

Business Education in the Marketplace: Study Programs as Unifying Force?

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Management education (ME) has been confronted with many challenges and changes. Major factors that shook the business education are: a) the environment that has changed significantly by global economic crisis, marked by Lehman Brothers disclosure, recession in Europe, and global public (non)-trust that managers lead their companies transparently, honestly, and in a sustainable manner; and b) changes in European higher education space, related to the so-called 'Bologna system'. There is an extensive body of literature critical of how business schools provide management education (e.g. Management learning, Academy of Management Learning & Education). Broughton (2009) is particularly critical of business schools, both in terms of their inability to produce skills to anticipate the economic crisis and in terms of their graduates' careers. In his view, pre-determined for financial sector and consultancy, graduates will have to wait for better times to reach 'the pay-back'.

One of major structural changes in European higher education was implementation of the 'Bologna system'. The aim of these structural reforms, covered under umbrella notion of Bologna processes, was to open higher education space. In accordance with further developments, today's European higher education space has reached the stage of synchronization or, to say politically correctly, harmonization in terms of structure and broad opportunities for students' mobility. This harmonization can also be associated with standardization and isomorphism (Wedlin, 2007), reflected in credit system (ECTS), in duration of studies, and also in terms of the content, courses. Faculties and schools, members of the universities, provide similar courses in similar programs and similarly describe their learning outcomes and aims of the courses.

The purpose of this study is to explore differences and similarities in teaching and learning methods as they are presented and advertised via webpages. The study is based on secondary data analysis. We analysed 14 European universities out of 28 from the list of 28 countries (https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/countries_en). We took every second country, then we looked at the university, located in the capital city, and if there were more universities in the capital city we selected the one that has webpage in English language. And, if there were still more universities, we chose one that has business school with the longest tradition. We were focused on MSc study programs.

Preliminary findings show business schools emphasize their past success, their links to economy and commerce, their successful students but they do not define how 'the same' courses will be differently

thought. The only exception that schools mention is mode of delivery – face to face or distance learning.

Keywords: management education, higher education, competition, diversification

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