

## Major Problems Obstructing Implementation of Higher Education Quality Management Systems in Higher Schools

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### Abstract

By referring to works by scientists from Lithuania and other countries the article deals with the major problems that obstruct more active implementation of higher education quality management systems in higher schools. The problems are analyzed on systemic (higher education in Europe and in Lithuania) and organisational (a particular higher school) levels. Problems characteristic to many European higher schools and those seen in Lithuanian higher education and individual organisations are distinguished.

**Keywords:** study quality management in higher school, internal quality management system, culture of quality.

### Introduction

In seeking activity efficiency in business and production organisations the issue of creation and management of internal system for ensuring quality is clear and no longer discussed. This is confirmed by an increasing number of organisations that have launched their quality management systems. As the most active knowledge users and producers, higher education institutions rather cautiously implement activity quality management systems, because quality of their activities is hard to measure, and the concept of quality in higher education has been an object of discussions for a long time. Scientists and educational management practitioners, who during the last decades of the XX century were intensively arguing for new and new aspects of quality in education (including quality in higher education) (Barczyk, 1999; Sallis, 1996; Lauzackas, 1999-2000; Harvey and Green, 1999-2002; Van Damme, 2004; Newton, 2007), who were discussing the problems with estimation and assessment of quality in higher education (Aldridge and Rowley, 1998; Mai, 2005; Alves and Raposo, 2007; Quin et al., 2009), in the beginning of the XXI century admitted that quality in higher education, as a multi-layer and multi-component dynamic conception constantly changing due to changes in requirements of the world of intensive activity and ensuring the progress of education through that constant dynam-

ics (Svietimo organizacijų kokybės vadyba, 2008; p. 14), can be estimated and assessed (Bogue and Hall, 2003; Quin et al., 2009), although this is a complicated holistic process.

As the very concept of quality in higher education is getting more complicated and as economic value of quality in higher education is increasing, the government that implements higher education policy takes managerial steps by regularly reconsidering the correspondence of the quality criteria to the present situation, by assessing quality in higher education and organising methodological, financial support for higher schools as they seek progress. At the same time, a higher school must possess not only intellectual potential necessary for generation of new knowledge, but also increasingly more managerial resources to enable itself to remain an academic community capable of satisfying the changing needs of society as well as efficient development of science and studies in future. Management of quality in higher education becomes one of the activities of a higher school management with a view to maintain and constantly improve efficiency of studies. Estimation, control, and assessment of quality in higher education by referring to the quality criteria, identification and application of means to improve it, assessment of efficiency of such means, etc. are the processes that confirm management of quality in higher education (McGhee, 2003; Janne, 2006). Although they cannot be regarded as quality guarantees per se (Serafinas, Rudzevicius, 2009), they are definitely important elements in higher school activity quality management systems without which it would be problematic to preserve high standards of studies nowadays.

Management of quality in higher education, as one of a few important factors that ensure quality of studies provided by a higher school and as one of the most important areas of management of quality of activities of a higher school, began to be actively discussed in Lithuanian academic publications only recently (Kvedaravicius, 2000; Cizas, 2003; Lauzackas, Tereseviciene, 2003; Ruskus, Liukinevici-

ne, 2003; Savickiene, Pukelis, 2004; Kucinskiene, Kucinskas, 2005; Ruzevicius, Serafinas, 2007; Liukineviciene, Garoliene, 2009; Katiliute, Neverauskas, 2009; Juskys, Ruzevicius, 2010) when looking for quality management systems suitable for a higher school (Savickiene, 2005; Ruzevicius, 2007; Ruzevicius ir kt., 2008; Serafinas, Rudzevicius, 2009), when considering how to more objectively evaluate the quality in higher education as perceived by a client (Zekeviciene, 2009; Allan, Pileicikiene, 2010; Bilbokaite, Liukineviciene, 2010). Only a few Lithuanian university-type higher schools (namely University of Management and Economics and Kaunas University of Technology) have education quality management systems, however, there were more such attempts at colleges (Savickiene, 2001; Spudyte, Misiunas, 2004; Skipariene, Sencila, 2007).

Analysis of descriptions of projects that were submitted for the year 2010 competition for receiving EU support for creation of internal higher education quality management systems as well as descriptions of projects that were granted EU support before June 2011 having been done<sup>1</sup>, it can be seen that the majority of Lithuanian university-type higher schools are only beginning to create them. There are higher schools (namely Vilnius College of Design, Vilnius Technologies and Design School, International School of Law and Business, Kaunas College, Kaunas University of Technology, Vytautas Magnus University, University of Management and Economics) that have implemented quality management standards (ISO 9001) for certain activities, which usually are appropriate in seeking efficiency of administration processes, however, there are no schools that could present their systems as applicable for other universities, although strategic documents of the European Union (Bologna Declaration (1999) and other documents adopted in the Bologna process: Salamanca convention, 2001; Berlin communique, 2003; Bergen communique, 2005; London communique, 2007; Leuven communique, 2009, Budapest-Vienna Declaration, 2010) have been emphasizing this aspect of management of quality in higher education with increasing focus for the last several years. This article will aim at answering the following **problem question**: what are the main problems that limit implementation of systems of management of quality in higher education?

**Research subject** is problems of implementation of systems of management of quality in higher education at higher schools.

**Research aim** is to identify the main problems that obstruct implementation of systems of manage-

ment of quality in higher education at higher schools.

**Research objectives** are to analyze the problems characteristic to: 1) majority of state higher schools in the European Union; 2) national higher schools.

**Research methods** are content analysis and heuristic induction.

## Research results

Universities unite active people who see perspectives of science, therefore quality in higher education, in the narrow sense, as correspondence to the standard, as profound knowledge of the field of science and ability to continuously research that field with a view to achieve progress is partially ensured solely through participation of competent lecturers in the study process as well as availability of material facilities for development of their professional skills. Most important are subject and scientific competence of lecturers as well as presence of facilities for studies and science. For a long time these were the major criteria for quality when assessing the quality of study programmes. Analysis of orders of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 1996-2010, which approve the rules for assessment of institutions of science and studies and which are available online having been done, it is seen that for a long time internal assessment of activity was entrusted to the institution itself, which was doing it following the procedures approved exclusively by that institution. External assessment of an institution provided for qualifying evaluation of study programmes, scientific activity, and institution; systems for maintenance of quality of activities of a higher education institution were one of the aspects of qualifying evaluation of an institution. Thus management of quality of activities of a higher school was one of the components for qualifying evaluation of an institution; this element was not necessarily related to quality in higher education. Changes in this area were begun when Lithuania joined the Bologna process, and particularly when agreement on common standards of assurance of quality in higher education in the EU was reached. Communique of 2006 of the European Commission<sup>2</sup> emphasizes that EU Member States that participate in creation of the common competitive European area of higher education, which would enhance application of scientific discoveries and activate labour markets, should develop competences of management of universities and administration. As indicated in the research "Analysis of internal structure and network of Lithuanian higher schools. Possible

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.esparama.lt/2007-2013/lt/gaires/priemones/priemone/projektai?priem\\_id=000bdd5380003d51&sparams=16521&pgsz=10&page=3](http://www.esparama.lt/2007-2013/lt/gaires/priemones/priemone/projektai?priem_id=000bdd5380003d51&sparams=16521&pgsz=10&page=3)

<sup>2</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/COMMonth.do?year=2006&month=05>

model of restructuring of management of higher schools” carried out by the National Development Institute upon the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania in 2007, Lithuania is successfully solving the formal issues, including that of external assessment of quality in higher education following the common EU standards of assurance of quality in higher education, however, internal mechanisms of quality assurance are not always directly related to means of external quality assurance (Lietuvos aukstųjų mokyklų vidinės struktūros, jų tinklo analizė..., 2007, 22-24). Therefore higher education management quality becomes important nowadays, and success of expansion of an institution is considered related to managers’ professionalism in the field of management. This does not deny the primary purpose of a university (creation of new knowledge, preparation of specialists who could ensure economic and scientific growth in future); it only places new responsibilities (efficient studies) on all participants in the process of studies, for execution of which subject knowledge is not enough. Internal mechanisms of quality assurance in higher education may help to develop the culture of quality of a higher education institution, to get ready for constant changes, as well as help everyone to assume responsibility for quality in higher education. The research carried out by scientists from Vytautas Magnus University in 2006 revealed that academic community of the higher school avoids assuming responsibility for quality in higher education being provided (Valiukevičiūtė, Žiogevičiūtė, 2006). Lecturers, employees of department or faculty as well as other staff delegated responsibility for quality in higher education to the top management of the university, and the top management of higher schools (chancellors, vice-chancellors) saw their own and lower level administrators’ responsibility for quality in higher education depending on the level as well as responsibility of lecturers for individual work during studies.

Management of quality in higher education as a separate area of activity, which is concerned with consistency, structures, and employees-in-charge of the managerial process, is a rather problematic area of activity for higher schools. And not only in Lithuania. Each higher school is able to implement individual measures that assure quality, while uniting all structures for assuring quality in higher education, creating internal system for quality assurance in education and acting within it is a complex managerial process. We understand a university’s quality management system as an entirety of organisational structure, duties, procedures, processes and resources (intellectual, material, financial), which is necessary for efficient management of activity quality (Ruzevičius,

2007b, 55). Culture of quality, which has been shaped within the organisation, is also important here. The greatest obstacles to implementation of internal systems for management of quality in higher education at higher schools can be divided into: 1) characteristic to majority of state higher schools in the European Union, 2) national, Lithuania-specific, and 3) internal, determined by the level of culture of quality at a higher school.

### **Obstacles characteristic to majority of state higher schools in the European Union in implementation of quality management systems**

The EU requirements for higher education establishments are globalized, because the aim is to ensure greater mobility, development of competences, and cultural exchange, which will not only deliver benefit to a particular educated subject, but also encourage and provide with knowledge all the human resources. Competitive conditions have forced universities not only to strive for great results in science (publication of articles in prestigious journals, experimental science projects), but also to strengthen the process of studies by all means possible. The term of a quality management system has been brought in to achieve the above-mentioned primary factors of higher education: harmony between studies and science. Importance of the term is particularly evident in the practice of the private sector, while for higher education institutions many quality management systems are too complicated due to constantly changing conditions for implementation of the process of studies. Since the authors could not find scholarly sources comprehensively analyzing the problems with implementation of quality management systems, the set objective is sought to be completed through insights based on heuristic logic.

Implementation of quality management systems in higher schools is problematic because:

1. The very process of integration of the systems of management of quality in higher education into the current and functioning systems of management and administration is complicated, it requires great administrative inputs as well as costs of implementation of the method selected for quality management (Juskys, Ruzevičius, 2010).
2. No unified system has been created for estimation and improvement and quality management of higher education as a multidimensional service and it is hardly possible to create a quality management system that fits all, a total quality management standard that fits all. This assumption is confirmed by the facts that most schools in the EU implement

a QMS only having received support from the European funds (Darchini, Giannini, Gola, 2006). Choosing a priority aspect in improving quality (studies that develop social responsibility and environmental culture, that satisfy the demands of the labour market, that ensure progress in science, etc.) or in searching for entirety of various aspects is a *long and dynamic* process requiring active consolidation of efforts of higher education quality managers and scientists.

In higher schools, and in state ones in particular, administrative structures that are complex, conservative, and often rather rigid in respect of fundamental changes are present. Administrative divisions usually operate according to a functional principle (financial and economic processes, external and internal communication, studies, personnel management, etc.), therefore it is rather difficult to introduce activities that require integration of separate divisions. It is even more difficult to create structures that unite university administration, lecturers, scientists, other employees and students. These things are easier to implement in young higher schools that receive funds not only from the state budget.

Implementation of quality management systems requires significant expenditure on administration (additional technical and human resources for activity, decision making, procedure formalisation and so on), introduction of the system itself, or its creation and implementation. If an already registered quality management standard is selected, its implementation is done by hired specialists or own employees who have gained the right through costly training (this is the recommended model). If a new one will be created or a unique quality management system will be created from a few already known standards, this will require training, expert assistance, and time: 2-3 years. To get certified according to the selected and implemented quality management system, a university will have to allocate funds for this every several years. Particularly costly are promising, newly created quality management systems. For example, for a university with 20000 students implementation and maintenance of EMAS (Environmental Management Audit Scheme) could cost about 100000 Euros over three years (Juskys, Ruzevicius, 2010). This is impossible without support from outside (funds, state, interested structures). 11 Lithuanian higher schools (3 university-type and 8 non-university-type) who won support from the EU for improvement or creation of internal systems of management of quality in higher education, in application descriptions mentioned exactly lack of funds for implementation of quality management standards and creation of efficient TQMS. A sur-

vey of Siauliai University partners – more than 100 higher schools in other countries – has shown that only a part of them have implemented quality management standards or have created TQMS based on international standards.

The 2-3 year (or longer) process of implementation of a quality management system requires responsible and competent employees who not only know both quality management systems and higher school's services particularly very well, but also are excellent managers. Such a combination of competences is rather rare at higher schools where the main indicator of competence is achievements in science. It is easier for universities, particularly for those focusing on social sciences (management, public administration, total quality management, higher school's quality management, education management, etc.), because choice of human resources for the new activities as well as attraction of experts for implementation of the systems are simpler.

### **Obstacles that became apparent in Lithuanian higher education**

Higher schools of Lithuania rather passively joined the creation of internal systems of quality in higher education according to the already available models of total quality management and therefore higher education reforms progress with certain difficulties in Lithuania. Among the reasons are:

1. Delayed nationwide focus on the need for an internal system of management of quality in higher education, which could ensure higher quality of studies. Prior to adoption of the *Law on Science and Studies* (2009) the internal systems of quality in higher education were the matter of policy and finance of the higher schools themselves. All the documents regulating studies only recommended having them.
2. Rather sluggish discussions in management of higher education on the concept of quality in higher education and absence of agreement on which interpretation should be taken in Lithuania. During the recent decade, as Lithuania joined the Bologna process, various interpretations of quality in higher education have been presented in Lithuanian science, the study programme quality managers trained by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education through international projects also showed a variety of interpretations. As there was no full agreement on what we shall consider the quality in higher education, higher schools (primarily universities) used to react with substantial de-

gree of scepticism towards proposals to create internal systems of management of quality in higher education. Colleges were more flexible on this issue, as they already possessed experience in working with professional standards, because agreement to adhere to them was reached at the very beginning.

3. Delayed resolving of issue on rendering of financial support to higher schools that are creating internal systems of management of quality. In drawing up the budget of a higher school expenses are normally planned on the most necessary fields of management, and only the money that remains is allocated to funding of the functions that are hard to define. Creation of quality management systems, particularly during the economic recession, became a problem in most public higher schools. A competition for receiving the EU support for creating internal systems of management of quality in higher education was announced in 2010, which became a good solution for those determined to implement the known quality management standards. Receiving the planned EU support was more difficult for those who had decided to select subsystems and measures from several systems and combine them to develop a unique system, or chose unpopular systems less known to managers of the funds and the Ministry. EU support was not planned for those higher schools that had no employees responsible for management of quality in higher education as well as structures performing these functions. As of June 2011 only 3 Lithuanian universities (and, to compare, 8 colleges) had projects for creation of TQMS prepared and approved.

We are going to present, as examples, a few problems arising from absence of unified policy on management of quality in higher education in Lithuania.

Presently higher schools face not only external assessment of quality in higher education, but also interest in quality in higher education shown by other institutions (“Veidas”, “Verslo ziniuos”, MOSTA research, etc.) and their efforts to rate higher schools according to understanding of quality that these institutions have chosen. Having experienced that interested parties may need various data, higher schools themselves analyze, in various aspects, the quality of studies they offer, gather indicators proving quality. For example, when seeking to harmonize the studies provided at a higher school with the needs of current and future consumers (conception of quality as satis-

faction of needs of consumers/customers), a need for analysis of economic development and estimation of it in the country and in individual regions of it. Barometers of labour exchanges show the forecast only for a certain region, for the nearest future when labour market is dynamic and changing. If a country has no analysis of economic development and need for specialists for this, then universities undertake it themselves, carrying out various researches and thus substantiating the future need for specialists and imparting of knowledge on them during studies. These are the researches that require financial and intellectual resources, these are the changes in organisational management which need specialists who are able to develop the culture of activity quality within organisation and to forecast the demand in labour market.

Seeking for the main participants – students and lecturers – of the process of studies to undergo qualitative transformation (paradigm of quality in higher education as transformation of participants of the process of studies) during the studies, it is necessary to continuously improve educational environments, create (self)education contexts for personalisation of studies, increase motivation to seek better results and to learn continuously, analyze progress of students and lecturers as well as achievements of graduates regularly. Decreased motivation to study is presently also emphasized by Lithuanian scientists (Gudzinskiene, 2007; Kaminskiene et al., 2010) who see the solution in interesting studies that train a student for individual and team activities. In preparing a student to act in complicated work environments, to create a job for himself, motivation increases in line with combining studies in the main and secondary fields, combining part-time studies in other countries with studies in Lithuania, doing observational practice abroad and professional practice in Lithuania or vice versa. To research these changing needs of students, specialists (researchers) are needed. Aiming for student’s activeness in the process of studies it is necessary to continuously raise pedagogical competence of lecturers. This requires a university to have a pedagogical qualification improvement system as well as competent specialists able to organise such education, to continuously motivate colleagues to learn and share experience.

Aspects of rational use of financial, material, and human resources as well as accountability to external financiers for use of them having been integrated into conception of quality in higher education (conception of quality as economic value) and competition among higher schools for students (and therefore for funding as well) having increased, the previously possessed academic freedom is lost at universities (Green, 1994, p. 168; Svietimo organizacija ko-

kybes vadyba, 2008, p. 24). Simultaneously the need for higher schools to take care of economic efficiency and productivity of the organisation increases, management of the higher school gets more complex and in need for new human resources. And issues of increasing the number of administrative personnel and their salary while the number of lecturers decreases are always problematic for higher schools where the main result is linked to achievements in science and studies.

A higher school that wants to have bright future takes care of shaping activity quality culture (quality as a conception of continuous development) as well as understanding that continuous changing is unavoidable. Naturally being a continuously learning organisation, a higher school rather often narrows the concept of a learning organisation by refocusing on subject and professional level instead of management, because managerial decisions often force to take a look at activity pursued by a lecturer and a university scholar by focusing on the needs of customers, society, and country's needs, to look for consensus between what is necessary today and what will be necessary tomorrow. Within academic communities we see certain hostility towards managerial decisions that require changes, bureaucratic decisions, because in Lithuanian higher education there is still no attitude to support a scholar who temporarily stopped his active scientific activity because of active managerial activity, academic activity does not include study programme management and new study programme preparation activities.

Another problem with Lithuanian higher education is lack of qualified higher education managers and activity quality managers. For a long time universities were governed by people recognized and elected to lead office of chancellor, vice-chancellor, dean, or institute director for their achievements in science, not in management. When a new head is elected, continuity of activity is not always ensured, time is needed not only to get to understand the management of the organisation, let alone activity quality management. This activity is not regulated in detail in state documents, it is not assigned separate funding from the budget, therefore it can be delegated to an individual department or even an employee, unless there is a systemic attitude to organisation, i.e., there is a lack of managerial competences.

The analyzed situations in seeking quality of studies in a higher school show that as the very concept of quality in higher education is getting more complicated and as society's requirements for quality of the studies offered are increasing, it is no longer enough for higher schools to have scientists and lecturers with managerial experience to manage quality

in higher education. Creation an activity quality management system in a higher school requires not only accord in academic community to have it (Misiunas, 2007; Skipariene, Sencila, 2007), but also appropriate structures and specialists the activity of which should be recognized as being no less significant for higher school than scientific and educational activity.

### **Internal problems of a higher school in implementing internal system of management of quality in higher education**

Matters of quality management are not an old phenomenon for Lithuanian higher education, therefore the progress of separate schools in this field differs, the results differ as well. The following internal problems may be distinguished:

1. Absence of conditions determining inner success of creation and implementation of studies quality management system at the higher school. According to the quality management classics (Drucker, Mintzberg), implementation of new managerial systems will be successful if: 1) importance of each person in that process will be admitted; 2) system ensuring continual development of competence of employees will be active (or conditions will be created to do that personally and independently); 3) initiatives will be supported. Creation of these conditions requires both managerial competences and financial resources, consequently, say, means to develop educational competence of lecturers and continuously improve it are available not to all higher schools of Lithuania.
2. Assumption of responsibility for quality in higher education and for participation in seeking quality in higher education by all higher school employees according to their activity profile. Organisational culture is difficult to change. If administrative bodies operating under functional principle do not see their participation, their importance when a higher school is attaining the previously set higher goals, this becomes a big obstacle in development of culture of quality. Science has already proven that customer's perception of quality in education is significantly influenced not only by the quality of processes of lecturing and studying, but also by the quality of the material facilities (libraries and classroom equipment, ICT, convenience of rooms for studying and self-expression) and of the created social and psychological environment as well as services (Mai, 2005).

While implementing internal system of management of quality in higher education, responsibility for quality in higher education is distributed to all, starting with a higher school's leaders and ending with assistants. Responsibility is also assumed by the student.

3. Lack of employees with knowledge of activity quality management and able to responsibly lead the management of quality in higher education. If there are no studies of social sciences, no scientists developing sciences of quality management or education quality at a higher school, then this is a big problem, because invitation of one employee to lead quality management will not solve the problem. A team of specialists is needed for continuous development of culture of quality in organisation, creation or adaptation of instruments for quality assessment, performing of researches on assessment with a view to identify the areas for quality improvement, etc.
4. For a long time in higher education the concept of quality assurance (instead of processes or activity improvement) was (and at some places still is) used, which is more focused on identification of factors of quality instead of management in the broad sense and there is more emphasis on results (Sencila, Skipariene, 2007). Works of some foreign scientists (Wagenaar, 2006; Carugati, Sangiorgi, 2006; Castelluccio, Masotti, 2006) provide QMS elements in quality assurance systems as well, because in practice not only opinion surveys of students or staff and their analysis exist, but also corrective actions are taken. Nevertheless, major attention is paid not to restructuring, implementation of processes or strategic development through quality management that encompasses many areas, but to financial audits and some functions of quality assurance.
5. Universities have many various divisions that perform different (by content) functions (different study programs, different functions of services, etc.), which aggravates implementation of QMS. This is far easier to implement in smaller organisations (such as colleges), particularly if they offer study programs that have similar content or belong to close fields of science. This assumption is backed by facts that Lithuanian colleges, namely Lithuanian Maritime College (Sen-

cila, Skipariene, 2007), International School of Law and Business (available online at <http://www.ttvam.lt/lt/apie-aukstaja-mokykla/kokybe/> [accessed on 02-08-2011]) were among the first to adopt ISO management systems.

## Conclusions

The main problems limiting implementation of internal systems of management of quality in higher education in foreign higher schools appear due to inflexibility of academic administrative structures over managerial changes: poor readiness of academic community to implement strict standards, lack of funds, slow redistribution of funds and absence of initial system for quality improvement. In higher schools of the EU member states the systems are implemented the fastest after receipt of substantial funding that covers the costs of services of consultants, experts, advisers, and lecturers who train the personnel, for the period of several years.

Seeking to implement internal systems of management of quality in higher education Lithuanian higher schools encounter not only the already mentioned problems that dominate abroad as well, but also additional problems prevailing on national or internal (institutional) level. Limitations on the national level which are disclosed through lack of resources (financial and human) for implementation of complex systems of quality management, non-determination which ones to implement due to short experience with application of them for assuring quality in higher education, lack of clear position of the government in deciding whether higher schools must have internal systems of management of quality in higher education for quality assurance, how to contribute to rather costly projects, which systems of the many currently available to recommend to implement, slowed down ambitions of Lithuanian higher schools. On the other hand, Lithuanian higher education lacks documents recognizing managerial activity at universities as being no less important than scientific activity. In academic community, managerial competences are not enough for management of quality in higher education. The academic community expects decisions and prognoses that are based on science and research. On institutional level, five core problems dominate: absence of conditions, lack of comprehension of assumption of responsibility and its implementation, lack of personnel working within quality management, community's stereotypical perception of QMS and its identification with quality assurance and great variety of activities and functions in universities.

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## Pagrindinės problemos, ribojančios studijų kokybės vadybos sistemų diegimą aukštosiose mokyklose

Santrauka

Tai, kad aukštojo mokslo kokybė yra sunkiai išmatuojama, o pati studijų kokybės samprata ilgą laiką buvo ir yra mokslininkų ginčų objektu, iš dalies lėmė, kad aukštojo mokslo institucijos, būdamos aktyvios vartojant ir kuriant žinias, gana atsargiai diegia veiklos kokybės valdymo sistemas. XXI a. pradžioje pripažinus, kad studijų kokybė kaip daugiasluoksnė koncepcija nuolat kintanti dėl intensyvios veiklos pasaulio reikalavimų kaitos ir ta nuolatine dinamika užtikrinanti švietimo progresą (Švietimo organizacijų kokybės vadyba, 2008), gali būti matuojama ir vertinama, o studijų kokybės valdymas yra vienas svarbiausių veiksnių, užtikrinančių aukštosios mokyklos teikiamų studijų kokybę, aktyvėja mokslininkų, valdžios ir atskirų aukštųjų mokyklų pastangos kurti ir diegti vidines studijų kokybės vadybos sistemas.

Šiuo straipsniu siekiama atsakyti į šį **probleminį klausimą**: kokios yra pagrindinės problemos, ribojančios studijų kokybės vadybos sistemų diegimą aukštosiose mokyklose? Tyrimo **objektu** pasirinkus studijų kokybės vadybos sistemų diegimo aukštosiose mokyklose problemas, jos tiriamos pasitelkus turinio analizės, euristinės indukcijos **metodus**.

Studijų kokybės vadyba kaip atskira veiklos sritis, numatanti vadybinio proceso nuoseklumą, struktūras, atsakingus darbuotojus, yra gana problemiška veiklos sritis aukštosioms mokykloms. Universiteto kokybės vadybos sistema suprantama kaip organizacinės struktūros, pareigų, procedūrų, procesų ir išteklių (intelektinių, materialinių, finansinių) visuma, būtina veiksmingai veiklos kokybės vadybai (Ruževičius, 2007b). Joje svarbi ir organizacijoje susiformavusi kokybės kultūra. Didžiausias kliūtis diegiant vidines studijų kokybės vadybos sistemas aukštosiose mokyklose galima suskirstyti į: 1) būdingas daugumai ES valstybinių aukštųjų mokyklų; 2) nacionalines, būdingas Lietuvai; 3) vidines, kylančias nuo aukštosios mokyklos kokybės kultūros lygio.

### Daugeliui Europos aukštųjų mokyklų būdingos kliūtys diegiant kokybės vadybos sistemas:

1. Sudėtingas pats studijų kokybės vadybos sistemų integravimas į jau esamas, veikiančias vadybos ir administravimo sistemas, procesas, reikalaujantis didelių administracinių sąnaudų ir pasi-

rinkto kokybės vadybos metodo, standarto diegimo sąnaudų (Juškys, Ruževičius, 2010).

2. Studijoms kaip daugiakomponentei paslaugai matuoti ir tobulinti, jų kokybei valdyti nėra sukurta vieningos sistemos ir vargu ar gali būti sukurta visoms tinkanti kokybės vadybos sistema. Pasirinkimas prioritetinio aspekto tobulinant kokybę arba ieškant įvairių aspektų visumos yra **ilgas ir kartu dinamiškas** procesas, reikalaujantis aktyvaus aukštojo mokslo kokybės vadybininkų ir mokslininkų pajėgų konsolidavimo.

Valstybinėse aukštosiose mokyklose yra susiformavusios sudėtingos, konservatyvios ir dažnai gana nelanksčios (veikia funkcinio principu) fundamentaliems pokyčiams administracinės struktūros. Dar sudėtingiau sukurti struktūras, sujungiančias universiteto administraciją, dėstytojus, mokslininkus, kitus darbuotojus ir studentus. Kokybės vadybos sistemų diegimas reikalauja didelių sąnaudų administravimui, atsakingų, kokybės vadybos sistemas ir aukštosios mokyklos paslaugų specifiką išmanantys specialistai. Toks kompetencijų junginys retas aukštosiose mokyklose, kurių pagrindinis kompetentingumo rodiklis–mokslo pasiekimai.

**Lietuvos Respublikos aukštajame moksle išryškėjusios nacionalinio lygmens kliūtys.** Aukštosios mokyklos gana pasyviai išitraukia į vidinių studijų kokybės sistemų kūrimą pagal jau egzistuojančius visuotinės kokybės vadybos modelius ir dėl gana sunkiai vykdomos aukš-

tojo mokslo reformos Lietuvoje: **pirma**, valstybės mastu vėluoja studijų kokybės vadybos sistemų, galinčių užtikrinti aukštesnę studijų kokybę, klausimo aktualizavimas; **antra**, užsitęsė studijų kokybės sampratos diskusijos ir nesant vieningo susitarimo, ką vadiname studijų kokybe, aukštosios mokyklos gana skeptiškai reaguoja į rekomendacijas kurti vidines studijų kokybės vadybos sistemas; **trečia**, vilkinamas finansinės pagalbos skyrimo aukštosioms mokykloms, kuriančioms vidines kokybės vadybos sistemas, klausimo sprendimas. Aukštosios mokyklos biudžete išlaidos paprastai planuojamos būtiniausioms valdymo sritims, paliekant sunkiai apibrėžiamų funkcijų finansavimą pagal galimybes.

**Vidinės aukštosios mokyklos problemos diegiant vidinę studijų kokybės vadybos sistemą:** 1) Aukštosiose mokyklose trūksta vidinę studijų kokybės vadybos sistemos kūrimo ir diegimo sėkmę lemiančių sąlygų. 2) Atsakomybės už studijų kokybę, už dalyvavimą siekiant studijų kokybės prisiėmimo visiems aukštosios mokyklos darbuotojams pagal savo veiklos profilį problema. 3) Darbuotojų, išmanančių veiklos kokybės valdymą ir galinčių atsakingai vadovauti studijų kokybės vadybai, trūkumas. 4) Stereotipinė KVS sąvokos suvoktis ir jos painiojimas su kokybės užtikrinimu. 5) Skirtingų funkcijų vykdymas riboja vieningos sistemos pasirinkimą.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** studijų kokybės vadyba aukštojoje mokykloje, vidinė kokybės vadybos sistema, kokybės kultūra

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