

MODERN APPROACHES TO EDUCATION QUALITY MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

This paper explores methodological approaches and promising ways of education quality management, analyzes the prospects of quality management at higher education organizations given the existing conditions of the external environment, milestones of international quality standards shifting to student-oriented education. As for universities, they are faced with the need of developing mechanisms to respond to constant changes while retaining the uniqueness of the environment generated by a particular educational organization as well as that of adapting to external challenges without abandoning well-developed traditions.

Keywords: strategic planning, quality management, international quality standards, higher education, quality models.

INTRODUCTION

The word “quality” has become commonplace lately in any field of human activity. Most companies, governments and countries attach great importance to the process of quality improvement across all aspects of social life and social production. Quality is increasingly turning into the basis of competitiveness which may lead to success. In this connection, the education system is no exception.

In recent decades, education has come to be so widespread that the slightest doubt which may be cast on its effectiveness and competitiveness causes mounting concern for large segments of the population. The establishment and development of various forms and types of education, its functional transformation, its deepening socially differentiated opportunities, updating the tasks of social adaptation of young people, the strengthening of the influence of education on career success and quality of life in general have raised questions of quality of education, evaluation of the performance of educational institutions on a fundamentally different and socially significant level. The decline in the educational level of the population is considered nowadays by most countries as a national tragedy [1].

Equally assessing the significance of education as a strategic factor of social development and the foundation of national security, leading countries of the world are constantly and systematically building up the level and quality of education doing their utmost to reproduce and accumulate educational resources.

An educational organization has the autonomy to define certain elements of the learning process on its own. Therefore, any instruction which comes down from above triggers a transformation in the entire system or its components. There is a need for developing mechanisms to respond to such changes without giving up the uniqueness of the environment created by a particular educational organization while adapting to external challenges without abandoning the traditions of a particular university. This opportunity presents itself through the strategic planning technique. A strategy once designed helps bring an organization out of a state where it chaotically responds to immediate challenges occurring within the environment thus giving its

activities meaning and long-term nature.

THE BASICS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Strategic planning (SP) is a dynamic set of interrelated management processes logically stemming from one another and the availability of feedback in the form of an evaluation phase and control over the previous steps in order to establish inconsistencies. SP is able to make an organization dynamic and flexible in terms of configuration depending on the conditions identified in the environment where it conducts its operations. Using SP allows educational organizations to:

- investigate external and internal factors influencing its functions and development purposefully;
- determine scenarios of development, probability of occurrence of risks;
- identify priority areas of development and follow them;
- correct planned steps in a timely manner;
- Define performance indicators for subsequent monitoring;
- allocate resources rationally;
- implement its general plans and those of its separate subdivisions.

A development strategy used by an educational organization should ensure management of its development by taking into account the changes taking place and generate conditions for interaction between managers and employees within an educational organization, applicants, their parents, students, representatives of employers, the state, society and others engaged in educational and social processes.

During the strategic planning process, it is important to assess the capabilities of all prospective participants, to analyze the existing conditions, to develop optimal performance indicators for the program and to predict risks. All this will help choose the best ways to achieve the goals. The following should be involved in the development of strategic planning: university management, employers, public, scientific and other organizations.

Once strategic planning is being implemented, an educational organization must be guided by the principle of integration which involves the integration of disparate elements into a single system. The key elements of this process are [3]:

1. *Defining the mission and strategic objectives of an organization.* The mission is the general goal of an educational organization which demonstrates its purpose as a competitive structure presented in the most general form determining the main reason behind the existence of this organization. The most common format of strategic objectives nowadays is the balanced strategic scorecard system which translates and gives concrete expression to the targets and the strategy of an individual organization turning it into a set of integrated operational target values.

2. *Analysis and evaluation of the external and internal environment.* The strategic analysis involves studying the following components: macro-environment, immediate environment, internal environment. Besides that, it is advisable to investigate the legal framework, including federal, regional and internal regulations.

3. *Identifying strategic alternatives and strategy selection.* At this stage, decisions are made on the future development strategy, its concept taking into account the real possibilities for development of a particular educational institution. Based on the overall development strategy, functional strategies must be designed for each activity (related to education, science, education, innovation, quality, marketing, finance, personnel, IT, etc.).

4. *Implementation of the strategy.* This is the least formalized part of strategic planning and the most uncertain in terms of the outcome.

5. *Evaluation and monitoring of the strategy.* These are logically a final process carried out in strategic planning. This process provides abundant feedback between the achievement of the goals and the actual goals of an organization.

EDUCATION QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Now, there is a new vector of higher education development with the paradigm changing towards student-oriented education and training. Higher education should make a significant shift in teaching: in education there is a need for a student-oriented approach in order to find a more flexible educational path and to recognize competencies acquired outside formal curricula.

Student-oriented teaching plays a role in increasing motivation, self-reflection and involvement of students in the learning process. This accounts for the requirements to involve students and other participants in the process in the evaluation and revision of programs as well as in the process of internal rulemaking: students should be involved in the procedures related to the development of key documents within an organization, including in the processes of strategic planning and quality management [4].

Involvement in quality assurance processes of internal systems and external institutions enables European higher education systems to show competitiveness and enhance transparency of the system, thereby contributing to mutual trust, recognition of qualifications, programs and other types of educational activities. Quality is usually the result of interaction between teachers, students and the educational environment of a university. The quality management procedure must be regarded as a cycle of continuous improvement and is aimed at ensuring appropriate objectives for development of the educational environment, curriculum content, educational opportunities and means. European standards and recommendations rest upon the following principles of quality management:

- Higher education institutions bear primary responsibility for the quality of education provided and its provision;
- Quality assurance meets the needs of national higher education systems, universities and students;
- Quality assurance factors in the needs and expectations of students, other participants of the process and society as a whole [5].

One of the requirements to the quality assurance policy of educational organizations is its public nature i.e. a reflection of the conceptual and institutional vision, strategic management processes and their deliverables in different media. Relevant structures should ensure that internal and external actors are involved in the development and implementation of a quality policy that is more efficient when there is a link between research, teaching and learning with due regard for the national and international context in which a particular organization operates as well as the uniqueness of its own educational environment.

The intrauniversity system of quality assessment employed by educational organizations involves an analysis and objective assessment to study the educational activities of a university and its structural subdivisions aimed at obtaining complete information on the implementation of the educational process and its deliverables which helps be ready for quality assessment as part of licensing, accreditation and efficiency monitoring procedures [6].

The chief objectives pursued by an intra-university system of education quality assessment extend to monitoring education quality and identification of areas for education quality improvement across all types of activity. This quality system should be predicated on the following principles employed in modern quality models: consumer orientation; orientation at the management of educational and scientific activity processes; regular evaluation (self-assessment) of university processes.

The process of development of an intra-university education quality system is divided into the following areas:

- 1) concepts, targets and tasks developed in the field of quality management of educational organizations as well as the identification of activities at which control will be aimed;
- 2) planning processes and creating conditions for their implementation; defining a system of quality indicators for given types of activities, ensuring their application relative to separate objects of management;
- 3) designing conditions for high-quality training of students; implementing such conditions;
- 4) self-assessment of the activities of educational organizations: monitoring education quality, self-analysis, analysis of educational process deliverables [7].

CONCLUSION

The modern concepts of strategic planning and quality management developed in conformity with international standards make it possible to define a set of tools and methods for adapting educational organizations to an environment of uncertainty, high competition and changing regulatory frameworks. A

substantial pre-condition is involving leading participants of the educational process in the planning process, creation of an open system to respond to signals coming from the parties involved which will allow for timely correction of individual elements within the system without violating the uniqueness of the educational environment created within an organization. The system of strategic planning and quality management at this stage should also account for the requirements to internationalization of education and science, student-oriented management concepts and publicity of developed and implemented models.

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