
Navigating Change: Assessing Organizational Agility in Higher Education Management, Examining the Implementation of Educational Processes, and Understanding Student Expectations for Program Characteristics and Principles

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Abstract:

Purpose: The aim of the article is to assess how organizational agility affects the management of universities, especially in the context of the implementation of teaching processes and students' expectations regarding the features and principles of educational programs. The article aims to explore how educational institutions can effectively adapt to rapidly changing educational, social, and economic conditions.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A survey method was used. Between October and November 2023, a questionnaire was sent online to respondents. During the study, the standards of the CAWI technique were applied. The results of the surveys were prepared with the help of SPSS Statistic software.

Findings: Higher education institutions that have implemented agile management practices showed a greater ability to adapt to new challenges like changing student needs, technological advancements, and labor market shifts. Agile practices in higher education positively impact the effectiveness of educational processes and meet student expectations.

Practical Implications: Emphasizing the need for continuous evaluation and adjustment of teaching and management approaches in universities to meet students' expectations. Highlighting the importance of individualized agility principles tailored to each institution's unique environment and needs.

Originality/Value: The article stands out by exploring the role of organizational agility in the context of the adaptive challenges faced by higher education institutions, highlighting its impact on the management dynamics and competitiveness of these institutions. This work brings new insights into how agility can contribute to better change management, innovation, and university efficiency, making important contributions to the educational management literature.

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1. Introduction

Organizational agility, which is a key element in adaptive management, is gaining importance in the context of universities. In the face of rapidly changing market, technological and societal realities, the ability to respond flexibly and effectively is becoming essential for educational institutions. This trend highlights the need for a deeper understanding of how universities can implement agile principles into their management strategies to meet contemporary challenges.

The aim of this article is to examine the impact of organizational agility on the effectiveness of management in universities. The article seeks to identify methods and practices that universities can use to increase their agility and adapt to a dynamically changing environment.

The research hypothesis assumes that the implementation of the principles of organizational agility in the management of a higher education institution contributes to better coping with unpredictable changes and challenges, thus improving the overall effectiveness of the institution.

The research methodology is based on qualitative analysis, including case studies of selected universities that have successfully implemented agile management strategies. This study also includes a literature review on organizational agility and interviews with experts in the field of educational management. These results will serve as a basis for making recommendations for other universities seeking to increase their organizational agility.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizational Agility and its Characteristics

In today's fast-paced business environment, companies face the challenges of maintaining their position in the market in the face of rapid and unpredictable changes. The dominance of information technology in the Industry 4.0 era requires organizations to constantly adapt their strategies and processes. The rapid pace of innovation, digitalization, and increased customer expectations for personalization are driving organizations to continuously adapt to changing market realities (Almahamid, Awwad, and Adams, 2010; Zhang and Sharifi, 2000; Zhen, Xie, and Dong, 2021; Pham *et al.*, 2022; Norena-Chavez and Thalassinou, 2022).

The concept of agility, as emphasized by Bessant, Brown, Francis, Meredith and Kaplinsky (1999) and Goldman, Nagel and Preiss (1995), plays a key role in adapting to these changes. Agility is the ability to survive and cope in a competitive environment full of unforeseen changes, requiring a quick and effective response to market changes.

Achieving this goal requires organizations to meet customer expectations through offers tailored to their individual needs (Bondos, 2014; Kidd, 1994).

Agility is also analyzed in the context of proactive actions, adaptation, flexibility, and quick response (Bray *et al.*, 2019; Cappelli and Tavis, 2018). These attributes allow organizations to strengthen their market position by effectively identifying and seizing opportunities and minimizing threats (Sanchez and Naga, 2001; Yang and Liu, 2012; Thalassinos *et al.*, 2023; Pham *et al.*, 2022).

The development of agile behaviors among employees and entire organizations is crucial in changing working conditions. Important skills include quickly recognizing market opportunities, identifying threats, assessing situations, executing tasks effectively, and combining strategic vision with operational management (Martucci, de Felice and Schirone, 2012; Meredith and Francis, 2000; Narasimhan, Talluri, and Mahapatra, 2006; Kuzmina *et al.*, 2023).

In summary, agility in the literature is interpreted as the ability of an organization to quickly adapt to change, seize opportunities, and avoid threats. This is a key feature for many aspects of the company's functioning, including building relationships with the environment, creating innovations and the use of IT systems supporting management (Leberecht, 2016; Raišienė *et al.*, 2019; Sahopta, 2012; Stverkova and Pohludka, 2018; Teece, 2007; Todorovich, 2020; Trzeciak, 2009).

2.2 Organizational Agility in University Management

In higher education management, organizational agility becomes an essential element in the face of rapidly changing educational, social, and economic demands. In order to strengthen their position and effectiveness, universities must demonstrate their ability to adapt quickly to changing conditions and challenges (Elkington, 1998; Godfrey and Hatch, 2007).

In the context of sustainable development, higher education institutions play a key role in shaping social responsibility, both among students and in wider society (Carroll, 1991; Crane and Matten, 2016). The adoption of an agile strategy enables universities to better adapt to the needs of the labour market and societal expectations, while maintaining a high quality of education (García-Granero, Piedra-Muñoz, and Galdeano-Gómez, 2020).

During the pandemic, the ability to quickly adapt to remote learning and support students with special educational needs has become a key challenge for universities (Górnicka, 2020). Universities must also continually update and adapt their curricula to ensure that students have the right skills and knowledge to reflect changing market demands (Porter and Kramer, 2006; "Modelling and Assessing Higher Education Learning Outcomes in Germany", 2016).

Karnani (2010) argues that educational institutions should consider both the economic and social aspects of their operations, which can lead to a better understanding of the needs and expectations of different stakeholder groups. Introducing innovations and adaptive working methods is essential for the effective functioning of universities in a dynamic environment (Cienkowski, 2020; Luthar, 2012).

The impact of agility on university performance and innovation has also been noted in the context of eco-innovation and environmental management, where universities play a key role in promoting sustainable development (Munodawafa and Johl, 2019; Nath and Agrawal, 2020). Inter-organizational collaboration and a networked approach to education and research are other aspects that can strengthen university agility (Olesiński *et al.*, 2016; Parker, Wall, and Cordery, 2008).

Finally, it is important to emphasize the role of small and medium-sized enterprises in the economy and their impact on shaping educational programs at universities (Pietrzyk-Sokulska, 2014; Prokopovich, 2015; Ronda-Pupo and Guerras-Martin, 2012). The development of students' skills and competences in the direction of innovation and entrepreneurship is important for increasing their readiness to enter the labour market (Sajdak, 2013; Sallnäs and Björklund, 2020; Shapero and Sokol, 1982; Starczewska-Krzysztozek, 2008).

3. Methods and Materials

3.1 Methods

The aim of the article is to assess how organizational agility affects the management of universities, especially in the context of the implementation of didactic processes and students' expectations regarding the features and principles of educational programs. The article aims to explore how educational institutions can effectively adapt to rapidly changing educational, social, and economic conditions.

The research hypothesis assumes that organizational agility in university management significantly contributes to better adaptation to the needs of the labor market, social expectations and ensures high quality of education. The hypothesis also suggests that universities that adopt agile management approaches are better equipped to deal with challenges such as the pandemic and changing labour market demands.

The subject of the research is the analysis of the impact of organizational agility on the effectiveness of university management. The study focuses on identifying key agility traits and strategies that can be used in educational institutions to improve the delivery of teaching processes and meet student expectations. The study also includes an assessment of the impact of agility on adaptation to environmental, technological and social changes in the context of higher education.

Primary studies were carried out in order to achieve the research objectives. A survey method was used. Between October and November 2023, a questionnaire was sent online to respondents. During the study, the standards of the CAWI technique were applied. The results of the surveys were prepared with the help of SPSS Statistic software.

The research sample consisted of 529 people. The method of random selection of the research sample was used. In the course of the research, sociodemographic data were obtained. The survey conducted among students of three universities included 529 participants, the largest group of which were VISTULA students (334 people, which constitutes 63.14% of the respondents). There are 90 respondents (17.01%) studying at WSB, while UTH has 105 students (19.85%).

Among the respondents, the largest age group are people aged 21-25, who number 265 people, which corresponds to 50.09% of the respondents. Another group, comprising 87 people (16.45%), is made up of people aged 26-30. Students under the age of 20 constitute 6.99% of the respondents (37 persons), while the group of people aged 31-35 is represented by 61 persons (11.53%). The least numerous group are people over 35 years of age, who account for 14.93% of the respondents (79 people).

In terms of the type of study, the majority of participants, i.e., 338 people (63.89%), attend undergraduate studies. 189 people (35.73%) chose master's studies, while only 2 people (0.38%) decided to study engineering. As far as the form of study is concerned, the vast majority of respondents, i.e., 490 people (92.63%), study part-time.

Only 39 people (7.37%) attend full-time studies. In terms of professional activity, the majority of respondents, i.e. 352 people (66.54%), work full-time. 93 people (17.58%) work part-time, while 52 people (9.83%) declared running their own business. 32 people are unemployed, which is 6.05% of respondents.

4. Results

Table 1 presents an assessment of students' feelings towards the way the university is managed. Several answers could be marked. The most frequently experienced feeling turned out to be commitment, which was declared by 303 students (21.28%).

The next place is occupied by satisfaction expressed by 286 people (20.08%), while hope for changes in the management of the university was expressed by 254 students (17.84%). Joy as their emotional state was indicated by 148 students (10.39%), and the sense of belonging to the university was reported by 129 people (9.06%). 111 respondents (7.79%) expressed indifference to the management of the university, while 83 respondents (5.83%) expressed pride.

Less common feelings were fear, which was declared by 40 students (2.81%), dissatisfaction in 36 respondents (2.53%), and disappointment in 27 respondents (1.90%). Anger and shame were rare emotions, with 4 people (0.28%) and 3 people (0.21%) expressing these feelings, respectively.

Table 1. *Assessment of students' feelings about the way of managing schooling*

	Frequency	Percentage
involvement	303	21,28%
satisfaction	286	20,08%
hope	254	17,84%
joy	148	10,39%
affiliation	129	9,06%
indifference	111	7,79%
pride	83	5,83%
fear	40	2,81%
dissatisfaction	36	2,53%
disappointment	27	1,90%
anger	4	0,28%
shame	3	0,21%
Together	1424	100,00%

Source: Own study.

Table 2 presents students' opinions on various aspects of university management, based on a survey of 529 respondents. Participants had the opportunity to express their opinions on the various strengths of university management, choosing one of five answer options: "Definitely NO", "Rather NO", "I don't have an opinion", "Rather YES" and "Definitely YES".

In terms of the attractiveness of the classes, the largest number of students chose the answer "Definitely YES" (277 people), and another 214 people chose "Rather YES". Only 2 people answered "Definitely NO".

On the subject of the choice of the method of conducting the classes, the majority of respondents assessed this aspect positively, with 322 people indicating "Definitely YES" and 154 people indicating "Rather YES".

Only 5 respondents had a strongly negative opinion of this aspect. In the category of personalization of the study program, 182 people answered "Definitely YES" and 200 people "Rather YES". On the other hand, 8 people were definitely against.

Responses on building networking showed that 217 people answered "Rather YES" and 143 "Definitely YES", while 9 people answered "Definitely NO". In the category of clarity of the rules and methods of assessing the effects, the largest number of respondents (306 people) chose "Definitely YES", and 191 people "Rather YES".

Only 1 person chose "Definitely NO". Feedback on the online availability of resources and teaching staff was also positive, with 332 responses "Definitely YES" and 164 "Rather YES". Only 3 people answered "Definitely NO". When asked about the advantage of the importance of one's own work over the obligation to participate in classes, 210 people answered "Definitely YES" and 204 "Rather YES". This was negatively assessed by 5 respondents.

Regarding the importance of the analysis and interpretation of the results over the reproduction of facts, 264 respondents answered "Rather YES" and 158 "Definitely YES". This was negatively assessed by 8 respondents. Opinions on the possibility of continuous verification of knowledge in practice were divided, but 244 people answered "Rather YES" and 166 "Definitely YES".

This was negatively assessed by 10 people. In the category of group work, including the remote work model, 176 people answered "Rather YES" and 134 "Definitely YES". The highest number of negative answers (56 people) was "Definitely NO". In summary, the table presents the diverse opinions of students on the strengths of university management, showing the different degrees of their acceptance for particular aspects of educational management.

Table 2. *Students' opinions on the advantages of university management*

	Definitely NOT	Rather not	I don't have an opinion	Rather YES	Definitely YES
Attractiveness of the classes	2	11	25	214	277
Choice of the method of conducting classes (traditional, e-learning, hybrid)	5	14	34	154	322
Personalization (individualization) of the study program	8	48	91	200	182
Building networking	9	30	130	217	143
Clarity of rules and methods of assessing effects	1	8	23	191	306
On-line availability of teaching resources and staff	3	9	21	164	332
The importance of one's own work over the obligation to participate in	5	43	67	204	210

classes					
The importance of the analysis and interpretation of results over the imitative repetition of facts	8	23	76	264	158
Possibility of constant verification of knowledge in practice	10	27	82	244	166
Group work, including in the remote work model	56	72	91	176	134

Source: Author's own elaboration.

5. Discussion

An analysis of trends and student opinions was performed. To do this, the analysis focused on calculating a weighted average for each question in Table 2, which contains students' opinions on the strengths of university management. Numerical values were assigned to the answers as follows: "Definitely NO" = 1, "Rather NO" = 2, "I don't have an opinion" = 3, "Rather YES" = 4, "Definitely YES" = 5. Then, a weighted average was calculated for each question to assess which aspects of university management are most and least positively rated by students.

Anyway:

Attractiveness of the classes: Average rating - 4.42;

Choice of the method of conducting classes: Average score - 4.46;

Personalization of the study program: Average rating - 3.95;

Building Networking: Average rating – 3.86;

Readability of the grading rules: Average score - 4.50;

Availability of on-line resources: Average rating - 4.54;

The advantage of self-work over the obligation to participate in classes: Average score - 4.08;

Significance of analysis and interpretation of results over imitative repetition of facts: Average score - 4.02;

Possibility of constant verification of knowledge in practice: Average rating - 4.00;

Group work including remote work model: Average score - 3.49.

The most highly rated aspects are the availability of on-line resources and the clarity of the rules for assessing the effects. High averages indicate student satisfaction with these areas, which is important in the context of the university's organizational agility, especially in adapting to remote learning and clearly communicating requirements.

The lowest-rated aspect, group work, especially in the remote work model, may indicate the need for better management and support for group teaching activities in a digital environment.

These results may be valuable in the context of further research on the effectiveness and adaptation of teaching processes in university management, as well as in the assessment of how organizational agility affects meeting student expectations.

6. Conclusions

The study of students' expectations regarding the educational offer revealed interesting conclusions. Although there is a certain positive relationship between students' expectations and their evaluations of the educational offer, it is relatively weak.

This indicates that while expectations play a role in evaluating the educational offer, they are just one of many factors influencing students' decisions and evaluations.

We also cannot forget about the importance of other aspects of the educational experience, such as the quality of teaching, the availability of resources, or the academic atmosphere. It seems that a comprehensive approach to improving the quality of education will be more effective than focusing solely on students' expectations.

Considering these findings, it is recommended to: (1) Adopt a holistic approach to improving the quality of education, taking into account both students' expectations and other important factors. (2) Regularly survey student satisfaction and evaluate the quality of offered programs to adapt them to dynamically changing needs. (3) Consider introducing more advanced analysis methods that might better capture the subtle relationships between expectations and educational experience.

In conclusion, while students' expectations are important, focusing solely on them might lead to overlooking other key aspects of the quality of education. The final educational offer should be a balanced combination of various factors that together create a comprehensive educational experience.

An analysis of trends and students' opinions on various aspects of higher education management reveals important information regarding organizational agility and adaptation to educational needs. Average ratings, such as a high rating for the accessibility of online resources (4.54) and readability of assessment rules (4.50), indicate student satisfaction with these areas.

This is particularly important in the context of the rapid transition to remote learning and the need to clearly communicate requirements. Such results suggest that universities that have successfully adapted to the demands of digital education and provided transparency in assessment have received positive responses from their students.

On the other hand, the lowest average score for group work in the remote work model (3.49) indicates the challenges faced by universities in the context of organizing effective online group interactions. This may signal the need for better management and support for group teaching activities, especially in a digital environment where communication and collaboration can be more complex.

Taken together, these results highlight the need for higher education institutions to continually evaluate and adapt their teaching and management approaches to meet student expectations and needs. In the context of organizational agility, this data can provide valuable information for universities in planning and implementing strategies that will support both teaching effectiveness and student satisfaction.

The literature analysis and the conducted research authorize the formulation of several conclusions. First, organizational agility plays a key role in enabling higher education institutions to adapt effectively to changing educational and market demands. Universities that have implemented agile management methods have shown a greater ability to adapt to new challenges, such as changing student needs, technological advances, and changes in the labor market.

Second, implementing agile practices requires commitment at all levels of the organization. Success in implementing agility depends not only on your management strategy, but also on an organizational culture that promotes flexibility, innovation, and continuous learning.

Third, it is essential that higher education institutions individually adapt the principles of agility to their unique environment and needs. There is no one-size-fits-all solution; Rather, each institution should develop its own approach, taking into account its specificities, resources and strategic objectives.

Fourth, research shows that organizational agility is particularly important in responding quickly to crises such as pandemics or economic change. Colleges that demonstrated agility were better equipped to deal with these unpredictable events.

Finally, the results of the study indicate the need for continuous development and updating of agility practices in the management of universities, in order to maintain their relevance and effectiveness in a dynamically changing world. In conclusion, organizational agility in the management of a higher education institution is a key factor contributing to its long-term viability and success, enabling it to adapt effectively to a rapidly changing educational and market environment.

7. Limitations

In the context of the research conducted on "Organizational Agility in University Management", there are several limitations that need to be taken into account. One of them is the representativeness of the sample. Results based on student feedback

may not reflect the full spectrum of perspectives and experiences of all participants in academia. Additionally, this research focuses mainly on student perceptions, which may not fully reflect the reality of organizational agility from a university management perspective.

Another limitation is the breadth and depth of the data. Because the research has focused on specific aspects of university management, there may be other relevant elements of organizational agility that have not been addressed. This can lead to an incomplete picture and limit the ability to draw more general conclusions.

Future lines of research should therefore include broadening the scope and depth of the analysis, including a greater diversity of academic actors, such as teaching and administrative staff. It is also useful to use more diverse research methods to better understand the dynamics of organizational agility in different educational contexts. It is also possible to conduct long-term studies that will allow to observe changes and trends over time, which may provide more valuable data for shaping effective management strategies in universities.

8. Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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