

High Hopes, Poor Results? Improving Organizational Development Processes in Universities

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Introduction

Traditional management consultancies, advising mainly private-sector enterprises have difficulties in understanding the peculiarities and specific structural conditions of higher education. Universities and scientific institutions cannot be sufficiently analyzed with those methods and instruments, because they do not apply to their functional and hierarchical structure as an expert-organization. This has implications for the organization and the dynamics of change processes in higher education
(Altvater 2007 : 13).



Image 1: Business people.. Pixabay

University organizations themselves are often forced to find compromises in lengthy decision-making processes. These processes impede innovative solutions rather repeatedly. At the same time, structural development processes can be blocked by the wide autonomy of the base units. The central problem of organizations composed of loosely coupled systems, is thus that the respective units to focus on their particular interests, a development of the organization as a whole is not in view and thereby impede this
(Altvater 2007 : 13).

Aim

This is a work in progress that will examine the development of methodological success-conditions of external consultation processes in higher education. It explores the feasibility of external consultation processes toward the improvement of the advisory processes in higher education.

Research Questions

- What factors are critical to the success of the organizational consulting processes by external consulting firms to universities?
- Which methodological and structural adjustments are required with respect to the loosely-coupled structures of universities?

Methodology

The empirical research will be based on the following steps:
Description of the current state of research on the topic, as well as the relevance of the topic. Anonymous, qualitative interviews with selected interview-partners (3 interviews with university professors, 3 with external consultants in higher education conducted). Elevation by a previously created, coded guideline; based on the method of "qualitative content analysis" according to MAYRING (Mayring 2000). Interpretation of the evaluated results. Creation of interpretation on the basis of the success conditions for consultation processes in higher education.



Introduction to Organizational Development



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdDg3udzK2E>

Summary

This research study is at its preparatory stage. This poster presentation is an opportunity to share my research study plan and to garner feedback from the scientific audience.

Due to prefabricated solutions taken from the private economy, often unclear conditions and responsibilities, etc. a considerable number of external consulting firms projects to universities are not as successful as they could be.



Image 2. People discussing business ideas. Retrieved February 5, 2017 from: <http://www.stockvault.net>

If external consultancy projects are carried out with a higher degree of transparency and awareness, both sides, the customer and the contractor, will benefit from the improved communication of BOTH consultant agencies and university advisors will facilitate productive discourse and performance-based qualitative outcomes.

References

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