. The necessity for changes at university forms premises to analyze university’s management processes from the viewpoint of new management paradigms, in order to evaluate the possibilities of management changes.

During recent ten years, many documents about modern view point to university’s management were passed. For example, Commission of the European communities (2006) has stated that modernization of Europe’s universities, involving their interlinked roles of education, research and innovation, has been acknowledged not only as a core condition for the success of the broader Lisbon Strategy, but as a part of the wider move towards an increasingly global and knowledge-based economy. In return to being freed from overregulation and micro-management, universities should accept full institutional accountability to society at large for their results. This requires new internal governance systems based on strategic priorities and on professional management of human resources, investment and administrative procedures.

The transformation of university structures and patterns, in order to suit a new entrepreneurial (Clark, 1998) paradigm, comprises, according to Brunsson and Sahlin-Andersson (2000), three levels: construction of identity (“who we are?”, and hence the organizational goal of “being special”), construction of hierarchy (passage from control to co-ordination, the engagement in common projects and in the building of a shared vision), and construction of rationality, i.e., of the acquiring of adequate means for rendering the university accountable, in the “audit society”. The paradigm of intelligent university says that it is necessary to specialize the management of university by separating it from academic personnel. The level of university’s intellectual capital provides information on that university’s innovation rate and on the quality of its intellectual resources by pointing of the priorities and goals realization by using politics and procedures, which were affirmed by a supreme government institution, for effective resources use; for effective teaching, scientific research and services, and so on. The responsibility of a supreme government institution is to manage, not to administrate.

While talking about intelligent university, it is necessary to bind it to business processes and organizational systems, because the existing practice shows that university business processes are far–gone, and organizational systems are just the reinforcement of traditions, existing in business processes.

Many processes of today’s university, for example, documents arrangement, the ways of students’ informing and others are similar to other organizations. That’s why by beginning business process development, university managers should follow the assumption, that many problems are caused not by administration workers, academic personnel or students, but by insufficient management of studies or administration processes (Adomaitienė, Ruževičius, 2002).

University can be named as a professional organization, that’s why university’s management by administration isn’t effective. The essence of professional organization is professional personnel, who specialize in one or other activity sphere. So the main principle of such an organization’s culture is a very limited control, created conditions for reaching goals, good communication with environment (Jucevičius, 1998). That’s why the only way to manage such personnel is leadership.

II Glion declaration (2000) says that there is a big difference between self–government and administration. Self–government is associated with the responsibility for organization’s mission and goals with resources supervision; president election, his evaluation and help; and with reasonable understanding of organization’s programs and activities. Administration is associated with responsibility for effective organization’s running and its goals realization by using politics and procedures, which were affirmed by a supreme government institution, for effective resources use; for effective teaching, scientific research and services, and so on. The responsibility of a supreme government institution is to manage, not to administrate.

While forming an intelligent university, it is essential to vouch for the open systems inside the university and the university itself to be opened to environment and to absorb information not only related to the field, which helps to make strategic decisions, but also to create assumptions for meeting knowledge society needs.

It can be stated that now in universities, to some extent, the functions of decentralization and delegation are validated by senate, faculties’ boards and so on. But these governmental bodies often do not reflect and cover all personnel and its intelligence, that’s why it is not a real decentralization and delegation, necessary to form an intelligent organization. Organizational university’s structure is defined by national laws, so it is impossible to change it. University, that wants to become intelligent, has limited possibilities to change existing structure and to readjust it to business processes and human resources, in such a way
forming possibilities to develop an informal organization – one of the factors of an intelligent university creation.

The role of university and its departments determine the goals and functions, which are performed by people – university’s community. The university’s processes are based on individual (studies) and group work (scientific research). But despite that, there exists competition between individuals and groups for recourses. That’s why an intelligent university should motivate workers to join into temporal work groups or teams, which by working together and using the same resources could create a new service or product – new knowledge. But some processes demand only individual or group work, so it can’t be stated that an intelligent university requires one or another extremity. The leaders of an intelligent university have to give the main attention not to technical, but to social systems. In a quick changing environment, management is understood as an implementation of processes through other people, so while forming an intelligent university the tune of individual and group work is essential, that is group work should be connected with decision process, new knowledge creation and organizational learning.

An intelligent university should not only notice people, with individual intelligence, but also to bring all workers into the same system, which would result in the effectiveness of university and possibility to react to changes. The methods used and means have to be coordinated with activity processes and strategic goals and have to match not only human resources knowledge or skills, but also to become the foundation of new knowledge creation and adaptation to external environment and forming culture of organizational learning.

According to Haug and Keleman (1996), university’s value system forms over some time and depend on university’s historical, cultural and intellectual heritage. Accordingly, processes and organizational systems of an intelligent university, influenced by intelligent processes, create an effect of synergy, which becomes an advantage of an intelligent university while competing in global market. By comparing “classic” and intelligent universities by intelligent processes, it should be mentioned, that intelligent university differs from classic¹ one by the level of intelligent processes (2 Fig.).

Intelligent decisions and their implementation together with intelligence processes create value expressed by university’s activities qualitative and quantitative indicators in scientific and teaching activities, material and non-material resources.

Prejmerean and Vasilache (2007) think, that university is intelligent if its strategy is an extrapolation of an algorithm with the “anytime” property. This means than an acceptable solution is always available, and the quality of the answer improves over time. In other words, given that individual intelligence can be defined as dynamic adaptation to niche survival (“the survival of the fittest”), organizational intelligence is the organization’s ability to apply something similar to genetic algorithms, in order to creatively recombine knowledge residing within individuals and relations.

¹ “classic” university in this article is understood as a typical university of our days.

2 Figure. The comparison of intelligence processes (created by the authors)

The universities, which are learning organizations in a quick changing environment, have systems and structures, enabling personnel to continuous learning by collaborating and using new knowledge. The ability to learn by collaborating defines the process of organizational learning. Sillins et al. (2002) have identified six dimensions of this capacity for organizational learning: school structure, participative decision making grounded in teacher empowerment, shared commitment and collaborative activity, knowledge and skills, leadership, and feedback and accountability.

Looking into the expression of intelligent university from the practical perspective, it can be stated that first of all it has to be eased from too overwhelming national regulation. Also, university should overcome psychological breaking up into faculties, departments, laboratories and other administrative units and should determine spheres in which it would be able to concentrate its activity. An intelligent university should open to environment and to collaborate with business structures and cooperate with society, together creating society of knowledge and changing traditional management and administration into more modern and congruent to environment needs management and administration.

Switching to needs universities, have to focus on strategies of organizational intelligence development. The first step is connected with the evaluation of organizational intelligence level within university. As organizational intelligence is constantly changing, universities have to create adequate functions, which are sensitive to environment and thus to secure the necessary level of organizational intelligence.
The difficulties in becoming intelligent university

Higher education is facing increasingly formidable challenges. It will have to demonstrate great imagination, creativity, intelligence and determination in its management and financing. It must also develop suitable capability in the planning and analysis of policies and strategies, based on partnership between higher-education institutions, government and national planning and co-ordination bodies. The main purpose of management must be to act as an instrument for improving the relevance and quality of institutions and systems. While higher-education institutions must develop an entrepreneurial culture, they are still not businesses and they cannot operate on the same basis as businesses (UNESCO, 1998).

Conclusions

Although universities tend to act as middle sized, or large corporations, in terms of their management and marketing decisions, their managers’ ability to hire or fire is limited (Birnbaum, 1998). Professors, in charge of the technical issues of teaching and research, are also members of the administrative bodies, take part in the issuance of policies inside (University Senate, for instance), and outside (Ministry of Education, Parliament etc.) the university, which leads to an overlapping of perspectives that may not work in the university’s best interest, especially when there is a mismatch between the academic goals (to invest in excellence) and the administrative goals (to cut down costs, to attract more students, to drop applications. Journal of management education, 1996, Vol. 20, Nr. 3.

References


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Universitetas turėtų skatinti jungtis darbuotojų į laikinas darbo grupes ar komandas, kurie, dirbdami kartu ir naudojant auksčiausias pačius iš karto slėnis, sukurti naują paslaugą ar produktą. Tai, kaip kai kurie universiteto procentai reikalauja iš žmogų individų, grupinių ar darbo grupių, turi ne tik pastebėti ir įvertinti tam tikrą veiklą, tačiau ir priimti strateginius sprendimus, kad būtų užtikrinti, kad tiek viduje, tiek į aplinką veikia susiskaidymo procesas.