

Possibilities for creation of an entrepreneurial university in Kazakhstan

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Abstract

The article describes the features of the new model of university - entrepreneurial university, as well as reflects the characteristics of the Karaganda Economic University, which is currently on a way of creating an entrepreneurial university.

Keywords: competitiveness, entrepreneurial university, Kazakhstani University

1 Introduction

In today's world, the competition is becoming overpowering, penetrating into the internal environment of any company that needs to be competitive at every level of both external and internal environment.

In the external environment, competitiveness is based on the new level of cooperation between the company and its partners, which become important economic actors of the new economy. In the internal environment, an increasingly important role in enhancing the competitiveness of companies is played by employees, providing the utmost impact on the competitiveness of the organization. Formation of new realities in the current economic climate depends on the change of company's management of competitiveness. It is necessary to modify the principles and models of successful entrepreneurship, rethinking of the essence of entrepreneurship, its objectives and content aspects of the activity (work with information, knowledge, management of intangible resources and turning them into assets).

This provision is not new and is especially important for universities in modern conditions.

2 Overview of the study area

Nowadays rather high demands are imposed on universities from the external environment, which include not just consumers, but students as well. Existing, often traditional, ways of meeting these requests do not work. Therefore, today there is a process of creating a new model of university - entrepreneurial university. This model should be a precondition for many Kazakhstani universities to improve the quality of educational services in the first place, and in the future it will be the key to maintain the status of active, qualified social institution.

Creation of the entrepreneurial universities is especially actual for the countries with large supplies of natural resources (oil, gas, natural minerals) among which there is Kazakhstan, where traditionally the resource-oriented economy created. In case of fast-growing rates of new

technologies emergence these countries are faced with the task of the innovative economy development and integration into the international scientific and technical community. Thus, universities play a crucial role in the acceleration of the adaptation process, positive changes and development of the entrepreneurial thinking of students, teachers and researchers.

The review of literature shows that the thorough study of the process of creating entrepreneurial universities in Kazakhstan has not been conducted. The nature of entrepreneurial universities is considered in the works of B.R. Clark, G.N. Konstatinov, and S.R. Filonovich, A.O.Grudzinskii et al.

Based on research findings, B. Clark has developed five common transformational elements that are inherent in entrepreneurial university. B. Clark, one of the most famous developers of the given conception, said that the main feature of the entrepreneurial university is the absence of fear to commercialize the generation and disseminate the knowledge [1].

The following definition of the entrepreneurial university can be formulated: "Entrepreneurial University is a higher education institution that systematically makes efforts to overcome the limitations in three areas - the generation of knowledge, teaching and transforming knowledge into practice - by initiating new activities, transformation of the internal environment and modification of interaction with the external environment" [1]. Currently, there are certain attempts to create entrepreneurial universities in Kazakhstan. However, these disparate and isolated cases do not allow conceiving a general picture of the status and prospects of development of entrepreneurial universities. Moreover, the mechanism of formation of entrepreneurial universities in Kazakhstan is indistinct.

As it was mentioned above, B. Clark has developed five common transformational elements inherent to entrepreneurial university: reinforced guiding core, extended periphery of development, diversified funding base, stimulating academic support and integrated entrepreneurial culture.

The given article will consider these elements from the position of one of the Kazakhstani universities -Karaganda Economic University of Kazpotreboyozy (KEUK). KEUK carries out training of specialist's at all three levels of national education system: Bachelor - Master - Doctorate PhD. In accordance with state license, university realizes 21 higher education programs and 16 graduate programs. According to the general ranking of universities it was ranked 2nd among humanitarian and economic institutions, and has 15th place in the top 20 best universities in Kazakhstan. All educational programs of the University are included in the top twenty specialties of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

In accordance with the current mission, KEUK, being one of the leading universities of Kazakhstan of economic profile, positions itself as an innovative university that implements educational and scientific policy as a basis for professional growth and personal development of specialists for the economy of Kazakhstan [2]. In the process of transformation into the entrepreneurial university, it is required to make conscious efforts to build the university that actively uses innovations and takes risks when developing new practices to significantly change the nature of the activities of the higher education institution in order to be in a more favorable position in the future. Entrepreneurial universities strive to become "resistant" universities and important independent players not only at the regional level, but also nationally and globally.

Let us consider the transformational elements by B. Clarkin KEUK.

1. Reinforced guiding core. According to B. Clark "traditional European universities throughout long time were incapable to independently direct the development" [1]. The same can be also told about higher education institutions of Kazakhstan. During existence of the USSR higher education institutions to a smaller extent, than the European universities, could choose independently the direction of development. In the tough state planned economy all activities of higher education institutions were strictly regulated from the center, from the Ministry. After the USSR breakdown and the independence acquisition the picture in Kazakhstan didn't change strongly, the difference was that there were many private higher educational institutions. State universities continued the activities in those traditions, developed for 70 years of the USSR existence. The majority of private higher educational institutions also performed the activities in old traditions. This results from the fact that former employees of traditional Soviet higher educational institutions became the founders and heads of the majority of private higher educational institutions. Besides, both state, and private higher educational institutions regulated the activities under the strict control of the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan (MES RK). Certainly, University of Nazarbayev should be noted that was initially planned and created as the University of the western type. Now it is even more often spoken in mass media about autonomous higher educational institutions. MES RK plans to turn a number of state universities into autonomous universities. It is a serious strategic step from the Government of Kazakhstan. However, as B. Clark specifies "Autonomous universities can be passive. They can live past, instead of looking

forward. They can be content with what they already became, and not to wish something greater" [1]. The question arises, whether the concept of "autonomous universities" is sufficient that universities of Kazakhstan became entrepreneurial? Clark gives the answer to this question, to make the autonomous higher educational institutions be entrepreneurial "the need new organizational elements which in total characterize entrepreneurial university" [1]. It is possible to tell that the concept of "autonomous universities" is necessary, but insufficient for transformation of higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan into entrepreneurial, other organizational elements are needed. First of all, it is necessary to form a strong team in the higher educational institution, capable "to quickly and flexibly react on growing and changing requests" [1]. Under the strong team is understood both strong group of heads of higher educational institution, and strong groups of departments (chairs).

Specific feature of the reinforced guiding core of KEUK is that the main team of central administration consists of those who work in this institution for a long period, i.e. this is the team that has absorbed the traditional values of the university and has a staunch reputation among staff and students. A further strategic development of our university will be directed at strengthening of the basic elements of entrepreneurial university, among which the most important role belongs to the extended periphery development.

2. Extended periphery of development. Strong management along with the traditional divisions (chairs, departments, laboratories, etc.) shall create the interdisciplinary project-oriented research centers. These centers shall be created for the solution of the interdisciplinary practical problems important for economic and social development of society, i.e. these centers (nonconventional units) are oriented outside the higher educational institution. Problem is in that the heads of the traditional divisions of higher educational institution (deans, heads of the departments and branches) "are rather strong to protect the ownerships. But the departments are incapable to make all that the universities should do now" [1]. Unconventional units must have the flexibility, administration of higher institution can easily create them as well as easily dismiss, but these units must have strong support from the management of the university.

In order to enhance research work in structural subdivisions there was created the Center for planning, coordination and monitoring of research in Karaganda Economic University. The main objective of the Centre lies in strengthening the work on the commercialization of interdisciplinary research at the university and co-ordination of work on the development of innovation infrastructure of the university.

To date, the individual elements of innovation infrastructure of the University have been already established and operated: Department of postgraduate and further education, Master's and Doctoral PhD; Center for planning, coordination and monitoring of research, Center for international programs and projects, Research institute of new economy and system analysis, Research institute of economic and legal research; Distance Learning Center, Computer Center, official website of the University. Information and communication capabilities of the

University library are actively used; connections with the enterprises of the region are carried out as well as commercialization office of innovation and business incubator is organized by the University.

Thus, the university has created successfully operating basic elements of scientific innovation infrastructure of the university, the main objective of which consists in creating favorable conditions for the implementation of scientific and innovative projects of students, undergraduates, doctoral students and faculty of the university.

3. Diversified funding base. To perform the activities productively and effectively, entrepreneurial higher educational institutions shall have big financial resources. State universities of Kazakhstan generally have one or two sources; they are the state support and the payment of students for training. Private higher educational institutions generally have one source of financing – a tuition fee from students. As practice shows, these funds aren't enough for entrepreneurial universities. There is a number of higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan which have an additional source of financing — these are grants and contracts. However, a source of grants is generally the state therefore it can be carried to the first source of financing. Financing sources are still needed. The third source of financing is business companies. Unfortunately, in Kazakhstan business companies aren't often ready to finance projects from higher educational institutions. But on the other hand, higher educational institutions don't possess a capability to implement the projects necessary for business companies.

4. Stimulated academic structures. Traditional structure of higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan doesn't correspond to the structures of entrepreneurial higher educational institutions. Unfortunately, existing departments didn't become the centers or platforms for carrying out the scientific researches, and are engaged first of all in teaching. According to B. Clark "if basic units (departments and faculties) oppose the potential innovations or remain indifferent to them, institutes continue to live as before" [1]. In higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan changes are necessary, and "in order to make the changes happen, departments and faculties shall become entrepreneurial units, improving the relations with the environment and starting new programs, and also finding the third sources of income. Their members will be the part of the central directing groups" [1]. One of the objectives of this research consists in the determination of the attitude of the faculties and department heads to innovations.

5. Integrated entrepreneurial culture.

According to B. Clark "enterprising universities, are in many respects similar to the companies working in the sphere of high technologies, create the culture of activities oriented to changes" [1]. In Kazakhstan the culture of higher education institutions isn't oriented to changes as the core activity of higher education institutions was and remains – training of students, undergraduates, and scientific and innovative activities practically aren't developed. One of the important research purposes will consist in the determination of the organization culture of higher education institutions of RK. The first step to change of organization culture is the diagnostics of existing culture. The following step the determination of the forming

mechanisms of "the activities, oriented to changes cultures ". By the researches results B. Clark determined - in order to transform the traditional university into entrepreneurial one, it is necessary to implement five above mentioned elements. KEUK has nearly half a century long history of the economic profile University, which occupies a stable niche, not only regionally, but in the domestic market of educational services.

Changing economic conditions in the country and in the world lead universities to commercialization of the research activities and, as a result, to the capability of selling the outcomes of scientific and technical creativity. In this situation the creation of a system of realization of scientific and innovative products, produced by a higher education institution, in the local and international markets is one of the ways to increase the efficiency of universities within a market economy.

Many higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan want to become entrepreneurial higher educational institutions, and some of them make certain steps in this direction. However they don't know how to pass this way and with what barriers they can face. It means that there is a social demand for this research. Social demand is confirmed by the great interest and desire of higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan to participate in this project as business partners. Through an activities prism these five higher educational institutions in this research also the Ministry of education and sciences of Kazakhstan is interested. Besides, teachers and scientists of Kazakhstan are interested in this research as thanks to this project, the process of the entrepreneurial higher educational institutions creation in Kazakhstan can be accelerated, and they will be able to realize themselves not only as teachers, but also as scientists who are engaged in applied researches. Thus, the demand for this research is obvious both from the heads of higher educational institutions side, and from the staff of higher educational institutions and scientists.

As it was told above, in Kazakhstan applied researches in the field of the entrepreneurial higher education institutions creation, in particular in such scale weren't conducted. At the same time interest in the entrepreneurial higher educational institutions creation grows every year. The gap turns out - on the one hand, more and more higher educational institutions want to become entrepreneurial, on the other hand - there is no accurate mechanism (road map) by means of which it is possible to promote on the way of the entrepreneurial university creation. Insight to the experience of the entrepreneurial universities creation in Great Britain and other countries will allow expanding vision of the heads of higher educational institutions. Social and economic effect will be that all higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan will be able to examine the research results and to plan the way on the entrepreneurial university creation.

3 Adopting relevant technology

In case of the project implementation the methodology on carrying out high-qualitative researches will be used. Research is planned in different regions of Kazakhstan, 5 higher educational institutions of Kazakhstan will be covered. In each higher educational institution the heads of

higher educational institutions and 10 focus groups of the higher educational institutions staff (two focus groups per one higher educational institution) will be interviewed together with foreign experts. Besides, questioning will be carried out among the key employees to determine the organization culture of higher educational institution, the tool of the assessment of the organization culture (OCAI) will be applied for this purpose, intended for diagnostics of the organization culture, developed by the authors Kim Cameron and Robert Kuinn [3]. This tool will allow making identifications of the existing culture of the higher educational institution, both from the head position, and from the position of the higher educational institution staff to understand, whether there are gaps in the understanding of the organization culture. Questioning of the key staff of higher educational institutions on the organization culture will be carried out, both at the beginning of the project, and at the last stage, it will allow revealing if there is any dynamics of the entrepreneurial culture and innovative processes development in higher educational institutions. Such scope of higher educational institutions and deep researches will allow generalizing data on Kazakhstan in general. At the selection of the higher educational institutions from different regions interest of the higher educational institution in this research, term of activities of higher educational institution and availability of the license for the implementation of the educational activities will be first of all considered. In case of employee screening of higher educational institutions for participation in the focus groups it is planned to bring together 8-10 people in each group, and groups will be uniform, for example, in one group - only heads of higher educational institution (deans, heads of the departments, heads of the branches, etc.) and in another - only scientists and teachers of the same higher educational institution. When interviewing the focus groups the methodology will be strictly sustained, in particular questions will be prepared in advance, focus groups will pass in specially prepared auditorium (oval table, video and process audio recording). Interview questions and focus groups will be prepared in advance, relying on five general transformational elements according to Clark [1, 2] and relying on experience of foreign experts. This approach will allow to attach the received survey results to these five elements and to carry out the deep analysis. The preparatory work will be carried out. Before interviewing the heads of

higher educational institutions, the insight with their activities is planned, previously having talked over with them and having visited their higher educational institutions. Questions for carrying out focus groups will be formulated relying on five general transformational elements according to Clark and practical experience of foreign experts.

4 Conclusions

The expected scientific effect will be both in the study and its results. The study itself is the first large-scale study in the field of entrepreneurial universities in Kazakhstan. The research results are interesting in the scientific world, as it is interesting to know what the state and prospects for the creation of entrepreneurial universities in Kazakhstan. The socio-economic effect will be in the scale of the project (five universities from different regions of Kazakhstan will participate in the project) and the relevance of the results are the majority of universities from all regions of Kazakhstan will be able to use the results.

The heads of universities participating in the study will be able to determine at what stage towards the creation of entrepreneurial universities they are. In five universities from different regions there will be seminars and conferences where they will present the results of research and experience shows the UK and other countries.

The applied research of this scale will be a breakthrough for Kazakhstan, as previously, such studies have not been conducted. The research results will help to develop the applied research in the field of entrepreneurial universities with the participation of international experts that will give impetus to young scientists in conducting such research.

For the results dissemination the meetings with the heads of five universities from different regions of Kazakhstan will be organized, where the researches were done, the monograph on the subject will also be presented. According to the study in each institution seminars and conferences will be organized. All materials will be transferred to the universities for reference and practical application. Through these activities, many universities of Kazakhstan will be informed of the research results. The research results will be published in magazines with impact factor, project participants will perform at scientific conferences, thanks to these actions the results will be open to the community of scientists.

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