

Response to opponents

“The alignment of organisational subcultures in a post-merger business school in Hungarian higher education”

Nick Chandler

First of all I would like to thank both of the opponents, Dr Fábri György and Dr Takács Sándor, for their time and effort in reviewing my dissertation and for their respective reviews and insightful comments. Both rounds of reviews have not only helped me in the development of my dissertation but also in further consideration of how to develop my research. I will address the comments made in the order presented and provide a suitable response.

Reviewer 1: Dr Fábri György

Dr Fábri expresses concern for the interpretation of aspects of higher education with the tools of management and organisational sociology. I agree that there are distinct differences in these two fields and have highlighted in the dissertation the areas of higher education that set Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) apart from many organisations. This aspect was, and still remains, a source of interest for me. Two tools were used in this study. The OCAI was the main instrument used and this instrument was tested by the original developers in a study by analysing the culture of over three hundred higher education organizations through the surveying of nearly thirty-five hundred individuals. These individuals were in key levels of authority, however - as found in my literature review - many managers and authority figures in higher education come from an academic background. Thus, the academic aspect is taken into account even in the initial development of this tool. Furthermore, the extensive usage of the OCAI in studies of higher education institutions is referred to in the dissertation as well. The second instrument, the market orientation questionnaire, was developed purely for a higher educational context.

In sum, the peculiarities of the academic aspects in higher education have been considered in the use of these tools, but a tool aimed purely at professors and scholars was considered inappropriate as it would constitute only 50% of the organisation, with the other 50% performing administrative / non-academic roles.

Dr Fábri highlights an insufficient weighing up of sources. An attempt was made to consider both sides in the arguments for and against different perspectives of organisational culture and views of the orientations of staff in the organisation, however it is accepted that a more in-depth analysis of the sources and their validity would provide greater insight for the reader.

With regard to the reviewer's desire for a greater presentation of social and cultural anthropological aspects, it is accepted that this may have provided better understanding in light of the merger that occurred previously, and develop an understanding of the nature of subcultures in this context. These aspects are planned for future research.

Dr Fábri refers to the use of Hungarian literature in the dissertation. Studies by Hungarian writers have been added to the dissertation following the first defence of the dissertation. In my own experience, I found the lack of articles in English on the culture of higher education

institutions in Hungary to be due to a lack of research in this specific area rather than the existence of many articles in Hungarian and not in English. In fact, in areas solely dedicated to either organisational culture or Higher Education, Hungarian authors had written in English, perhaps through the need to do so for international conferences and these have been added wherever suitable and relevant. Although I am a foreigner analyst and may be considered an outsider, I would like to consider myself as both an insider and an outsider as I have been working at the institution of this study since 1997.

I would like to address the reviewer's comment that market neutral subcultures appear invisible or with negative scores. This is purely due to the methodology employed and the need to discover the degree of market orientation in subcultures. There is no bias towards the need for market orientation in Higher Education, as opposed to (for example) academic orientations such as those presented by Derek Bok.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr Fábri for his encouraging comments about the dissertation and my approach to the work. It is true that it was a lucky choice of topic and I am thankful for having a dissertation that deals with a hot topic in Hungary at this time.

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