

Artículo de investigación

Structural models of corporate universities in the United States of America**Структурні моделі корпоративних університетів у Сполучених Штатах Америки**

Recibido: 12 de agosto del 2019

Aceptado: 25 de septiembre del 2019

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Abstract

Growing competition in the rapidly developing information society and global economy poses new challenges before businesses. Corporate sector is becoming more and more aware of the decisive role which highly qualified human resources play in the successful functioning of companies in national and international markets. The search for new ways and mechanisms of training employees lead to the creation of corporate university as an advanced form of organizational learning. In view of the importance of this innovative educational phenomenon and the diversity of ways of its realization, the authors aim to analyze the structural models of corporate universities classified by scientists based on different criteria. The methodology of the research was based on interdisciplinary and systemic approaches. We used a complex of interrelated methods: comparative, structural, systemic-functional analysis, comparison and synthesis which are suitable for the study of scientific papers, official documents, empirical data. Particular attention is focused on the main classifications which are based on the availability of campus, the way of subordination of the university in the organization's hierarchy, form and degree of centralization of control over the corporate university. Organizational features of corporate university in the United States of America are highlighted. The authors conclude that, despite the differences between companies, particularly, in the areas of activity, missions and strategic goals, modern corporate universities in all their structural diversity become a mechanism of professional training and development, which, on the one hand, performs the function of the development of the

Анотація

Зростаюча конкуренція в умовах швидкого розвитку інформаційного суспільства та глобальної економіки ставить перед бізнесом нові виклики. Корпоративний сектор все більше усвідомлює вирішальну роль, яку відіграють висококваліфіковані людські ресурси в успішному функціонуванні компаній на національному та міжнародному ринках. Пошук нових шляхів та механізмів навчання працівників зумовив появу корпоративного університету як передової форми навчання в організації. З огляду на важливість цього інноваційного освітнього явища та різноманітність способів його реалізації, автори мають на меті проаналізувати структурні моделі корпоративних університетів, які вчені класифікують за різними критеріями. Методологія дослідження базувалася на міждисциплінарному та системному підходах. Ми використовували комплекс взаємопов'язаних методів: порівняльний, структурний, системно-функціональний аналіз, порівняння та синтез, доцільних для вивчення наукових праць, офіційних документів, емпіричних даних. Особливу увагу зосереджено на основних класифікаціях, що ґрунтуються на наявності кампусу, способі підпорядкування університету в ієрархії організації, формі та ступені централізації контролю над корпоративним університетом. Висвітлено організаційні особливості корпоративного університету в Сполучених Штатах Америки. Авторі роблять висновок, що, незважаючи на

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organization aimed at ensuring its competitiveness and, on the other hand, – the function of development of employees and motivating them to continuous professional growth, which is the basis of their personal competitiveness. Thus, corporate university can be considered as a link between the sustainable development of the company and the individual continuous professional development of employees.

Key Words: Corporate training, corporate university, organization, structural models of corporate universities, the United States of America.

відмінності між компаніями, зокрема, у сферах діяльності, місії та стратегічній меті, сучасні корпоративні університети у всьому їх структурному різноманітті стають механізмом професійного навчання та розвитку, який, з одного боку, виконує функцію розвитку організації, спрямованого на забезпечення її конкурентоспроможності, а з іншого боку, – функцію розвитку працівників та мотивації їх до постійного професійного зростання, що є основою їхньої особистої конкурентоспроможності. Таким чином, корпоративний університет можна розглядати як сполучну ланку між стійким розвитком компанії та індивідуальним постійним професійним розвитком працівників.

Ключові слова: корпоративне навчання, корпоративний університет, організація, структурні моделі корпоративних університетів, Сполучені Штати Америки.

Introduction

Growing competition in the rapidly developing information society and global economy poses new challenges before businesses. Corporate sector is becoming more and more aware of the decisive role which highly qualified human resources play in successful positions of companies in national and international markets. The search for new ways and mechanisms of training employees lead to the creation of corporate university as an advanced form of learning in organization which to the fullest extent embodies the convergence of business and education as also focuses on personnel training and development aimed at meeting the needs of the company (Lytovchenko, 2016 a). In view of the importance of this innovative educational phenomenon and diversity of ways of its realization, the aim of our study is to analyze the structural models of corporate universities in the United States of America as country where they first emerged, highly developed and are widely spread.

Theoretical framework

The analysis of scientific sources (Rademakers, 2014; Barrow, 2017; Dealtry, 2017; Wheeler & Clegg, 2012; Lipp, 2013; Frazee, 2002; Meister, 1998b; Noe, 2010) shows that corporate university is becoming a symbol of significance of personnel training and development for companies, serves as an incentive for continuous professional development of each employee,

provides a close link between training and business while traditional educational institutions provide broader vocational education and training and cannot account for the needs of each corporation in their programs. We can also consider corporate university as “an innovative form of partnerships between education and industry... contributing to powerful knowledge development, narrowing the gap between the education sector and the marketplace, solving complex social problems and accelerating the economic growth of the country” (Lytovchenko, 2016 b).

However, given the differences in the development conceptions, strategic goals, needs of organizations, features of their corporate culture and the volume of resources allocated by them for employee training, corporate universities of different companies in the United States differ in aims, objectives, structural features, teaching methods. Each corporate university is as unique and exclusive as its parent company, the purpose and structural and functional characteristics of each corporate university are determined by the available resources, its aims and organizational culture (Kent, 2005).

The results of the study suggest that in the United States, institutions of different educational levels can be called corporate universities. The range of educational programs they provide varies from

the basic to the postgraduate level, although nowadays only a small number of universities offer bachelor's, master's or doctoral programs, in view of the complexity of the accreditation procedure for in-company training programs and the costs associated with supporting such accreditation. A corporate university can be a large educational institution which, by its size and volume of training courses, can be compared with traditional universities. However, it can also be a small educational center which seeks to improve its status by calling itself a corporate university. As argued by Hulse and Nicolai (2004), according to the purpose, it can exist in different formats: from a training center for new employees to an elite program of training high-level executives or universal in-company training centers accessible to all employees. Emphasizing the flexibility of corporate university models, Paton, Peters, Storey and Talor (2005) argue that in fact there are no two identical corporate universities and even suggest using the term "strategic educational initiatives" instead of "corporate educational programs".

Methodology

The methodology of the research was based on interdisciplinary and systemic approaches. We used a complex of interrelated methods: comparative, structural, systemic-functional analysis, comparison and synthesis which are suitable for the study of scientific papers, official documents, empirical data.

Results and discussion

In view of this, we find it necessary to consider different classifications of corporate universities which are important for understanding their aims, structure, organizational features, learning process, make it possible to analyze, compare and predict their activities in more detail. At the same time, scholars emphasize that classifications are not permanent or unchanged and should evolve with the evolution of corporate universities (McKinney, 1966).

There are many attempts to identify the key characteristics which make it appropriate to classify corporate universities and allow identifying their common and distinctive features, analyzing the reasons why some of them are more successful and effective than others, thereby helping university leaders identify ways to improve them. Such classifications are mostly based on the following criteria: strategy, level of development, size, use of technology, structure, accountability, purpose,

degree of autonomy in decision-making, method of evaluating the results, management, etc.

Abel (2008) highlights the following main aspects of corporate university activities that can serve as a conceptual framework for corporate university classification:

- Organizational aspect: the size of the university, its age, structure, stage of development, management and leadership, strategy and mission;
- Educational aspect: curricula, contingent of students, evaluation of the effectiveness of training programs;
- Functional aspect: use of technologies, sources of financing;
- Partnership aspect: relations with companies, human resources department, external providers, academic educational institutions.

The analysis of literature shows that, in developing classifications of corporate universities, scientists demonstrate different visions of the basic structural components of the corporate university model. Thus, Prince and Stewart (2002, p. 805) present it as a combination of four key processes taking place in a corporate university: knowledge systems and processes; networks and partnerships processes; people processes; learning processes. According to these scholars, without the coordination and support of these four processes, a corporate university cannot fulfill its role of an organizer and coordinator of learning in an organization. By combining and coordinating these four structural components, the corporate university is the driving force behind the transformations in the pursuit of the strategic goal of the organization.

The study of scientific sources shows that different models of corporate universities are distinguished, depending on the criterion chosen. We consider it appropriate to investigate the structural features of corporate universities in the US in the context of analyzing their structural models which scholars view from different perspectives. Thus, Paton, Peters, Storey, and Talor (2005) suggest campus-based classification. Accordingly, these scholars distinguish between corporate universities that have their own campus (campus-based learning) and those that exist in virtual form or combine e-learning with on-site training in the corporate learning centers network (distributed learning). They also differentiate the content of training activities that may be highly specialized and involve the development of certain professional

skills, transfer of information or broader content of professional development including the adoption of corporate values, rules and regulations, coverage of a wide range of research and teaching degree programs.

These scholars (Paton, Peters, Storey, & Talor, 2005) distinguish four types of corporate universities: computer-based teaching over the intranet, networked communities, classic training schools, chateau experience. This typology shows current trends in corporate education which indicate that classic training school continues to exist, but ceases to be the dominant type of corporate university, giving way to three other types of this institution.

While Paton, Peters, Storey, & Talor (2005) consider campus-based structural models of corporate universities, Allen (2002) views them from the perspective of university subordination in the organization's hierarchy, since it defines the mode of university functioning. He identifies three ways of subordination of a corporate university in an organization: 1) to senior management; 2) to the human resources department; 3) to a unit of a company or a subsidiary company. The scientist stresses that the way of subordination defines how fast and comprehensive the support of the university from the company will be.

In context of our analysis, we will consider another classification of corporate university structural models proposed by Wheeler & Clegg (2005) which is based on the criterion of the form and degree of centralization of control over corporate university and, accordingly, identifies centralized, decentralized, and federal models. In case of a centralized model, the corporate university is accountable to only one person. This model is very effective when the organization is small in size and needs to actively promote training programs.

In a decentralized model, there is no centralized control over the university. Its various divisions have complete freedom in the development of programs, curricula, courses, their content, duration and cost. This model is highly effective, especially for international companies with subsidiaries in different countries, since it helps these companies to address cultural and job specific issues in different parts of the world. For example, the virtual Intel University does not have a clear organizational structure or specific management center. But most of its fifty divisions do not exist virtually but are campus-based and located within the corporation

premises. They provide programs and services through websites or have their own campuses. Intel University coordinates all units, disseminates and unifies technologies, methods, techniques of personnel training in accordance with company needs (Wheeler & Clegg, 2005).

The federal model, as noted by Wheeler and Clegg (2005), provides for a central unit that manages, coordinates, and links all of the University's units in different locations. However, the local units have certain autonomy, in particular, each of them can choose which functions to delegate to the central management in order to achieve consistency of content and effectiveness of training. An example of such a university is National Semiconductor University, which assists its parent company, National Semiconductor, in developing common learning standards and common curriculum.

Each form of corporate university can provide a desired result, depending on the level of development of the organizational training system. It is important to emphasize that organizational learning is humanistic in its nature (Lytovchenko, 2016 c) and is based on andragogical principles. Being to a high degree learner-centered, it involves: prioritizing self-study; immediate use of the acquired knowledge and skills on the job place; choice of content and technologies of learning according to the age characteristics of students, their individual abilities and level of development, area of learning; variety of forms of training, their flexibility in the implementation of the adult education process in modern business; connection of the acquired theoretical knowledge with the professional activity of learners; certain freedom of learners in the choice of purpose, content, technology, resources, time, duration and place of learning; active collaboration of the teacher and the learner, their partnership relations, reflective approach to learning.

Based on the analysis of the scientific literature on the problem under study, we can summarize the main organizational features of the corporate university:

- *The purpose of programs.* It varies over a wide range: from the development of top-level executives to the development of each employee, to the diverse training of the entire production chain of the company, including its suppliers and clients.
- *Form of creation.* A corporate university can operate as a structural

unit (department, etc.) of an organization or as a subsidiary, that is, a separate legal entity. It may also be a program created at an academic institution.

- *Management.* A corporate university may be governed by a corporation, in particular, by the human resources department of the organization, or may have its own governing bodies.
- *Financing.* A corporate university can be funded from the corporation's budget or through its own business activities.
- *Form of functioning.* A corporate university can operate with the use of material resources and property that provide for its activities (premises, campuses, facilities) or exist in virtual form using electronic learning tools.
- *Form of training.* A corporate university can use face-to-face training, distance learning and blended learning, which is a combination of the first and second forms.
- *Alignment with the organization's strategy.* Alignment with the organization's strategy can be vertical – from top to bottom or vice versa – from bottom to top. In the first case, the strategic goal of the corporation is embodied in the learning programs of the university. In the second case, the results of the university's research and learning activities are reflected in the organization's development strategy.
- *Reporting.* The university can report to the corporation in a variety of ways – from simple provision of information about the training services provided by the university to evaluating the impact of training on the performance and the innovating of the organization.

Paton, Peters, Storey and Talor (2005) identify three areas that are of high priority in planning the structural and organizational features of a future corporate university:

- Functional features of the future institution, in particular its role in the development of the parent company and contribution to the company's activities;
- The form of organization, in particular, the determination of how "real" or "virtual" it can be, what services it can provide using in-house facilities and what services – with the use of external providers;

- Financing and management, including how it can be effectively integrated into other, broader systems which it needs to serve.

Allen (2002) argues that the most effective corporate universities are those whose primary function is to help the organizations achieve their corporate aims. And while the creation of a corporate university does not have to be an end in itself, it should be seen as a mechanism to help an organization accomplish its strategic goals. A corporate university should not duplicate, in whole or in part, the functions of a traditional university. Corporate programs differ in quality and content from traditional universities (Dealtry, 2001), but they also take into account the main pedagogical and psychological characteristics of adult learning (Ogienko, 2016; Saienko, 2017).

Conclusions

According to the results of our research, we can say that, despite the differences between companies, particularly, in the areas of activity, missions and strategic goals, modern corporate universities in all their structural diversity have become a mechanism of professional training and development, which, on the one hand, performs the function of the development of the organization aimed at ensuring its competitiveness and, on the other hand, – the function of development of employees and motivating them to continuous professional growth, which is the basis of their personal competitiveness. Thus, corporate university can be considered as a link between the sustainable development of the company and the individual continuous professional development of employees.

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