

MODERN APPROACHES TO COMPETITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSITIES

ABORDAGENS MODERNAS PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO COMPETITIVO DE UNIVERSIDADES

ENFOQUES MODERNOS PARA EL DESARROLLO UNIVERSITARIO COMPETITIVO

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ABSTRACT

Purpose The purpose of the study is to present theory and methods of efficient system of university's competitiveness development.

Design/Methodology/Approach The methods of study included chronological method, system analysis of statistical information, expert evaluation method, and mathematical data processing.

Findings Creation of an innovative university requires a qualitative change of technology and the content of educational, scientific, methodical, economic and industrial activities of the university. To achieve long-term success in asserting the university on educational market, the work should be performed in all the spheres and by all the aspects of its activities. It is very important to take into account specifics of interrelation between a higher education establishment and external environment; the university managers should objectively evaluate the university's position in the market of educational services, understand the necessity of changes, and predict the effects of introduced amendments. There are different strategies aimed to achieve high competitiveness of a university including internalization of higher education and creation of entrepreneurial universities.

Originality/Value The results represented in the article can be used by the heads of higher education establishments to optimize the system of universities' competitiveness management. The article may also be useful for specialists who prepare study editions and guides for students specializing in management in education, and non-specialists interested in this topic.

Keywords: *university, competitiveness, approach, development, competition*

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Introduction

The issues of education become much more significant in Russia's modern economic conditions. The potential for the development of national economics is defined by the efficiency of higher education. The growing demand for high-qualified specialists in Russia increases the requirements for higher education system. Thus, the problem of choosing the higher education establishments (among current educational services in the market) that can meet economic demands becomes more important.

Universities with a high research potential, good facilities and resources and a large experience in training specialists demanded on labor market are the most preferable nowadays. Growing competence between universities due to above-mentioned reasons causes a problem of developing the approach to the competitive development of an university and necessity to solve some tasks: to evaluate the competitiveness of a higher education establishment, to choose the ways to strengthen university's competitiveness, and to elaborate the system of measures for maintaining the competitiveness of a university.

The solution of these tasks is restrained by the lack of successful and widely applicable in theory and methodology efficient system of management of higher education establishments' competitiveness.

Thus, the significance and urgency of the topic of study is defined by the understudied economic and organizational issues linked to the elaboration of scientifically justified approach to the competitive development of a university.

The management of universities' competitiveness has been thoroughly studied by many researchers. However, we should notice that various authors have not fully covered the issue of elaborating the approaches to the competitive development of a university.

This fact defines the goal of the study, which can be formulated in the following way: to present the theory and methodology of elaborating the efficient system of the management of university's competitiveness.

The *goal of study* is to present theory and methods of efficient system of university's competitiveness development.

The goal of study defines the following *tasks of the study*:

- to analyze theoretical ideas of university's competitiveness;
- to explore the nature and economic content of development concept of university's competitiveness management efficient system.

Methods

The methods of the study included chronological method, system analysis of statistical information, expert evaluation method and mathematical data processing.

Considering the method of system analysis, several basic stages of the system analysis of the notion of university's competitiveness can be identified:

- to define the relevance of the study,
- to systematize the existing interpretations of the notion of university's competitiveness,
- to aggregate the interpretations of the notion of university's competitiveness (to unite the revealed interpretations in groups),
- to generate the alternatives of the notion of university's competitiveness and to select the best one.

Based on the author's representation of the methods of the system analysis concerning the notion of university's competitiveness, the relevance of the subject under study should be first justified.

It is known that nowadays the main goal of educational activities is

- to render a wide range of quality educational services at reasonable prices to applicants and students that enable applicants to adapt to the conditions of their future activities in the market economy and to promote (career),
- to satisfy efficiently the needs of state and non-state enterprises and entities in qualified specialists;
- to provide adequate level of the well-being of university's founders, professors and employees participating in rendering educational services.

In present conditions, providing high competitiveness of a university is one of the key issues of the development faced by the higher professional education sector in Russia.

The fundamental statements of modern economic theory, higher education economics, and state regulation of higher education in Russia provided *methodological basis* for the study.

The *sources of information* included fundamental works of economists and experts in education economics and development of education service market, who studied the competition in the education service market and competitiveness of education establishments and its factors, and works of managers in building the system of university's competitiveness management.

When regard the modern approaches to competitive development of universities, one should understand that a university, as a structural component of a mechanism for goods production, somehow develops its activity under effect of internal and external factors. External factors

often have and important impact on the choice of behavior strategy in educational service market.

Results

Before discussing the competitive development of a university, we should define the notion of “competition” as an element of the market mechanism in this sphere and the forms of competence. For this purpose, we can present the definition of this notion given by the collective of Russian authors. According to it, competition is a rivalry between economic agents for more profitable conditions of sales and purchases in the market. In professional education, universities compete for attracting and satisfying a part of total demand for the professional education services in the volume, content and structure sufficient for universities to fully realize their potential. The forms of competence in the system of professional education, interindustry and intraindustry, have their own specificities (Abrosimov, 2004).

Interindustry competition is a competition between the professional education system in general and other economic sectors for the part of labor resources that will receive off-job education. In the general system of interindustry competition, there emerge interindustry proportions in the system of professional education expressed in the distribution of specialists by spheres and sectors of economy. These proportions define the scales and the structure of the demand for graduates from the system of professional education.

Intraindustry competence in the system of professional education can be observed at different levels:

- between the levels of professional education, state and non-state systems of education,
- between budgetary and extra-budgetary education,
- between the groups of homogenous areas and specialties,
- between homogenous specialties,
- between the forms of education,
- between universities.

It should be noted that in spite of the importance of such category as competitiveness, the literature has not yet elaborate more or less uniform terminological approach to this notion even to the activities of commercial structures not to speak of universities. There are several different approaches to competitiveness, in particular, to the competitiveness of university, and indices of competitiveness.

First, various definitions of the “competitiveness” notion represented in economic literature should be considered.

In the simplest case, the competitiveness of a manufacturer is considered equivalent to the competitiveness of his production. Thus, A. Voronov reports in his article that “competitiveness of an enterprise is its ability to manufacture and sell competitive goods” (Voronov, 2001).

A similar approach can be found in R.A. Fatkhutdinov’s work (2006). The author states that competitiveness as a state characterized by the degree of real and potential satisfaction of a particular need by an enterprise (firm) compared to similar possibilities of other firms represented in this market enables to evaluate and compare real and potential abilities of firms in manufacturing and selling goods that compete in the market (Fatkhutdinov, 2006).

In the dictionary, the competitiveness of an entity is also reduced to the competitiveness of its goods; this category is defined as “the ability of a firm or a company to compete in the markets with the manufacturers and sellers of similar goods by providing higher quality and reasonable prices and creating comfort for customers and consumers” (Prokhorov (Ed.), 2000).

The European Management Forum (Geneva) gives the following definition: “competitiveness is a real and potential ability of companies as well as their possibilities to design, manufacture and sell in the conditions in which they have to work the goods that are more attractive by their price and non-price characteristics for consumers than the goods of their competitors” (Dolinskaya, 1991).

The author of this article considers the approaches cited above quite arguable. Obviously, a firm cannot be competitive if its production is not sold. However, the competitiveness of goods is not the only factor defining the competitiveness of a manufacturer. Market relations do not allow industrial subjects to occupy a stable position in the market for a long time basing only on the indices of the goods competitiveness in its supply strategy. The high efficiency of productive-economic activities is a necessary condition for a successful competitive struggle.

A.I. Yudanov in (1996) refers to competitiveness as a degree of attractiveness of the product for a consumer concluding a real purchase. A.L. Lomakin states that this definition is purely descriptive and qualitative, as the attractiveness of a product is a subjective category not expressed by any particular qualitatively measurable qualities and signs of the product, which characterize its quality for a consumer. Besides, reducing all the customers (more exactly, consumers of the product, goods, service) to one universal consumer concluding “a real

purchase” says little of the weight value of consumers demanding for these goods (Lomakin, 2004).

One can agree with the authors who notice the dialectical unity of the categories of “the competitiveness of goods” and “the competitiveness of a manufacturer”.

The author of this article assumes that the benefit of this group of definitions is that they are limited to the competitiveness of goods and services as the only factor of entity’ competitiveness and also consider the efficiency of industrial activities as a necessary and essential element in developing the competitive possibilities of an entity. However, it does not account for such factor as inconsistent competitiveness of a relative various period of time.

Many sources studied report that the competitiveness of a university is largely formed under the influence on one of the basic components — the staff of a university providing its high potential and competitiveness.

The analysis of literature enables to conclude: nowadays, the competitiveness of a university is its superiority over other universities in educational services and its ability to offer competitive services in the future.

There are many views on the content of the indices of competitiveness. The scientists identify economic, marketing, material-technical and staff components. They draw much attention to the component of “the competitiveness of graduates”.

The conducted study enables to identify basic determinants of the competitiveness of a university, namely:

1. The quality of educational service;
2. Financial and economic potential of a university;
3. Marketing;
4. Staff.

Each determinant, in its turn, represents a complex function of a large number of factors.

Managing the competitiveness of a university is a certain aspect of educational management aimed at elaborating, developing and realizing competitive advantages, stimulating the enrichment of potential (staff, logistics, informatization, public relations, etc.) and providing the stable position of universities in the competitive environment. The competitive environment covers the objects and factors of the market influencing the relations between the education establishment and customers.

Higher education establishments work in the market of educational services and products as well as in labor market. The market of educational services and products has some specifics defined by:

- first, the link between labor market and the market of educational services,
- second, the peculiarity of educational services in comparison with other services,
- third, the combination of the methods of state and market regulation.

To achieve long-term success, the work on providing the competitiveness of universities should be performed in all the spheres and by all the aspects of their activities. Thus, the key management aspects of providing the competitiveness of universities are:

- type of organizational structure,
- flexibility and rationality of management policy,
- style, methods and mechanisms of management,
- abilities of operative and tactical adaptation,
- flexibility or the style of ultrastability of universities.

Considering the aspect of the “flexibility or the style of ultrastability of universities” in details, some explanation is necessary.

The scientific literature reports that the style of ultrastability implies that an university maintains the system of management of competitiveness within some limits. These limits enable the university to follow to the goal-attractor. The goal-attractor may imply training of specialists demanded at the market of graduates. The obligatory federal programs, the State Educational Standards, tradition of the system of education and the mechanisms of their implementation perform the role of feedbacks keeping the program of system functioning.

The process of the management of university’s competitiveness can be formed of three components: studying the market of educational services and labor market, evaluating the competitiveness of an university and its competitors, choosing and implementing the strategy of behavior at the market.

It is only possible to use the theoretical model of managing the competitiveness of a university in practice if it is adjusted to the realities of a particular university.

The procedure of management defines the competitiveness of an university’s potential as an object of management and has a system of interrelated elements consisting of internal environment of an enterprise, its consumers and competitors united in a single whole for providing stable competitive positions and keeping the current ones and enhancing new competitive advantages.

The possibilities to define the forms of study and arrangement of educational process independently, provide supplementary educational services, elaborate and implement own programs of research, development and manufacturing activities independently, conduct publishing activities, work jointly with other universities, monitor the quality of education, address to the higher education authorities with the initiatives to introduce amendments to current legislation in the area of education in higher education establishments provided by the legislation increase the competitiveness and efficiency of the regional management of higher education.

Obviously, one can be successful in enhancing the competitiveness only with objective information about the dynamics of internal processes of statistics, the results of monitoring and marketing and sociological studies on certain topics. These data transform into information enabling to form the knowledge on the dynamics of processes in the system at the state and regional levels, in the higher education establishment, etc.

In the pursuit of increasing the competitiveness of a university, it is very important to take into account the specifics of interrelation between a higher education establishment and external environment. The process of making and implementing decisions for positive growth rates implies the setting of a goal, planning, organization, control and analysis, motivation, and communication. Besides, the managers of a higher education establishment should objectively evaluate the established positions in the market of educational services, understand the necessity of changes, and predict the effects of introduced amendments.

The rating system enables each university to evaluate its place in a particular system (group), to conduct objective analysis of one's strong and weak points with the purpose to correct the strategy of stable development so that to approach to the value of priority coefficient of this system as efficiently as possible.

Besides, there is an objective possibility to efficiently determine the strengths and weaknesses of the competitors in the segment of the educational service market and an ultimate factor — the labor market in a particular situation establishing in each administrative-territorial unit, region, and state in general.

The system innovations in the higher education are mostly based on the search for decisions on economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the activities of a higher educational establishment and the system in general, improving the processes of training, and the efficiency of implementing innovative technologies of education. These innovations can cause changes in the organization of a learning process pursuant to the requirements of the Bologna

Declaration. Obviously, this will significantly influence the quality of educational activities and the quality of higher education as well as the quality of the management of a higher education establishment at the organizational measuring. System innovations require to constantly accumulate information and knowledge on the processes in the external and internal contexts of the system of higher education.

Singular (accidental) innovations, opposite to system innovations, are occasional in the activities of a university. This is a spontaneous response to new possibilities or threats from external or internal environment. The examples include creation of new specialties, providing new educational services, permanent improvement of the process of education or the system of management. Implementation and realization of singular innovations is associated with great risk and is less efficient compared to the results of system innovations.

The innovations in the higher education can be subdivided into three groups according to the changes they lead to: radical, recombination and modification. Below, the characteristic of innovations according to the criterion of the reason of an active innovation will be considered.

The radical innovations in the universities are caused by the desire to obtain or confirm the leading position, to achieve competitiveness or hold it in the market of educational services and labor market due to the high quality of educational activity and the quality of higher education.

Recombination innovations are based on the necessity to diversify educational services and sources of financing, search for new segments of the market of educational services and labor market, and increase the efficiency of the management of a higher education establishment.

The modification innovations are caused by the necessity to satisfy clients' needs in the market of educational services and labor market.

It is necessary to elaborate a program (a set of works) aimed at solving the task of strengthening the status and position of an education establishment on the basis of the obtained results.

Development of the structure, elimination of weaknesses in the educational services and improvement of informational environment will enable a university to respond rapidly to the changes in the competitive environment by adjusting to it and occupying the most of the educational market pushing less competitive universities out.

The system of the management of university's competitiveness above focuses on a problem. This enables the management of a university to rapidly detect problems decreasing the competitiveness of the university, reveal the nature of these problems and reasons for them,

and, having found out all the circumstances, make address-focused decisions to remove defects and improve the competitive positions in the market.

Under conditions of the development of university's educational space, it is necessary to take into account independently the factors influencing its competitive advantages and position in the competitive environment. This will help to respond to the changes in competitive environment, occupy a large share of educational market and to push less competitive universities out.

Universities find various options to increase their competitiveness and make students' professional qualities correspondent to changing economics.

Thus, one of the options is to internationalize higher education. The internalization involves the following stages:

- invitation of foreign professors to give lectures and/or full courses of study;
- introduction of some courses or entire programs taught in English;
- providing students' training in foreign partner universities;
- enrollment of foreign trainee students;
- providing joint double degree programs with foreign partners (Porter, 1985).

Internationalization of higher education is the subject of M.E. Ulyanova's work (2010). M.E. Ulyanova says that the creation of joint double degree programs with foreign partner universities can be recognized as the most efficient method of education internationalization.

There are positive aspects of joint programs as they enable universities to implement some principles of Bologna process including:

- harmonization and comparability of education plans;
- transparency of education system;
- providing education quality;
- mobility of students and professors;
- employment assistance and attractiveness of European higher education.

Organizational form of these programs can vary and match the following criteria:

- they are jointly worked out and accepted by a number of universities;
- students study in a partner university for some period, the term of study in each university is distributed evenly;
- the results of exams are automatically calculated;
- there exist special commission on admittance and performance review of students;
- educational plans can be jointly worked out;

- professors can work in both universities.

However, it is difficult to implement some aspects of a double degree program. Thus, the diploma signed by two universities is invalid according to Russian legislation (Ulyanova, 2010).

Despite some difficulties in creating double degree programs, this example of university's adaptation to new economic conditions can be considered an efficient strategy that allows to make education more attractive, increase competitiveness and improve the image of Russian universities.

Another attractive strategy for increasing the competitiveness of a university in Russia's globalized economics is to create a model of entrepreneurial university.

The issues of entrepreneurial university creation are studied by both foreign and Russian researchers. Thus, I.M. Gaynutdinova (2010) reports that the development of university's entrepreneurial activity is primarily associated with implementation of innovative technologies of university management, i.e. optimization of business processes, diversification of forms and technologies for the implementation of educational programs in globalized economics and system of higher education.

An entrepreneurial university functions in several areas:

- education services;
- research and development;
- international education projects.

This, in turn, involves high-scale diversification of financing sources, including state order, wider consulting services, attracting funds from sponsors and philanthropists and implementation of various large projects (including international ones). The implemented model of entrepreneurial university strengthens the competitiveness of universities as well (Gaynutdinova, 2010).

There is another interesting example of a university across two cultures given in the work of A.A. Strizhenko (2000). The author reports that American University, Washington, DC, USA made an agreement on the provision of academic management in newly created American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates in 1997. This university is a cross-cultural establishment, i.e. implies partnership of students, professors and non-specialists (Strizhenko, 2000).

A similar education establishment, the Confucius Institute, is successful in implementing educational programs in the structure of universities in 15 Russian cities. These higher education establishments include:

- Belgorod State University (Belgorod);
- Far Eastern Federal University (Vladivostok);
- Ryazan State University (Ryazan);
- M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University (Moscow), and some others.

Creation and development of Confucius Institutes network is one of the most significant cultural and educational world projects of the beginning of the 21st century. It aims at consistent implementation of the policy of open and harmonious interstate and international relationships, in which cultural component plays a special role. The project was worked out on the model of already existed Servantes Universities (Spain) and Goethe Universities (Germany) by the office of State Department of CPR (Hanban).

Continuing the issue of study herein, we can notice that the modern stage of modernizing higher education will become successful only if its strategic ideas will be reinforced by serious changes in the approaches to the management of the education competitiveness in the universities. If divisional and utterly administrative system of management (where the mission of the professors' staff is just declared and not reinforced) is preserved, it will hardly become possible to implement new standards and educational programs, and any other reform will be proclaimed inefficient. New approaches to the selection and organization of education content and new pedagogical technologies will not work without increasing subjectivity of the participants of pedagogical process, mostly professors.

Discussion

The study suggests and justifies the definition of a modern university as an innovative structure, and analyses the objective prerequisites for reformation of the management system of such innovative university. It should be noticed that information systems enable universities not only to provide the efficiency of management due to automated communicative relations, but also to improve the management culture of an innovative university up to the modern level. The definition of innovation objects has determined the tasks of managing innovative university through defining benchmarks including the notion of competitiveness and quality of educational activities.

Nowadays Russia witnesses quite a difficult process of diversifying higher education establishments that determines many different models and configurations based on the

integration of education establishments of various level as well as merger and partnership of universities with scientific entities and perspective enterprises.

An innovative university represents the most important part of the economics of knowledge. It can be described, on the one hand, as a system of socio-economic activities and, on the other hand, as a system of value-oriented activities. In the framework of socially oriented activities, everything focuses on satisfying the needs of the customers of university's services in the best possible way. The value-oriented activities involve the development of the creative potential of a personality, its transformation, and raising the level of its competences.

Creation of an innovative university requires a qualitative change of technology and the content of educational, scientific, methodical, economic and industrial activities of the university. Thus, the university has to solve many current innovative tasks, and their solution brings serious changes into its management system.

To solve these tasks, one should not only change the system of management, but also to revise the staff policy. The staff policy is emphasized because the personnel are the main factor of providing university's services.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be noted that nowadays a proven strategy of market behavior is not enough for an university that aims at increasing its competitiveness. Objective need for modernization of higher education establishments is determined by economic reality. New solutions should be adopted, and models that increase the efficiency of the university's activity and provide its integral and stable development over a long period should be worked out. Irrespectively of the chosen model, solutions aimed at increasing university's competitiveness should improve education quality and develop new competences in graduates, including the ability to work in a multicultural business space and adapt to it.

ABORDAGENS MODERNAS PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO COMPETITIVO DE UNIVERSIDADES

RESUMO

Propósito O objetivo do estudo é apresentar teoria e métodos de sistema eficiente de desenvolvimento de competitividade da universidade.

Design/Metodologia/Abordagem Os métodos de estudo incluíram método cronológico, análise sistemática de informações estatísticas, método de avaliação de especialistas e processamento de dados matemáticos.

Descobertas A criação de uma universidade inovadora requer uma mudança qualitativa da tecnologia e do conteúdo das atividades educacionais, científicas, metódicas, econômicas e

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industriais da universidade. Para obter sucesso a longo prazo na afirmação da universidade no mercado educacional, o trabalho deve ser realizado em todas as esferas e em todos os aspectos de suas atividades. É muito importante levar em consideração as especificidades da inter-relação entre um estabelecimento de ensino superior e um ambiente externo; os gerentes da universidade devem avaliar objetivamente a posição da universidade no mercado de serviços educacionais, entender a necessidade de mudanças e prever os efeitos das emendas introduzidas. Existem diferentes estratégias destinadas a alcançar alta competitividade de uma universidade, incluindo a internalização do ensino superior e a criação de universidades empreendedoras.

Originalidade/Valor Os resultados representados no artigo podem ser usados pelos diretores dos estabelecimentos de ensino superior para otimizar o sistema de gestão da competitividade das universidades. O artigo também pode ser útil para especialistas que preparam edições e guias de estudo para estudantes especializados em gerenciamento em educação e para não especialistas interessados neste tópico.

Palavras-chave: universidade, competitividade, abordagem, desenvolvimento, competição.

ENFOQUES MODERNOS PARA EL DESARROLLO UNIVERSITARIO COMPETITIVO

RESUMEN

Propósito El objetivo del estudio es presentar la teoría y los métodos del sistema eficiente de desarrollo competitivo universitario.

Design/Methodología/Enfoque Los métodos de estudio incluyeron método cronológico, análisis sistemático de información estadística, método de evaluación experta y procesamiento de datos matemáticos.

Resultados La creación de una universidad innovadora requiere un cambio cualitativo en la tecnología y el contenido de las actividades educativas, científicas, metódicas, económicas e industriales de la universidad. Para el éxito a largo plazo en afirmar la universidad en el mercado educativo, se debe trabajar en todas las esferas y en todos los aspectos de sus actividades. Es muy importante tener en cuenta las especificidades de la interrelación entre un establecimiento de educación superior y un entorno externo; Los gerentes universitarios deben evaluar objetivamente la posición de la universidad en el mercado de servicios educativos, comprender la necesidad de cambio y predecir los efectos de las enmiendas introducidas. Existen diferentes estrategias para lograr la alta competitividad de una universidad, incluida la internalización de la educación superior y la creación de universidades empresariales.

Originalidad/Valor Los resultados representados en el artículo pueden ser utilizados por los jefes de las instituciones de educación superior para optimizar el sistema de gestión de la competitividad de las universidades. El artículo también puede ser útil para especialistas que preparan ediciones y guías de estudio para estudiantes especializados en gestión educativa y para no especialistas interesados en este tema.

Palabras clave: universidad, competitividad, enfoque, desarrollo, competencia.

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