

ABSTRACT

According to the Polish legal system and practice, a public university is at one and the same time the inheritor of the academic tradition, a public entity as well as an entity operating on the competitive market. The research problem this study deals with concerns the fact that, in view of the dynamic changes occurring in their environment, contemporary public universities need an adequate model of information policy. This task is connected with the continuing evolution of the contemporary university operating model itself. The dissertation presents an original model, developed with regard to all the related principles, for the formulation, design and management of information policy in public universities and it proposes a concept of a maturity model for the information policy management. Moreover, the dissertation indicates possibilities for further improvement of communication and information processes in this particular type of organization.

The goals of the study were achieved through literature and survey research, including in-depth interviews. The research covered eight Polish public universities and, additionally, for comparison, one leading non-public university as well as three foreign state-owned universities.

The literature research helped to develop a model of information management, treated wholly as a model approach to public university information policy. The structure of the model results mainly from the analysis of the essence of the functioning of a public university and the general theory of management. It has been established that two variants of the model can be used – an extremely centralized one that results directly from the provisions governing higher education and a decentralized one with a varying degree of decentralization, but only within the operational layer of university management (the model should always be centralized in the strategic layer). The model was verified based on the performed research. First, a pilot study was conducted at one of the biggest and most modern universities, identifying the content and organizational scope of information policy, and then the scopes of decentralization were analyzed at the other universities, indicating the recognized malfunctions. In addition, an analysis was performed of the three foreign universities operating within a legal-political order in which a wholly centralized management system is imposed upon the universities, including their information policy. This was further used to examine the practical centralized model which, in its pure form, does not occur in Poland.

The proposed model is based on applying the process approach, which is an alternative to the traditional, structural management of information policy. At the same time, the model provides a holistic approach to the circulation of all the information processed

by a university, ensuring its legally required transparency, effectiveness and efficiency.