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INNOVATIONS IN TRAINING LEADERS OF AN ORGANIZATION

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It is mandatory in the present-day global business society that leading universities should incorporate innovative and global factors which enhance business leaders' educational needs. If higher education stays relevant in a world which has become linked in business economic interdependence, the use of innovative methodologies in presenting learning experiences for these leaders becomes imperative.

Ключевые слова: training business leaders, global business, innovative methodology, MBA joint program.

The contemporary world enterprises operating and cooperating with businesses in foreign countries, it is evident that globalization of business is a reality. Businesses have to keep in mind global interactions and networks which make businesses and some countries dependent upon one another for successful operation of a business. The links between business entities are enhanced through increased innovations of communication such as the information harvesting through the internet, global communication video, and social media.

It is important in this global business society that training leaders should incorporate the global factors which all business leaders need to know to have skills to be competent and competitive. The basis of successful organizations is the presence of educated effective leaders [1]. That is why higher education remains an important business as students, parents and university administrators and professors struggle to balance education costs with a shrinking economy and at the same time maintain program integrity and rigor while vying for scarce resources. The use of innovative methodologies in presenting learning experiences for these leaders is imperative if higher education is to be relevant in a world which has become linked in business economic interdependence.

There may be some common educational needs of business leaders operating in different countries but linked by common business requirements or needs. It is possible to observe business leaders talking on a cell phone, receiving and texting messages over the same device. Gathering information quickly is a hallmark of the global society. A message which once took weeks to send and receive through the mail service is no longer as efficient for any global business leader today.

Though in spite of the world business going global, there exist cultural differences as Hofstede

in 2010 edition of *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* argues [2]. Recent research shows that employees of American and Russian organizations react differently, for instance, to attempts of a leader in giving an award to a member of a working group who shows the best result. The American winner of competition is happy and proud, while the Russian is likely to be baffled and to feel uneasy.

Global initiatives address the preparation of universal responsive leaders who can attend to issues that encompass moral and ethical concerns in business enterprises. The business leader today needs to process information correctly at a high rate to make decisions which are clear, creative, and innovative. Global leaders must lead their organizations into areas of innovation and create new markets according to W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne, *Blue Ocean Strategy* (2005) [3]. The common characteristics of leadership are studied and the main ones can be distinguished (Fig. 1).

However, the basis of research and development of these theories were mostly Western European, American or even Japanese companies. Peculiarities of leadership behavior in Russian enterprises should integrate and coincide with the world system of economic relations [4]. Besides, Russian leadership research which informed higher education instruction should keep and successfully implement the peculiarities of international labor and industrial culture. The specific features of such integration are shown in Fig.2 below.

Educational goals emphasize both immediate subject matter and enduring value to the individual. The educational response to training leaders through an innovative program is the Masters of Business Administration (MBA). Higher education through programs like the MBA Program must not only give information but also foster a climate of

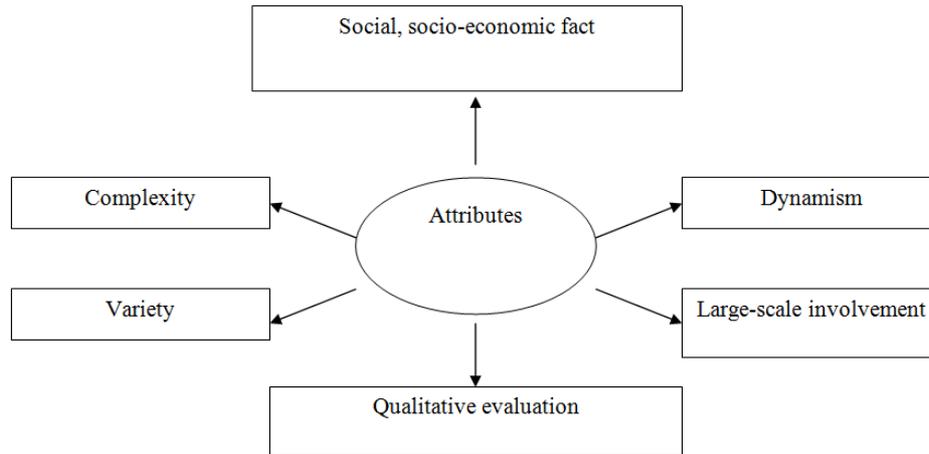


Fig. 1. Attributes of innovative research as an object of research

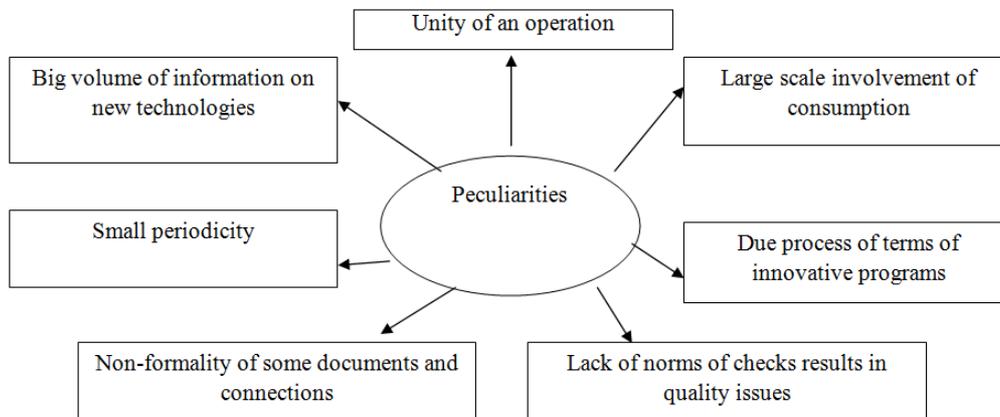


Fig. 2. Specific peculiarities of innovative education as an object of research

global cultural education so that leaders can make decisions based upon real facts and not stereotypical information concerning other business people in differing countries. Information is freely found through the internet; however, considerable critical thinking and refined intellect through education must occur for the best application and decision-making by a business leader.

The new MBA program developed and recognized in Russian higher education started in 1992 with many managers of Nizhni Novgorod enterprises and representatives of state and municipal authorities trained under this program which includes several innovative cross cultural educational experiences: a tour to the USA and inclusion of western professor experts teaching MBA students in the USA and Russia – a joint program.

From 2001 till 2010 the representatives of American universities took part in international scientific conferences arranged by the Faculty of Finance of the Nizhni Novgorod State University (UNN) and delivered lectures to the students of MBA program on development of leadership quali-

ties of a manager. The scientific-research unit of the joint program supposes studying the work of business entities in both countries and finding out the peculiarities of leadership behavior in the contemporary world. Prestigious specialties attract a lot of young people today.

How we provide ongoing education, training and development so that those in influential positions remain current of the issues and trends is vital in our knowledge-based economy. Business education is a multi-level system comprising training according to the following scheme: bachelor – master – MBA. The last two levels allow for preparing a cadre elite for development of Russian business, and also for joining the European educational community [5]. This community created international standards based upon the Bologna Agreements declaration which was signed by 29 ministers of education from various European countries. Thus, the MBA program has taken the international standards and responsibility to create financial business elite in Nizhni Novgorod and the region within the framework of our competence.

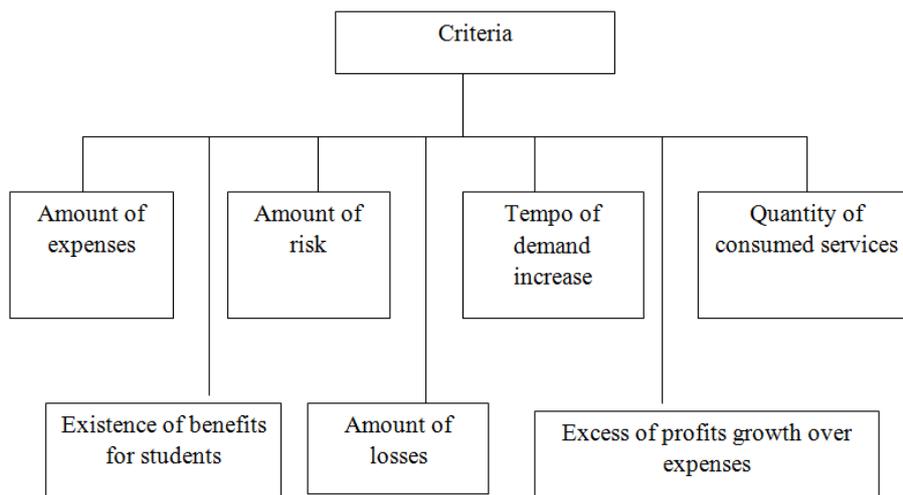


Fig. 3. Criteria for selection of innovative programs of education

Thus, there is a possibility to create a strong stimulus to integrate business and education in the region. Nowadays the main role in education management is played by the educational system itself. But it is the responsibility of business not only to estimate the effectiveness of educational programs via its purchasing but also to preset the conditions of its maintenance.

The peculiarity of innovative education of leaders is that it has some profound distinctive features from other specialties of higher and additional professional education (scientific, technical and most of humanitarian) [6].

First of all, consumers of educational services have stereotypes the majority of which are restricted to getting a diploma. There exists a misunderstanding in getting a Master degree and additional professional education, such as the MBA program. However, only these levels of education allow students to learn about new tendencies in development of management technologies and competitiveness in the market.

Secondly, a transition has been completed from the system of common economic education to elite education to satisfy the demand of market structures. For this purpose not only educational programs have been altered but also target groups and the financial form of realization of education. The programs can be different depending on the criteria of their selection (Fig. 3).

A program can be targeted at the market segment including directors and specialists of enterprises and companies independent from their size and form of possession. Among the MBA students there are top managers and specialists of the leading enterprises such as Gorky Automobile Plant, Machinebuilding Plant, Gasprom, Promtech-NN as well as representatives of dozens of other small companies.

Another program is designed to train target groups of students who received a referral from regional administration as well as all other students willing to get a special education, allowing working as district, municipal and regional authorities.

The third program lets all students who want to work in the sphere of business get a Master degree. Any innovational education program cannot be isolated and is based on the potential of a university itself and the corresponding partners in other countries. Lobachevsky State University of Nizhni Novgorod is one of the prominent universities of Russia, a major educational, research and cultural complex. In the official national ratings the university constantly appears among the best universities of Russia. Diploma Specialist programs (5 years) are offered in 47 specialties. Bachelor's programs (4 years) are taught in 22 areas. There are 56 Master's programs (6 years), 10 programs of secondary professional education and shorter-term training programs for those already having higher or secondary professional education in respective areas.

The teaching staff of the University includes highly-qualified professionals, lecturers, including Candidates of Sciences and Doctors of Sciences (over 70%). Master students also have an opportunity to attend lectures delivered by professors from other countries, for instance, from the USA. Innovations in preparing specialists, bachelors and masters in the university are applied on the basis of integration into the educational process, research and requirements of employers.

Requirements for organizing innovative education were developed.

In 2009 a cooperative symposium was held by Spring Arbor, Michigan (USA) and the Nizhni Novgorod State University, Russia. Leading specialists from the University, who deal with questions of leadership and management, took part in

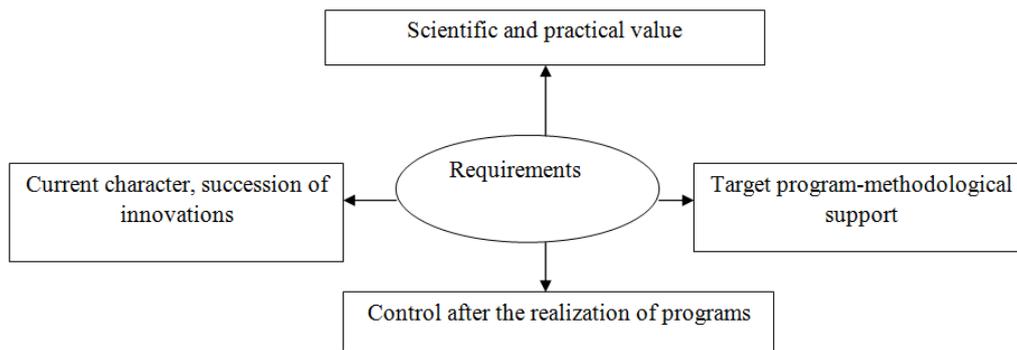


Fig.4. Requirements for organization of innovative education

the conference. Professors from Spring Arbor: James G. Coe, K. Caleb Chan, Naomi Larsen delivered their presentations. The participants of the conference learned about work of American companies and discussed the issues of research done in Russian and American organizations in the sphere of leadership and teaching leadership principles. As a result of the symposium a collection of articles and presentations was published (October 2010).

The MBA joint program work has occurred over a number of years and was facilitated by President and Rector of UNN, Dean of the Finance Faculty, Professor Lyudmila Sukhodoeva and Dr. James Coe from first the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities, Taylor University, Spring Arbor University, and now President of Teach-the-Word, an international organization.

The MBA students were invited along with UNN full-time professors to visit the various campuses in the U.S.A. Faculty observed teaching methodologies and gained a new perspective on cultural aspects of the U.S.A. and western economies. Also teaching methodologies were modeled presenting various means of integrating value-based ethics for decision-making which MBA students and faculty could use. U.S.A. professors were invited to Nizhni Novgorod University in an exchange program which gave them a new perspective on cultural aspects of Russia and a foundation for socialist planning in education.

The teaching methodology which the MBA students and faculty observed was based upon a constructivist philosophy of learning. The constructivist theory of learning places the student in the center of the learning experience and challenges that student to research with some guidance and then to share/teach/give oral report on the findings. This places the ownership for learning in the hands of the learner, who should be learning and gives responsibility for learning in a more liberating way. Some faculty members object to this innovation and philosophy, but people usually learn from pleasurable self-interest. This action may lead the

learner to be curious: often the beginning of an innovative project.

An Innovative MBA Curriculum Developed to Create Innovative Global Leaders

Students like the ability to take online courses because they can get online at any time of the day to facilitate their learning; however, many students also like the interaction afforded in the classroom. An online combination of assignments accomplished online and attendance at classes developed into a hybrid model.

In the U.S.A., according to a 2011 survey by the Babson Survey Research Group in collaboration with the College Board, online enrollment grew at a compound annual growth rate of more than 15% per year between fall 2002 and fall 2010, increasing from less than 10% of all higher education enrollments to just more than 30% during that period.

From U.S.A. higher educational research, it is evident that over a thousand leaders of higher education institutions agreed that an online strategy is critical to the long-term success of their institutions. Yet, many are slow to adapt this innovation in learning; however, the lower cost of delivery and ease of outcomes and assessment make this educational avenue very attractive.

Students like to meet colleagues in the classroom setting. The social interaction facilitates learning and makes it more interesting. Yet, sometimes it is inconvenient to attend classes with competing work or business obligations. Here the hybrid model succeeds by providing two avenues of learning: classroom and online. During the week the online learning provides for student discussion, teacher interaction, writing ideas with research, and developing a learning journal. All of this online learning can then be brought into the classroom as a platform for further learning and assessments such as oral presentation reports by students.

Many students use social media daily, which can be used to enhance the learning experience. Students may use You-Tube to give a presentation

or to learn about a new technique of leadership decision-making. Web pages of management leadership experts are also helpful for learning. The student can read and hear an outstanding expert give a lecture during a time which is convenient to the student and their learning need. Skype is an innovation which may also be used when it is impossible to host foreign experts to teach in the MBA program. This media allows for not only one-way communication but also a discussion in a two-way format of questions and answers. These innovative ways to utilize social media in the classroom enhance learning and lower costs for the university.

The present global business society mandates that superior universities should incorporate innovative and global factors which enhance business leaders' educational needs. The use of innovative methodologies in presenting learning experiences for these leaders becomes imperative if higher education stays relevant in a world which has become linked in business economic interdependence.

How we learn, what we learn and how we use that knowledge has influence in ways and on people in ways that we cannot comprehend. Higher education through programs like the UNN MBA Joint Program must not only give information but also foster a climate of global informational sharing so that leaders can make educated decisions. The scientific-research unit of the joint program promotes studying the work of business entities in both countries and finding out the peculiarities of leadership behavior in the contemporary world. From

the U.S.A. higher educational research, it is evident that over a thousand leaders of higher education institutions agreed that an online strategy is critical to the long-term success of their institutions. Many Russian students use the internet and social media daily, which can be used to enhance their MBA learning experience. Innovative methodologies of learning through the internet and social media may deliver a more relevant learning experience while at the same time lower overhead costs for the university.

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