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„Financing of scientific and didactic activities in the process of managing public higher education institutions in the Silesian Voivodeship”

Summary

Currently, all organisations, including public universities, operate in a dynamic environment. In these uncertain times in which higher education institutions have to operate, it is reasonable to take into account the assumption that the more uncertain the operating environment is, the greater the emphasis should be on creating flexible management procedures that would enable higher education institutions to continue to operate, fulfill their mission uninterruptedly and continue to thrive.

Crisis situations faced by public universities in recent times (the COVID-19 pandemic, the armed conflict in Ukraine, or inflation) directly affect their operation. The funding of public universities is governed by the top-down legislation in force. However, the experience of recent years shows that whatever it may be - in order to ensure the continuity of action of public higher education institutions, to enable them to fulfill their mission and to continue their development, they need to be managed in a sustainable and flexible manner. Such management should be conducted in such a way as to be able to react as swiftly as possible to changes resulting from circumstances beyond the control of public universities. It should be emphasised that crisis management in a public university should be part of governance due to the fact that crisis is a strategic issue for the survival of any organisation.

In the light of the above considerations, the methods of financing universities require in-depth analysis, as they affect the strategies of universities. The issue of the interdependencies between the management of a public university and the financing of its activities, taken up within the dissertation, should be read as an attempt to broaden

the perspective and knowledge on the management and financing of the activities of a public university in the current Polish situation.

The main research problem of the thesis entitled *„Financing of scientific and didactic activities in the process of managing public higher education institutions in the Silesian Voivodeship”* was a cognitive gap concerning the relations occurring between the new system of financing public higher education institutions in Poland and the way they are managed. This allowed to define the main objective of the dissertation, which was to develop a concept of a sustainable system of managing and financing public higher education institutions. The chosen main objective was achieved through the implementation of specific objectives, such as:

- the presentation and analysis of contemporary models of public university governance;
- the analysis of trends in the development of higher education in Poland;
- the identification of sources of funding for public universities in light of university governance;
- the formulation of financial determinants of the management of public universities;
- the analysis of forms of monitoring the use of funds by public universities;
- the identification of the correlation between funding and management of public university performance;
- the development of the concept of a sustainable management and funding system for a public university;
- the verification of the proposed concept of a sustainable management and funding system and funding in the current conditions of a public university and the drawing of conclusions.

In order to achieve the dissertation objectives, the following main hypothesis was verified: *„The governance of a public university determines the choice of funding types and sources”*. The main hypothesis was supported by the following subsidiary hypotheses:

- subsidiary hypothesis number 1: There are bidirectional connections between public university governance and funding;
- subsidiary hypothesis number 2: The identification of the specific financial demands of a public university contributes to the choice of the university's management strategy;
- subsidiary hypothesis number 3: There are multidirectional interactions between a public university and its socio-economic environment.

In order to verify the hypotheses stated, an in-depth analysis was carried out of the literature, the data found, the case study, as well as the responses of the survey respondents given by means of a survey questionnaire. The research part was based on

both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The risk of conducting the measurement using only one method was reduced due to the fact that the mixed methods used included a triangulation of research methods.

The research part based on the literature study and the analysis of found data provided

a preliminary verification of the hypotheses and provided the basis for further ownresearch. The result of the literature study and the conducted case study was the identification

and analysis of the connections between the funding of scientific activities of a public university and the management of a public university and the development of the survey questionnaire used in the dissertation. The next part of the research involved quantitative and qualitative research using a survey questionnaire, which consisted of three main thematic modules:

1. Basic information on the governance of a public university;
2. Funding of public universities;
3. Monitoring the use of funds.

The verification of the dissertation's main hypothesis and the implementation of the dissertation's subsidiary objectives formed the basis for the main objective of the dissertation, which was to develop the author's concept of a sustainable system of public university management and financing. The concept presented in the dissertation consists of seven units:

1. The strategy of a public university;
2. Financing;
3. The public university environment, including:
 - micro environment;
 - macro environment.
4. University resources, including in particular:
 - human resources
 - information resources;
 - infrastructure;
 - financial resources.
5. Crisis management;
6. Current activities;
7. Monitoring and control.

Therefore, the main scientific objective of the dissertation has been achieved. All the subsidiary objectives of the dissertation have also been achieved.

The concept described in the dissertation was confirmed by the results of conducted qualitative and quantitative-qualitative research. The result of the conducted research is a reproduction of the connections occurring between the management of public higher education institutions in the Silesian Voivodeship and the financing of their activities.

The overall conclusion of the research conducted in the dissertation is as follows: The effective management of a public university will positively affect its funding opportunities. The following conclusions also emerge from the analyses conducted:

- funding is used to achieve the objectives contained in the strategy, which is a fundamental element of the university's governance;
- active search for sources of funding contributes to the more complete realisation of the objectives set out in the strategy;
- the active search for sources of funding should be carried out by the public university as a whole, its individual units and individual employees;
- the more dynamic and uncertain the environment of public higher education institutions is, the more flexible the management system of the institution should be;
- the effective strategy, as a key element of management, is conducive to the development of the public higher education institution and its acquisition of new resources;
- efficiency in internal and external communication positively influences the process of managing a higher education institution;
- from the point of view of public higher education institutions, a five-year period seems to be optimal for the strategy, as it guarantees appropriate stability while maintaining adequate flexibility;
- the vision of a public higher education institution should be developed with reference to its mission and in accordance with the values of the institution;
- a low level of involvement of the academic community in the strategic process has a negative impact on the realisation of the objectives set in the strategy;
- the complex, dynamic and uncertain environment in which public higher education institutions currently operate makes it necessary to introduce crisis management measures;
- the crisis management in a public university should be part of management due to the fact that a crisis is a strategic problem for the survival of any organisation;
- the management of a public university should be consistent with the philosophy of sustainable development.

From the standpoint of the research conducted in the dissertation, it is also significant to emphasise the role of a public university's strategy as an imperative document

for the university and a fundamental element in the management of a public university. The strategy is the overarching element for ongoing activities and for funding.

The author's concept developed in the dissertation was dedicated to public higher education institutions, however, due to the universal nature of its application, it seems possible and justified to implement it also in non-public higher education institutions, obviously after taking into account their specifics, which may form the basis for further research.