Ensuring competitiveness in the system of additional professional education

Tatyana Vladimirovna Matveeva, Natalia Vyacheslavovna Mashkova, Eduard Viktorovich Patrakov, Oleg Vladimirovich Obukhov

Ural Federal University named after the first Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Mira Str. 19, Yekaterinburg, 620002, Russia

Abstract. The article studies the operating conditions for the system of additional professional education from the perspective of innovative support; considers the stages of assessment of competitiveness of an additional professional education entity; analyzes elements of the system of competitiveness support in the educational services market. For improvement of competitiveness of the additional professional education entities, the authors suggest selecting the most important indexes and factors of the macroenvironment, the infrastructure of the region, and the microenvironment, and record and analyze these parameters regularly.

Introduction

Education at all stages of its development acted as a stabilizer and determined the society development. This role currently remains the important and timely one, as all trends and contradictions of the contemporary world raise new problems, solution of which primarily depends on stable development of the education system.

In the current circumstances, when the world education system plays the decisive role in cultural and social development of people, new requirements are produced to education being a social institution, as the dynamics of requests and real demand of labor markets, according to Khairullina N.G. and Yumachikova Y.R., requires qualitative reforms and improvement of flexibility of the additional education institution [1].

Methodology

The problems of supporting competitiveness of organizations determine its comparative competitive advantages with respect to the rivals in the market of educational services. This approach is an essential condition of functioning of the system of additional professional education (hereinafter - APE) from the perspective of innovative support.

The weak position of the previous APE system was the absence of a structure responsible for profit gain. At that, the organizational connections that existed independently were weak, which resulted in diminishing the opportunities of innovative transformation in the APE system.

Body of the work

According to the authors, the main condition of stable operation of the APE system is the improvement of competitiveness of this education segment, which requires:

- applying scientific approach to innovative, strategic management;
- developing a mechanism of flexible pricing depending on the education process market state;
- implementing an innovative strategy and ensuring the unity of development of information technology and management with accurate detailing by stages of competitive advantages (CA);
- unifying the quality and the aggregate costs for all stages of the lifecycle of entities;
- applying modern methods of research and development (functional cost analysis, simulation, forecasting, optimization, economic substantiation of each decision, program-based planning, strategic innovative projects, etc.);
- maintaining the interconnection between the functions of managing any process at any stage of the lifecycle of entities;
- forming a system of measures related to managing competitiveness of APE entities with various extent of adaptation to market environment.

The system of innovative support of the APE entities and the system of competitiveness support (hereinafter - SCS) are a set of interconnected measures, which enable an entity in certain modes of operation to achieve predictable results [2].

The system of competitiveness support includes:

- the entity – the motion force, which activates this system;
- the goals – the program results of this system operation;
- the methods – the tooling required for achievement of the set goals;
- the form – the required organizational documenting of tutorial and methodological approaches;
- the means – the aggregate of types and methods of a problem solution.

The system's targets are implementation of the economic potential in a particular form, support of stable stimuli for the audience, rendering high quality education services, managing skilled, innovative, and creative individuals in the market of educational services.

Following the goals of the APE system operation, according to the authors, the system of competitiveness support can be represented from the perspective of systemic approach in the form of a block diagram (Figure 1).
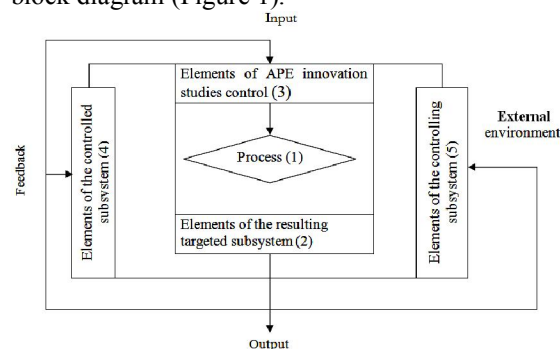

Figure 1. The system of APE competitiveness support

When applying the systemic approach, the subject of management must ensure high quality of the output of this system (if its input quality is high), which is at the same time the input of another system. At that, we need to take into account the internal and external environment.

For improvement of competitiveness of the APE entities, it is necessary to select the most important indexes and factors of the macroenvironment, the infrastructure of the region, and the microenvironment, record and analyze these readings regularly. The main task of the analysis is to determine the state balance of the elements of the external environment of the studied entity's SCS, develop and implement measures on improvement of the elements' quality and ensuring of their balance.

It is reasonable to study the elements of the educational innovative system from the perspective of competitiveness in the following order:

The SCS efficiency is to be determined by the quality of scientific support of management of the APE competitiveness.

We find the structure of the subsystem of SCS scientific support to be as follows:
1. study of the problems of competition and competitiveness as the motion force in education;
2. economic laws of market relations mechanisms;
3. laws of organization under static and dynamic conditions;
4. scientific approach to management of competitiveness of the APE entities;
5. the principles of entities' management;
6. the system of project management;
7. the main methods of management;
8. study of the competitive advantages of various entities;
9. the methodological principles of evaluation of APE competitiveness.

SCS functioning is possible based on the analysis of entities, economic feasibility, rationalization of structures and processes, and management of the education quality.

Generally, the work on evaluation of competitiveness of the services of an APE entity includes stating the task, analyzing and forecasting the demand, prices, costs, and requirements of the consumer market, selecting technical and economic indexes for evaluation of the competitiveness of the entity, selecting the database (of analogs) for comparing with the real entity, evaluating the competitiveness of the APE entity by information and economic readings, providing integral assessment of the competitiveness of the APE entity, and developing recommendations.

The analysis of the domestic and foreign experience in the problem of management of competitiveness of educational institutions enabled us to identify its several aspects [3, 4, 5, 6]:

- evaluating the competitiveness (finding the competitiveness measures);
- bringing the existing parameters to the required competitive level (CL);
- maintaining the CL by controlling and adjusting.

Each of the aspects involves multiple tasks, which can be solved in various ways. Some of them involve only the technology of the work fulfillment and can be applied disregarding the external environment factors without considerable restructuring of the APE system organization and management.

Others involve not only internal, but also external connections of the organization and require considerable transformations of the activity content, the structure, and the number of divisions, their functions, etc.

The first group of tasks, which target finding the APE system competitiveness measures, includes the following most important ones:

- measuring the education services market level;
- measuring the costs for educational products (services) at all stages of lifecycle;
- determining the innovative level of the education services market;
- determining the timeliness of rendering the education services.

The tasks of the second group include:

- analysis of the demand for the services (in various markets, of various consumers);
- comprehensive analysis of own educational product (parameters, functions, structure, internal organization, applications, etc.);
- comprehensive analysis of the substituting educational services;
- analysis of competitors' services;
- determination of the education services' lifecycle stage.

The main role in managing the APE system competitiveness belongs to the third group of tasks: optimization of the quality and costs; usage of advanced standards for the services; expedited update of specific services (creation of brand new or modified ones); improvement of the education system; introduction of a relevant incentive system; providing necessary and reliable information

The concept of the APE system competitiveness is based on the necessity of expedited satisfaction of the requirements of the education market, saturation of the market with the services of primary demand and stable development of APE entities in the circumstances of competition [7].

These goals are to be achieved by means of integration of the efforts on improvement of the education market quality and bringing the costs down to the functionally reasonable level. Improvement of the competitive position of educational services considerably depends on the scale of innovations usage.

Evaluation of the competitive position of an APE entity is necessary for development of measures on improvement of the APE entity competitiveness; selection of the partner for organization; raising investors' funds for prospective corporate projects;

creation of pilot business projects on approbation of innovative education programs.

Determination of the APE position in the education services market is possible only if prompt and unbiased methodology of competitiveness evaluation is available.

As it has been noticed previously, one of the constituent elements of the system of competitiveness support of an APE entity is the marketing block, which performs the assigned functions. Besides, the system of support needs to take the existing competition into account (Figure 2).
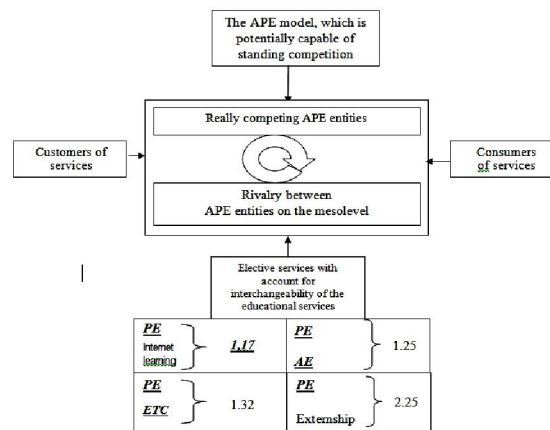

Figure 2. The system of the APE entities competition according to the model of M. Porter [8]

The stability of the system of APE entity competitiveness management is a generalizing concept, which includes a large battery of factors. Anyway, loss of stability can happen in the result of the system parameters change, external influence (particularly, too significant by value or qualitatively incompatible with the system), or in case of disorder of connections within the system when the structure of the system changes (structural instability). Sharing the viewpoint of Borisenko [9], we will supplement it in terms of stability, which is determined by the ability of a system to save its quality in the circumstances of changing environment and internal transformations (occasional or intentional).

Conclusion

According to the systems theory, quality is measured based on the system's goals. Maintenance of the stability of the APE innovative development system is the internal goal of the system, which, unlike the external one, characterizes the relations with the environment. Consequently, the system must be arranged in such a way as to ensure its own survival, stability in the dynamic environment, and at

the same time development and a certain goal achievement.

Characterizing the stability of the system, the economic stability of the APE, we determine such state of all of its resources, at which not only the quality is ensured in the circumstances of dynamic environment and internal transformations, but also the higher educational institution achieves the goal of its mission – creation of high quality human capital for enterprises in the circumstances of intelligent economy.

APE entities do not just compete with each other trying to attract the audience; they depend more and more on financing their activity by differentiation and diversification of the offered products and services. The ambivalent nature of higher educational institutions and APE entities is obvious: social goals are largely achieved through commercial activity [10].

Depending on the goal of an APE entity, the economic stability is characterized using the indexes of competitiveness, the financial readings, and the volume of economic potential.

The competitiveness index allows assessing the extent of relevance of an educational program or an APE entity to the market demand. Financial stability is the indicator of usage of financial resources in the circumstances of developing environment. Interaction of these two elements allows assessing the ability to maintain stable position of an APE entity in the external environment. However, it must not be ignored that the main goal of an educational institution's activity is the social effect; therefore, profit is an auxiliary element, which supports achievement of the goal.

Summary

Taking into account the broad range of the issues for an APE at entering the consumer market, and then at maintaining its positions in various markets, the system of competitiveness support needs to include subsystems of both preparatory actions and analysis and diagnostics, namely analysis of consumer products and education technology, analysis of demand and needs of customers, survey of educational services markets, analysis of the operating environment, competition, differentiation of services, and strategic planning of the APE entity operation.

Corresponding Author:
Dr.Matveeva Tatyana Vladimirovna
Ural Federal University named after the first Russian President Boris Yeltsin
5/23/2014

Mira Str. 19, Yekaterinburg, 620002, Russia

References
1. Khairullina, N.G. and Y.R. Yumachikova, 2004. A Regional University in the Circumstances of of Education Modernization. Tyumen: The Tyumen State Oil and Gas University Publishing House, pp: 54.
2. Vanyurikhin, G.I., 2001. Creative Management. Management in Russia and Abroad, 2.
3. Research in the Sociology of Education, Vol. 12, 2000. Eds., Pallas, A.M. New York.
4. Education and Technology: Meeting the Needs of Tomorrow, 1999. Washington.
5. The University of the Future: Problems a. Prospects, 1990. Columbus.
6. Education and the Economy: An Indication Rep, 1997. Washington.
7. Matveeva, T.V., 2007. Modern State and Directions of Innovative Development of the Additional Professional Education. Regional Economy: the Theory and the Practice, 17(56): 67-77.
8. Porter, M., 2002. International Competition. Moscow: Ekonomika, pp: 256.
9. Borisenko, N.Y., 2001. Certain Theoretical Aspects of Financial Stability. Accounting in Budgetary and Non-Commercial Organizations, 17(47): 26-35.
10. Matveeva, T.V., 2007. Guarantees of Quality in the System of Additional Professional Education. Yekaterinburg: RAS, pp: 200.
11. Tatyana Vladimirovna Matveeva, PhD of Economics, Head of Department of Entrepreneurship and Innovations, Ural Federal University named after the first Russian President Boris Yeltsin, 19 Mira Str., Yekaterinburg, 620002, Russia
12. Natalia Vyacheslavovna Mashkova, Candidate of Economic Science, Assistant Professor of the Department of Entrepreneurship and Innovations, Ural Federal University named after the first Russian President Boris Yeltsin, 19 Mira Str., Yekaterinburg, 620002, Russia.
13. Eduard Viktorovich Patrakov, Candidate of Pedagogical Science, Head of Department of social Safety, Ural Federal University named after the first Russian President Boris Yeltsin, 19 Mira Str., Yekaterinburg, 620002, Russia.
14. Oleg Vladimirovich Obukhov, Candidate of Economic Science, Head of Department of Economics and Product Quality Management, Ural Federal University named after the first Russian President Boris Yeltsin, 19 Mira Str., Yekaterinburg, 620002, Russia.