ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS OF INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: THE THEORETICAL VIEWPOINT

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Abstract

Purpose. The goal of the paper is to discuss the potential benefits and to highlight the drawbacks of integrated management system for organizations that seek to improve management process.

Methodology. Methods of the research were used: analysis of a scientific and special literature that presents the requirements, models and results of integrated management systems studies, and analysis of statistical data to assess actuality of integrated management systems for enterprises in Lithuania.

Findings. Summarizing research findings, it should be stated that the implementation of management system integration should be based on provision of social responsibility and holistic approach to the organization. It requires the long-term united efforts of leaders in a strategic hierarchical level and high organizational maturity to ensure the fluency of the running stages of planning management system integration, preparing documentations, implementing and realizing integrated management system. Also it is necessary to purify the conception of integrated management system in organizational context. Theoretical analysis of integrated management systems show, that all of the management systems can not be well integrated in principle. They can only be partly integrated and coordinated. A need to question the level of integration of management

systems is very important as in scientific discourse as in practice. It is important to mark, that the number of organizations, that seek to optimize management processes by implementing the integrated management systems is rapidly increasing in Lithuania, too. It shows that benefit associated with integration of management systems is apprehensible in Lithuania. Advantages of integrated management systems can certainly become even stronger if scientists and practicians join their forces in search of methods of organizational management development.

Research limitations. The research limitations related to a lack of integrated management systems implementation studies in Lithuanian scientific literature. That hinders the possibility to frame specific recommendations to the practicians in Lithuania.

Practical implications and value. In the contemporary world, coordination and supervision of management systems is a complex aim, which needs constant redesigning and innovations; organizations are challenged to optimize their management constantly. One of potentialities can be implementing an integrated management system. Traditionally, it consists of the quality management, employees' health and safety management, social responsibility management and environmental protection management migration to one management system. As there is no international standard, that would submit unambiguous recommendations about ensuring the management system integration, every organization copes with this assignment on it's own. The paper gives value both to managers and to scientists who are interested in advantages and limitations of integrated management systems in general because of a generalized systemic approach to the research issue.

Keywords: integrated management system, standards of management, business processes optimization.

Research type: viewpoint and conceptual paper.

Introduction

Rapid social and technological changes, increasing competition and society's pressure to develop production and services while conserving the environment and workers' health promotes the organizations to look especially complex to their activity and external challenges. Leaders in organizations need to look for new ways to improve organizational activity and management processes to successfully push forward.

With this goal, more and more advanced organizations choose management optimization solutions. One of that is implementation of so called integrated management system (IMS further), which concludes to the required standards of quality management, employees' health and safety management, environmental protection management and social responsibility. The uniting a few standards to a single management system gives the opportunity to increase the organization's economical efficiency substantially, while

at the same time increasing the quality of production and services and to brighten the image of organization.

In the Western countries, practical problems of IMS are being solved in scientific level. However, Lithuanian scientists do not give the required attention for the research of integrated management systems at the moment. Nevertheless, the leaders of organizations are widely interested in this method and in the opportunities it gives. Business representatives discuss business processes optimization by IMS (see for example, Šilingas, 2010; Ciemnolonskis, 2010 and others). Management of quality and environmental protection is most commonly analyzed in the scientific level of relationship with the management processes (Arbačiauskas, 2010), however, it is rarely associated with the compatibility of other management systems. Probably due to little interaction between business and science in Lithuania, there is a lack of scientific investigation, based on the actual management optimization need, which would allow giving practices the information, insights and recommendations associated with the integrated management system realization and meant to increase the efficiency of organizational management.

The goal of the paper is to discuss the potential benefits and to highlight the probable drawbacks of IMS for the organizations that seek to optimize the management processes.

The following tasks are set to achieve this goal: 1) reviewing the international management standards that make up the basis of integrated management system conception; 2) Describing the benefits and potential drawbacks of integrated management systems for organizations, while referring to different publications of abroad authors about the areas in question.

Methods of research were: a) analysis of scientific and special literature that presents the requirements, models and research results of IMS; b) analysis of statistical data.

The article is divided into sections. The first section presents international standards, on the base of which the conception of IMS has formed. In the second section the assumptions, terms, policies and organizational benefits of IMS are discussed. Also the section discusses theoretical problems associated with integration of different management areas. The third section is for discussion. Also it gives the conclusions of the paper and recommendations for the further research.

1. International Standards for Managing the Organization

The commitment to give quality services and produce quality products, to conserve environment and to take care of employee health and safety is becoming a very important part of strategy and image for organizations that seek fortune in long-term perspective. Providing special attention to these areas, organizations recognize taking the responsibility for the outcomes of their work. In that way organizations increase the trust and loyalty of their partners and at the same time economic indicators are being improved (Jorgensen et. al, 2006). The connection between the quality of service or product and the yield of organization is unquestionable. However, talking about

employees' health and safety, environmental protection and other areas of management, some key questions associated with the extent of organization's commitments, possible restrictions of organization's direct actions and needed resources and expected return arise (Zeng et al., 2007). Controlling separate areas in a way which would allow giving synergistic effect and economical benefits is not so simple. The optimization of management using requirements of international standards makes the finding of solution for this problem a bit easier.

As a response to the requirements of clients and other interest groups and the pressure of competitive market, a set of international management standards has been made to increase the effectiveness of the work of the organization.

The first standard was the quality management standard ISO 9001. Later on, environmental protection management standard (ISO 14001) has been made. At the moment, organizations refer to employees' health and safety (OHSAS 18001), financial management (Sarbanes-Oxley Section 404), social responsibility (SA 8000), sustainable development (BS 8900), business continuity (BS 25999), food safety (ISO 22000), information safety (ISO 27001), informational technology service management (ISO 20000) standards. In addition, industries also refer to specific supply chain (ISO 28000), chemicals (RC 14001), automobiles (ISO/TS 16949), air space (AS 9100), medical devices (ISO 13485), telecommunication (TL 9000), testing and calibrating laboratories (ISO/IEC 17025) standards.

Evaluating the organization systematically, it should be noted, that it is necessary to improve all subsystems at the same time, while reaching for the highest results of the work, because weak achievements in one management area negatively affect the overall functioning of organization.

The variety of organizations makes it impossible tom create a single standard, that would cover their all possible activities and processes. However, few standards are relevant for almost all organizations. These are the international standards of quality management, environmental protection management, employee health and safety and social responsibility.

International Organization for Standardization confirmed the first series of standards (ISO 9000) in 1987 and the second one in 1994. At first, standard ISO 9001 was meant to describe the organizational policy, procedures and rules that give the ability to ensure equal quality or organizational work. Later, in the standard edited in the year 2000, client and identification and satisfaction of his needs became the center of concern of ISO 9001. Also, constant and cyclic improving of quality management was begun to emphasize (www.iso.org; Kaziliūnas, 2006). According to data of 2010, over a thousand organizations in Lithuania have certificated their quality management system (Informacija apie sertifikuotas vadybos sistemas: sertifikuotos kokybės vadybos sistemos, 2010).

Another, international standard of environmental management (ISO 14001) was formed on the basis of quality standard set ISO 9000 in 1996. It describes the organization's environmental protection management system as associated and together functioning elements, that allow the insurance of effective and efficient management of

activity or products and services that have or might have an effect on the environment. According to statistical data, the reach for environmental protection has become very relevant for organizations. For example, six years after the creation of standard, the International Organization for Standardization had given certificates for organizations, registered in 118 countries (ISO, 2003). In Lithuania, organizations' commitment to conserve environment is also strong—according to data of Lithuanian department for standardization, in July 2010, 582 organizations had certificated environmental management systems, and in November this number was over 630 (Informacija apie sertifikuotas vadybos sistemas: sertifikuotos aplinkos vadybos sistemos, 2010).

An updated environmental management standard version was confirmed in 2004. The fundamental difference, compared with the previous one was the improved compatibility with quality management standard ISO 9001:2000 and implemented systemic approach while setting goals of environmental protection and measuring the management results (ISO 14001:2004).

Employees' health and safety management system is standardized after the standard OHSAS 18001:1999, the authorship of which is assigned to a few organizations of standardization, certification and consultation (OHSAS 18001). Despite of the fact that International Organization for Standardization does not describe this system, it is well coordinated with the standards of quality management and environmental protection management. The standard OHSAS 18001 is meant to help organizations to minimize the negative work effect for employees and to control the risks for employee health and safety. In 2007 this standard was updated in cooperation with 43 organizations from 28 countries (OHSAS 18001:2007).

The organizational management of social responsibility was standardized in 1997. The standard SA 8000 was formed by Social Accountability International. The goal of the standard SA 8000 is to ensure employees' rights and international conventions, associated with the main human rights, children rights, non-discrimination principle, prevention of forced labor, penalty law, employee's right to healthy and safe environment, rights of establishment and functioning of professional associations and unions etc. (SAI, 1999).

International Organization for Standardization is working on a new standard ISO 26000 (Guidance on Social Responsibility, 2009), the whole text of which was submitted to public inquiry from 2009-09-14 to 2010-02-14 (Lietuvos standartizacijos departamentas, 2010) before confirming it. The perception of importance of social responsibility is slowly penetrating Lithuania. Most of the organizations declare to apply the principles of social responsibility, while presenting their policies and values, however, according to data of Lithuanian department for Standardization, only 16 organizations met the standards of this area and had the certificates proving it in 2010 (Informacija apie sertifikuotas vadybos sistemas: kitos sertifikuotos vadybos sistemos, 2010). We have to admit, that the emphasis of organization's social responsibility is still more of a marketing campaign than systemic cooperation with social partners. (Gruževskis et. al, 2006).

2. Principles of and Assumptions for Integrated Management Systems

Examining the reviewed international standards of organizational management, a few similarities and specific factors can be seen. Exactly, they are:

1. The standard ISO 9001:2000 became the base for the environmental protection and employee health and safety management standards;
2. The environmental protection management standard ISO 14001 was specially coordinated with the provisions of quality management standard;
3. The employee health ant safety standard OHSAS 18001 was formed considering both ISO 9001 and ISO 14001;
4. Special attention is given to the principal of constant improving of described system in both of these standards;
5. The standards of quality management, environment protection management, employee health and safety management and social responsibility standards have a very similar structure (Jorgensen, 2002).

However, the main condition which allows implementing different management systems is a united conceptual approach to the nature of organizational management, having in mind that different management systems operate in a unified organizational structure, using shared resources and combining work processes to achieve organizational goals (Slater, 1991). In other words, integrated management systems are being developed on the base of principal similarities of management systems.

There are a few reasons why implementation of management systems is beneficial for the organizations (Slater, 1991; Jorgensen et al. 2002; Jorgensen et al., 2006; Pojasek, 2006; Douglas, Glen, 2000):

1. It allows the organizations to decrease the extent of documentation and bureaucracy which arises due to work organizing and control, referring to separate procedures or different standards;
2. It allows saving resources, entrusting the management of the integrated management system to one leader instead of appointing separate leaders to each and every management system, including the certificated one;
3. It allows carrying out an internal and external audit more clearly and effectively;
4. It promotes concentrating on the organization's activity improving and the strengthening of connections between quality, employee health and safety and social responsibility.

Nevertheless, standardizing integrated management systems with common documentation is difficult due to the variety of organizational goals and characteristics and the uncertainty of management, which is influenced by a changing external environment. Talking about the coordination and supervision of management systems, it should be marked, that this activity is complex, requiring constant redesigning and at the same time innovations in separate management areas. Long-term united efforts of strategic level leaders and high level of organizational maturity is required to ensure fluent stages of planning, preparing the documentations (policies, procedures, orders), implementation

and realization of integrated management systems (Bernardo et al., 2009). As there is no international standard, which would submit unambiguous recommendations to ensure the implementation of management systems, every organization copes with this task on its own.

Both in theoretical and practical level of implementation of the integrated management systems a few key problem issues arise.

The idea of management system implementation, as it was said, is based on the similarities of international standards, which appeared naturally: up to eighty percent of works about quality management, environmental protection management and employee health and safety management in different organizations are very similar in their nature. However, there still remain twenty percent of issues, the content of which, talking about different organizations and their management areas, is not similar. Sometimes these works even seem incompatible with each other at first glance (Pojasek, 2006). It means that they can not organically blend with each other; they can only be documented next to each other.

Another problem is the organization's leaders' approach to the importance of management systems. The highest rank in organizations is usually given to quality management, and the environmental protection, employee health and safety and social responsibility is pushed to the background, or serves as a proof that reach for quality exists in all work areas (Jorgensen et al., 2006). Overrating one area, while devaluating others is incompatible with the idea of integration.

It should be also marked, that the realization of united management systems, including integrated management systems, is inherent from organizational culture, which supports a few things: employees taking part in submitting the solutions for the organization's development and solving problems, teamwork, constant learning and improving, dedication and personal leadership and coordinating various interests. (Wilkinson, Dale, 2002). However, there are not many organizations that develop and advanced organizational culture, because in order to create and strengthen this culture, resources with difficultly evaluated quantities return are needed.

On the other hand, if and adequate organizational culture is not supported, the implementation of management systems confronts with strong resistance of functional leaders. It is associated with the human factor, needed structural changes and the nature of implementation of management systems itself. Due to the variety of work specifics, conflicts between the supervisors responsible for separate areas arise; they fight for influence areas or even survival.

Finally, it must be agreed, what does the implementation of management systems mean in organizational context? Dictionaries describe the implementation as a merge of parts or elements into one system, and setting the functions of each element. Sometimes the implementation of management systems is described as cooperation based on coordinated policy (Tarptautinių žodžių žodynas, 1985; Tarptautinių žodžių žodynas, 2005).

The problem of conception implementation is explored at an international scale. For example, the British Institute for Standardization submits the stages that lead from

coordination of management systems to implementation. It is thought, that management systems can be (British Standards Institution, 2006):

1. Coordinated: separate management systems operate in the same organization at the same time;
2. Integratable: shared elements of management systems are identified;
3. Integrating: the identified shared elements are coordinated to work jointly;
4. Integrated: a united system, which incorporates all shared elements, is operating.

As some elements, as mentioned, can not be merged into unified system, and a necessity to talk about the level of management system integration arises.

Partly, integrated systems are also called parallel systems (Wilkinson, Dale, 2002). Parallel management systems mean that a united management structure is created using similarities of installed standards, however, the procedures of each area remain described separately, even though filed in a single manual. This type of implementation allows both to decrease bureaucracy, which inevitably occurs after installing different management standards, and to remove most of duplicated work

To solve the mentioned problems, theoreticians suggest not implementing all management systems, but only few of the referring to needs and possibilities (Bernardo et. all, 2009; Salomone, 2008). It is also suggested to execute the implementation not by thinking about a united system from the position of functional leaders, but by concentrating on the employees, who actually do the particular work. A tension and confusion would be avoided while describing the processes and orders of employees'work, if employees had to coordinate their work referring to different standards (Pojasek, 2006). In other words, if all the attention was given to the processes, the desired results would be realized itself and integral system would be created (Slater, 1991). It is important, that both leader executives and experts would take part equally while developing the documentation of processes (Pojasek, 2005).

3. Discussion

Having an intention to integrate management systems, it is important to realize the organizational processes as a united management of many different organizational activity areas. Following areas are resources management, knowledge management, environmental protection management, work safety management, employee health protection and others. The implementation of management systems integration should be based on provision of social responsibility and holistic approach to the organization.

The implementation of management systems allows optimizing the processes of organizational management:

– To organize the processes of organizational activity smoothly,
– To meet the deadlines,
– Don't to exceed the planned budget,
– To reduce faulty work and waster to a minimum,

– To avoid the disturbance of employee health and violations of environmental balance.

Integrated management systems are developed on the basis of principal similarities of organization's management systems. However, it is difficult to standardize integrated management systems with a single documentation due to the variety of organizational goals, tasks and characteristics and the uncertainty of management, which is influenced by a rapidly changing economical and social environment.

Long-term united efforts of strategic level leaders and high level of organizational maturity is needed to ensure the smooth stages of the management integration planning, preparing of the documentations, and realizing the new management practice. Coordination and maintenance of management systems is a complex work, that requires constant reconsideration and at the same time innovations in separate areas. As international standard for IMS not exist, that gives unambiguous recommendations on assuring the integration of management systems, every organization copes with this task on its own.

The practical realization of IMS is inherent from the organizational culture, which supports changes and management innovations.

It is necessary to purify the conception of integrated management system in organizational context. A need to talk about the level of integration of management systems is very important as in scientific discourse as in practice. Theoretical analysis of IMS show, that all of the management systems can not be well integrated in principle. They can only be partly integrated and coordinated. The question about the level of the integration of management systems is raised by Lithuanian practices (it shows the research of Raišienė, 2010). That fact enhances the relevance of scientific problem and the necessity of further researches on the implementation of management systems integration.

It is important to mark, that the number of organizations, that seek to optimize management processes by implementing the IMS is rapidly increasing in Lithuania, too. It shows that benefit associated with integration of management systems is apprehensible in Lithuania. Advantages of IMS can certainly become even stronger if scientists and practicians joined their forces in search of organizational management development.

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INTEGRUOTŲ VADYBOS SISTEMŲ PRIVALUMAI IR TRŪKUMAI TEORINIU POŽIŪRIU

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Santrauka. *Spartūs socialiniai ir technologiniai pokyčiai, didėjanti konkurencija, didėjantis sociumo spaudimas plėtoti gamybą ir paslaugas, tausojant aplinką bei dirbančiųjų sveikatą, skatina organizacijas į savo veiklą bei išorės iššūkius žiūrėti itin kompleksiškai. Norint sėkmingai veržtis pirmyn, organizacijų vadovams tenka ieškoti naujų veiklos valdymo tobulinimo būdų.*

Šiuo tikslu vis daugiau pažangių organizacijų pasirenka vadybos optimizavimo sprendimą – įdiegti vadinamąją integruotos vadybos sistemą, apimančią kokybės, darbuotojų saugos ir sveikatos, socialinės atsakomybės bei aplinkos apsaugos tarptautinių standartų reikalavimus. Keleto standartų sujungimas į vieną vadybos sistemą leidžia iš esmės padidinti organizacijos ekonominį veiksmingumą, tuo pat metu pagerinant gaminių ir paslaugų kokybę, produktyvumą bei organizacijos įvaizdį.

Vakarų šalyse vadybos sistemų integracijos praktinės problemos sprendžiamos moksliniu lygmeniu. Bendradarbiaujant mokslininkams ir praktikams formuojamos naujos integruotos vadybos koncepcijos bei kuriami modeliai, leidžiantys integruotos vadybos principus perkelti taip pat ir į viešąjį sektorių. Tai rodo, kad integruotų vadybos sistemų plėtra įgauna naują mastą, o šios tematikos mokslo tyrimų aktualumas didėja.

Straipsnio tikslas – apibūdinti integruotų vadybos sistemų potencialią naudą organizacijoms, siekiančioms optimizuoti valdymo procesus ir išryškinti galimus trūkumus bei įgyvendinimo problemas. Šiuo tikslu straipsnyje apžvelgiami tarptautiniai kokybės standartai, sudarantys prielaidas integruoti vadybos sistemas organizacijose. Taip pat remiantis užsienio autorių publikacijų ir atliktų tyrimų analize nagrinėjami integruotų vadybos sistemų teikiamos naudos bei galimų diegimo problemų klausimai.

Pažymima, jog vadybos sistemų integravimas sudaro sąlygas optimizuoti organizacijos valdymo procesus: sklandžiai organizuoti įmonės veiklą, numatytas užduotis vykdyti laiku, neviršyti suplanuoto biudžeto, iki minimumo sumažinti broką ir nekokybišką darbą, išvengti darbuotojų sveikatos sutrikdymų bei aplinkos pusiausvyros pažeidimų.

Vadybos sistemų koordinavimas bei priežiūra – tai kompleksinis, reikalaujantis nuolatinio perprojektavimo ir tuo pat metu inovacijų atskirose srityse, darbas. Kadangi iki šiol nėra tarptautinio standarto, pateikiančio vienareikšmes rekomendacijas vadybos sistemų integracijai užtikrinti, kiekviena organizacija šį uždavinį sprendžia individualiai, susidurdamos ir su panašiomis, ir su unikaliomis problemomis. Pabrėžtina, jog vienodas standartas gerokai palengvintų dažniausiai kylančių problemų sprendimą.

Straipsnyje formuluojama išvada, jog, užsibrėžus integruoti vadybos sistemas, svarbu organizacijos veiklos procesus suvokti kaip daugelio skirtingų vadybos sričių (išteklių, žinių, aplinkosaugos, darbų saugos, darbuotojų sveikatos apsaugos) vieningą valdymą ir remtis holistiniu požiūriu bei socialinės atsakomybės nuostata. Pažymėtina, kad Lietuvoje sparčiai daugėja organizacijų, siekiančių optimizuoti valdymo procesus, pasirenkant vadybos sistemų integravimo priemonę. Integruotų vadybos sistemų įgyvendinimo trukdžiai yra menki, palyginti su gaunama nauda. Mokslininkams ir praktikams sutelkus pajėgas ši nauda neabejotinai gali tapti dar svaresnė.

__Raktažodžiai__: integruotos vadybos sistemos, vadybos standartai, organizacijos veiklos procesų optimizavimas.