

TOWARDS A GLOBAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION: A COMPARISON OF THE ANGLO-SAXON AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

The increasing globalization of markets spurred by modern telecommunication technology has a lasting and profound impact on the way companies conduct business. Many companies join forces and form alliances across national and cultural borders in order to cope with intensified competition and ever more demanding customers. International cooperation necessitates the collaboration of employees and managers from different countries with often considerably different educational backgrounds.

In a global market, where restrictions of movement of employees from different nations are removed, the competition for career advancement as well as for entry-level positions in international companies turns out to become a competition based on different educational systems. For example, take the case of the European Union where citizens of the member states are free to move and to work in any country of the union. Degrees from universities and business schools are mutually recognized. If a student gets a degree in one country, all other countries of the union automatically recognize this degree. Accordingly, students from British universities that follow the Anglo-Saxon tradition compete with graduates from Central-European universities that are influenced by the Roman educational system.

This special session compared the educational system following the Anglo-Saxon tradition as it is found in countries such as the United States, England, Australia, and India with the educational system of Central-Europe. The goal of this presentation was to make a useful contribution to the ongoing discussion about marketing education in the U.S., to build a better understanding of the points of difference and similarity between these two higher education systems, and to gain a greater appreciation of cross cultural differences and their impact on business training and practice.

The German system served as an example for an educational system in the Roman tradition as it is found in Central-Europe. Some of the distinctive aspects of this system that were discussed included the following areas.

- 1) School System
- 2) Implications of the School System
- 3) University System
- 4) Pedagogy in Business Schools
- 5) Implications of the German Business Schools
- 6) Organization of German Business Schools
- 7) Discussion in Germany

For the last five years there is an ongoing discussion about a possible revision to the university system in Germany. The position of most businesses is to adapt the system more to the Anglo-Saxon tradition. Also, many students feel that they are at a disadvantage relative to students educated in the U.S. or British system. Specifically, universities are attacked in the political discussion for being inefficient and not providing a control mechanism for professors. In turn, professors are criticized for their poor pedagogy and their lack of interest to interact with businesses. Advocates of the old system emphasize its value for general personal enhancement of students and argue that the ability to think independently and to cope with new problems is beneficial to businesses in the long run. Also, it is contended that stricter controls of professors lead to erosion of academic freedom.

These distinct approaches to education were discussed in terms of their impacts on the training received by business students and the resulting business practices employed by the graduates of these educational systems.