COMMODIFICATION OF EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC LABOUR—USING THE BALANCED SCORECARD IN A UNIVERSITY SETTING

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The dissatisfaction with the financial performance of public enterprises in the 1980s led governments to embrace the rhetoric of free markets, and commercialize many state sector activities. This movement has included universities. In many countries, the state began reducing financial support for higher education, encouraged competition and demanded financial self-dependency. A new managerialism entered universities and ubiquitous management philosophies such as the total quality management (TQM) and the balanced scorecard (BSC) have been tested in some universities, such as the one described in this paper.

Pressure upon unit cost has been accompanied and reinforced by the institution of quasi-market funding mechanisms. In the pursuit of business-like efficiency, performance targets and measures have been introduced to measure and evaluate the productivity of individual academics and their departments. The translation of public sector activities into private sector vocabulary calls for managers to re-present the organization in the appropriate economic terms. The BSC and TQM philosophies are central economic vocabularies that have been utilized by some public sector organizations.

The paper utilizes Habermas’s critical theory of societal development to evaluate the incidence of TQM and BSC implementation in corporate universities. It argues that although the state presumes that market-based vocabularies like TQM and BSC promotes efficiency and effectiveness in organizations, through their application the very essence of education is jeopardized. The effect of these developments has seen a progressive commodification of students and academic labour. Treating education as a private good, and students as customers, is a constitutive re-ordering of university life, and potential degradation of its function in society.

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Introduction

This paper attempts to evaluate the impact of policy changes on university administration. In particular it examines the importation of managerial techniques from the private sector to public sector tertiary institutions. Such importation is part of a larger world-wide movement to introduce more “business-like” accountabilities and results-oriented management styles to all kinds of public sector organizations (Hood, 1991). At the heart of new public management is the concept of management as a specialized and separate function focused on achieving cost-efficiency in state services. Its associated techniques are assumed to be portable to almost any sphere of activity in the public or private sector. In the case of universities, associated with the introduction of managerialism, there has been a greater emphasis on financial self-sufficiency (Hodson & Thomas, 2001), and a reduced level of state funding per student. Universities have been encouraged to compete for students, not only locally but globally. Many universities have extended their activities into international collaborations, such as Universitas 21. They have become transnational corporations with global offerings of courses.

Education is more and more viewed as an investment by “customers” who search the world for the best product available. Students expect a pay-off from their investment. So they seek vocationally oriented courses. Distinctions between universities and polytechnics are disappearing, and indeed in the UK all polytechnics were renamed “new” universities, a re-branding exercise of enormous significance for the traditional universities. So the products of tertiary institutions are becoming more standardized, as participation rates increase while state funding is reduced.

The reduction in the level of government funding for universities over recent years has required most institutions to review their financial situation. Indeed, for some universities, the reduction has meant a review of their financial viability. Hodson and Thomas (2001), for instance, note that almost weekly since 1996, the Times Higher Education Supplement has reported on institutions taking significant strategic action relating to their financial situation. Most universities have looked at a range of income generation approaches and philosophies to reduce their dependency on the State’s funding, thereby placing new and often unwelcome responsibilities on both teaching and research staff (see Rigby, 1995).

To date, there are few empirical studies that address the importation of managerial techniques from the private sector to a public sector tertiary institutions in a particular context, especially in a developing country such as Fiji. There have been calls by authors such as Samuels and Oliga (1982) and Wallace (1990) for more research in the developing country context. In addition, there have been calls for more studies which capture the wider social context within which organizations operate and the dynamic which has been added to public sector complexity by the turbulent market-oriented environment in which the new-style public sector competes to provide services (Lapsley & Pettigrew, 1994). The focus of this paper is to address these apparent gaps.
Purpose and Approach

The purpose of this paper is to review the way universities have been reconceptualized through a market-based economic and accounting logic. In doing so, universities have been encouraged to adopt managerial techniques such as total quality management (TQM) and balanced scorecard (BSC). The paper explicates how the application of such techniques in corporatized universities tends to reconstitute academic labour and students as “commodities”.

The study adopts a critical perspective using Habermas's theory of societal development to enable a critique of the business mentality of universities. This theory offers a discursive framework, explained in the theoretical section below, for elucidating the changes, including the introduction of more business-like techniques to universities. Our purpose is to examine the changes within the context of some overall model of societal development (see Broadbent et al., 1991), which facilitates critical appraisal. Habermas's argument is that the instrumental reasoning associated with capitalism has penetrated deeper into daily experience. Political and cultural life has been colonized by instrumental techniques (i.e. accounting and economics) and distorted communications, so that categories of truth and beauty have been replaced by the instrumental knowledge of technoscience (see Lawrence, 1999, p. 223). This argument will be discussed in the context of a university in Fiji.

Research was conducted by personal observations of the empirical organization as well as formal interviews with senior level staff, accountants and other staff as new accounting were introduced. The evidence was gathered over the eight month period between February and September, 2001. The research consisted of nine interviews. The interviewees were selected from different sections of DXL University (so called in order to preserve confidentiality) such as the accountants, bursar, heads of departments, lecturers and management staff. The topics selected for interviews were mainly the adoption of managerial techniques such as the BSC from the private sector, the perceived role of and relations between academic staff and students and the nature of education, within the university. The interviews took place in an informal surrounding. Most questions were asked in an open-ended manner to help interviewees to respond in their own ways. The aim was to generate a rich source of field data. The interview proceedings were tape recorded and back-up notes were made. The tapes were transcribed soon after the interview, and a selection of the interview transcripts was fed back to the participants to obtain a clear understanding of the issues involved. Questionnaires were also administered with various senior and junior staff to provide support for the interview data so as to enhance their validity and reliability. These were handed out to the interviewees at the end of the interview and collected personally a day or two later.

Reliance was also placed on secondary sources of information including a growing literature on public sector reforms, in Fiji as elsewhere (Public Enterprises Board Annual Report, 1998; Nandan, 1999; UNESCO, 1998).
Theoretical Framework and Argument

Prior to the presentation of the empirical evidence, a brief outline of the theoretical model is presented, including a brief discussion of steering media and their regulative and constitutive potential.

Habermas’s model of societal evolution is utilized in this study. Habermas uses the conception of legitimation crisis to highlight the problem facing capitalist society (see Lawrence, 1999). His argument is that the instrumental reasoning associated with capitalism has penetrated deeper into daily experience. Communicative rationality is undermined as the lifeworld is colonized by steering media of power and money and as language is infused with the strategic intent of business and financial capitalism. Habermas’s major thesis is that the development of society can be depicted as shown in figure 1.

Habermas, in general, argues that modern society is an amalgam of “lifeworlds”, “steering media” and “systems”. “Systems” are expressions of these lifeworlds in terms of tangible organizations. The economic and administrative “systems” are guided to follow lifeworld concerns. Simultaneously, these systems are held together by what he calls “steering media” such as money and power. Such media become represented in and through defined societal institutions (see Broadbent et al., 1991).

The problem of juridification is used by Habermas to explain the thesis of colonization. A distinction is drawn between regulative and constitutive characters of steering media, such as the law, which Habermas regards as the most important of the steering media. The question one needs to ask is how to evaluate whether

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**Figure 1.** Habermas’ model of social evolution (see Broadbent et al., 1991).
a particular steering medium has any colonizing potential? Habermas draws distinction between two kinds of steering: see Table 1.

It is this transformation from regulative to constitutive steering function that represents the process of the inner colonization of the lifeworld, in which the sub-systems of the economy and the state become more and more complex and penetrate even deeper into the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld (see Habermas, 1987, p. 367). Habermas articulates the need to protect the lifeworld from the constitutive and colonizing influences.

The theoretical framework above is useful in elucidating the recent changes in Fiji’s educational policy and its impact on its tertiary institutions, as economic pressures are brought to bear on their management.

The argument illustrated in this paper is that distorted communications and ideology act against democratic institutions. The impact is felt particularly by the underprivileged, economically and educationally. The state’s policy tends to shift, for the sake of “efficiency” and economic performance, towards support of the productive and relatively wealthy, at the expense of the pursuit of equality. In the case of education, if it is to be produced and consumed as a private good, which implies excluding those who cannot afford the price, there will be an inevitable widening of the gap between rich and poor, between educated and uneducated, and between those who can and cannot participate in the “knowledge” economy.

**Background—Political Context**

The reconstitution of the welfare state in Fiji began with the interim government initiative in 1989. The government began to dismantle state controls that were introduced previously. The aim of the reforms were to encourage the public sector organizations to be run in a commercially focused manner to give the government and the people of Fiji a better reward for the public funds invested in them.

As in other countries (see Boston & Dalziel, 1992), the increasing burden on government expenditure of the “welfare” state leads to greater calls for
self-sufficiency and an increasing emphasis on individualism. The results of economic reform are deemed to increase economic efficiency and reduce the burden that the public enterprise sector places on the taxpayer.

Public sector reform in Fiji has also been initiated as a result of satisfying international obligations. The international development agencies such as the World Bank have been increasingly called upon to provide technical assistance of various kinds to its less developed member countries. A state usually seeks assistance from the World Bank when organizations are plagued by institutional, operational and financial problems (ADB Report, 1989). Often, as a condition of financial assistance, the development organization insists on some form of economic restructuring of public sector organizations. Such conditions, offered as part of the "technical assistance", require the state organizations to adopt accounting and managerial techniques more familiar in the private sector. The World Bank finances development projects once these suggestions have been implemented. For obvious reasons, money provided for development projects must be safeguarded by new accountabilities, which guarantee the repayment of the monies and interest. They do not always coincide with the desire of governments to provide social welfare and assistance to their indigenous peoples.

Critics argue that the economic gain from such economic restructuring programmes benefit certain sections of the population rather than the general good. The economic incentives required to promote economic efficiency tend to negate, philosophically and practically, the egalitarian effect of state welfare agencies. There is a tendency for the poor to become poorer (Waldegrave et al., 1995; Lawrence, 1999). In a country like Fiji, which has 50 percent of its people living below the poverty line (Narayan, 2001), the consequences of encouraging greater income inequality are very severe. As for the state agencies themselves, the quest to reduce unit costs results in redundancies, adding to the number of people unable to support themselves financially.

The University—Context of Study

The case study university was established in the 1960s. The mission of DXL University is defined in its charter:

The objectives of the University shall be the maintenance, advancement and dissemination of knowledge by teaching, consultancy and research and otherwise and the provision at appropriate levels of education and training responsive to the well-being and needs of the communities... (University Strategic Plan, 1999–2002).

The university’s current strategic plan identifies commercial activity derived from its academic and associated staff as a growth area. The strategic plan notes that

The university is confident that it will be able to follow the example of other universities and become more entrepreneurial in its activities. It has already begun to market its expertise and facilities more actively. It is increasing its strength in marketing and business by establishing positions dedicated to these areas, which will also assist in the development of appropriate policies on intellectual copyright (University Strategic Plan, 1999–2002).
Commodification

This highlights the emphasis placed on academic capitalism. Further, the university strategic plan notes that the students were to be treated as customers and education as products. Academic staff have been encouraged to adopt new managerial practice and business language. One of the managers of the university argues that

Education is like a commercial service. We need to maintain a superior quality of service and keep our customers (students) satisfied. There is also a need to generate more income from other activities such as consultancy and trading activities (Interview, 10.05.01).

The rationale for generating alternative income streams is that diverse income sources facilitate greater stability in planning. Contingency plans are also necessary. One of the Fijian universities, for example, is contemplating increasing its reserves as a proportion of total income, which are currently under 5 percent, to at least 15 percent to resolve the problem of cuts in state funding (The Fiji Times, 2001). This would keep the university’s operations viable even in difficult financial circumstances, albeit that fees have been increased both local and international students for courses offered on face-to-face and distance mode. The alternative income streams were instigated as a consequence of reduction in government expenditure, and are in line with the public sector reform policies of the state. This policy is consistent with a more general movement in public sector aimed at improving efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of universities (Coy & Pratt, 1998; Tooley, 1998).

The university operates on a system of three-year contracts for its staff. The staff review exercise facilitates the renewal of contracts and is a mechanism for measuring staff quality. Research output plays a critical role in staff review exercises. DXL University has performance indicators well in line with Kaplan and Norton’s BSC approach (Kaplan & Norton, 1992, 1993, 1996a,b). This is considered in depth later in the paper. Increasingly, there is a trend towards greater corporatization of public sector institutions, including universities (University Strategic Plan, 1999–2002, p. 4). Therefore, the strategic plan argues that the DXL University needs to be alert to international trends in university managerialism and governance, and adopt those that improve the effectiveness of its operations. The strategic plan (1999–2002, p. 4) notes that

Internationally, there is a trend towards greater “corporatization” of public sector institutions, including universities. Quality issues in higher education have received much greater focus in recent years. A modern university must have in place a quality assurance system... Stakeholders, including government and students, have become far more conscious of quality issues.

The object of the university was conceived in business terms as being more entrepreneurial in its activities and promoting commercial activities such as promotion of intellectual capital and increasing its productivity. These developments are symptoms of commodification in which the work of academics are subjected to “quasi-market” means of management control (Willmott, 1995). The University’s seven Institutes are expected to become more entrepreneurial in their outlook. The University is expected to generate 10 percent annual growth in other income, which includes revenue from interest income, consultancies and other business activities.
It has already began to market its expertise and facilities more actively, and has most recently acquired a computer business in town. The income from these other sources of income in 1998 was F$1.35 million and by 2007 this is expected to grow to F$3.4 million (University Strategic Plan 1999–2002). Further, for the commercially oriented goals, it was essential to measure the performance of the university in line with BSC in the guise of efficiency and effectiveness. The University Strategic Plan (1999–2002, p. 16) notes that

Signs of corporatization trend include demands for greater accountability, greater emphasis on management rather than collegiate approach to leading a university and the use of corporate planning instruments such as business plans, mission statements and indeed strategic plans.

Pressure for more accountability in the use of public funds, together with the changes to the structure and funding of DXL University, are rationales for giving BSC and TQM a higher profile. Similar results were obtained by one of the researchers while carrying out a research in a public housing institution in Fiji—the Housing Authority (HA) of Fiji (Sharma, 2000). This will be discussed in a later section in the paper.

The Corporate World and Universities

The TQM and BSC systems at DXL were implemented with the intention of making the university more effective, self-reliant and to prepare it for corporatization. The University Strategic Plan (1999–2002, p. 32) reports that

The University will work towards reducing the share of government contributions.

The University adopted TQM and BSC strategy to enhance both “institutional” and “quality” culture.

Many private and public sector organizations in the past decade have adopted TQM with the intention of being profitable through a customer orientation, improving market share and competitiveness (Johnson, 1994; Shank & Govindarajan, 1994; Powell, 1995; Fowler, 1996; Maloney & Stower, 1999). The adoption of TQM includes participation of all members in the organization in the drive for continuous improvement, elimination of waste and a focus on customers. Some suggest that TQM may be viewed as a programme to change an organization’s corporate culture (e.g. Lord, 1998; Wilkinson & Witcher, 1999). Some commentators have also suggested that it is another means to exploit workers (Zbaracki, 1998; Brah et al., 2000), or at the very least to reduce organizational life to a set of repetitive standardized routines devoid of judgmental input (Armstrong, 2002).

Yet the BSC approach to performance measurement as articulated by Kaplan and Norton (1992, 1993, 1996a,b) has gained enormous prominence in mainstream management accounting research. Kaplan and Norton’s BSC suggests that apart from financial measures of performance, attention needs to be paid to the requirements of customers, business processes and longer-term sustainability. The scorecard is a complement to the previous financial measures of past performance with measures of drivers of future performance.
The scorecard provides answers to four pertinent questions:

- How do customers see us? (Customer perspective).
- What must we excel at? (Internal business process)
- Can we continue to improve and create value? (Learning and growth perspective)
- How do we look to shareholders? (Financial perspective).

Most universities operate in environments where, increasingly, students are described as customers, education as a product and the domain in which universities operate as the education market (see Craig et al., 1999; Hodson & Thomas, 2001). Many universities, in order to promote the student as customer metaphor, use student ratings for the evaluation of teaching. The student completes this evaluation form during the semester of taking the course. Such is the case at DXL University, where student evaluation is used as a KPI indicator of academic staff.

Students are represented as consumers of the educational service or product. Student ratings of teachers, in Habermasian language, can be argued to be a part of the steering media, in this instance to ensure teachers’ quality. Standard forms have been devised by the DXL University with the guise of attempting to measure teachers’ accountability and maintaining quality in education. It is also seen as a managerial tool intended as a disciplining power over academics, which is based on the market-based logic of student as consumers of educational product (see also Singh, 2001). It has potentially unfortunate consequences. Good teachers are the ones who please students. There is a tendency towards “edutainment”, providing students with a pleasant experience and high grades in return for their fees, rather than a challenging and uncomfortable learning experience.

So this conception of university “teaching” as a good consumed by students is problematical and needs elucidation. University education can be classified as a product because both education and consumer goods are utilitarian. A distinction lies in the fact that education is a social good, life-long and durable. Each serves a function: private goods satisfy customer’s wants, whilst potentially education, as a public good, advances worthwhile learning and gives an understanding of how the rational and communicative action by members of society help make the world a better place. The dissemination of knowledge through education potentially highlights contemporary significance, gives insights to human endeavours, explains how the world works, and why it is so (Willmott, 1995; Craig et al., 1999). Unlike a packet of detergent, education and the associated knowledge is not finished when the final suds have gone down the plug or the worn shirt thrown out. Rather, knowledge, as Craig et al. (1999) note, persists through ages, outliving the student who seeks it and professors who profess it. And whereas it may be refined over time, and some theories may be abandoned and refined with better understandings, knowledge is durable and social (p. 516).

Most universities now operate in an environment where students are recognized as fee-paying customers (Green, 1994; King, 1995; Tinker & Koutsoumadi, 1997; Craig et al., 1999; Edwards et al., 1999; Baldwin & James, 2000; Hyland, 2000). Under the customer metaphor, students buy their education and shop around for classes and majors. Consequently, the goals of educators become attractive
in the context of retaining students for their courses. Resources usually follow students, and faculties are directly rewarded in proportion to the number of students (customers) who choose to attend (buy) their classes (i.e. full-time equivalent, see Franz, 1998). Formal institutional student evaluation of teachers during the semester legitimizes the commodification of students’ educational experience. It ties in with the notion of KPI indicators of academic staff at DXL University. Generally student satisfaction with teachers is measured at two points in time: during the course by the student rating of teaching and after the completion of the course—Course Evaluation Questionnaire. The course evaluation questionnaire is a standardized questionnaire. Students rate “teachers” on a scale of satisfactory to unsatisfactory, and the exercise provides a measure of teacher accountability. Of course, student feedback is not a new phenomenon. It is quite implicit in the student–teacher relations. Indeed, teachers obtain constant and immediate feedback from their students in a classroom setting such as their participation and expression on their faces and also through their in-semester assessments. Such feedback is valuable for a teacher’s self-development and improvement. But the formal student evaluation is for public dissemination. It can thus be argued that the institutionalized student rating of teachers is a steering mechanism set up to measure teachers’ accountability in their teaching endeavours (Singh, 2001). It imposes the measurers’ conception of performance as opposed to the subjective and self-developmental informal feedback of the professional.

TQM is geared towards customer satisfaction, and one of the key measures for BSC is the customer perspective. If students are customers, they may be involved in curriculum setting to satisfy their wants. This condition will lead to customer satisfaction, in accordance to the BSC and TQM philosophies. Needless to say, students wants will be dictated by the immediate wants of potential employers (Tinker & Koutsoumadi, 1997; Craig et al., 1999; Allen, 2000; Hyland, 2000). So the students could be described as proxy customers for potential employers. Tinker and Koutsoumadi describe students, in particular accounting students, as would-be CPAs who need to package themselves as commodities in order to secure jobs in the marketplace. Commodities, according to Marx, exhibit two attributes: they are products (i) which are useful and (ii) which exhibit “value”, i.e. the commodity enables capital to expand itself through accumulation and profit (Tinker & Koutsoumadi, 1997, p. 454). This conception extends to the commodified accounting graduate. The university trains students for CPA certification, thus preparing them to work in CPA firms under compliant conditions. The university seeks to satisfy the CPA firms in their self-fulfillment prophecy mission. Students are led into thinking that CPA work is the norm of all accounting. CPA accreditation gives CPA members significant influence on the design of curriculum. Those who shape the accreditation process do so to benefit their own hiring requirements (Tinker & Koutsoumadi, 1997). This is in contrast to the conception of education which aims at self-fulfillment, allowing diversity of individual expression and thought.

So the student as customer metaphor undermines the traditional conception of education. Franz (1998) puts forward a series of questions on the student as customer metaphor. If the student is not the customer, then who is? Is it the parents who pay for their children’s education? Is it the employer who hires the
Commodification

graduates? Is it the board of trustees who oversee the institution that pays academic salaries? In a way it is all of them. The society, at large, is the customer. The goal of education is to equip individuals to be effective participants in society—to be productive citizens (Franz, 1998). Once students have sufficient vocational skills, the stakeholders will be satisfied. On the other hand, non-achievement of the above goals means that the stakeholders will remain unsatisfied, particularly if the educators create troublesome, independent learners and critical thinkers. Such reasoning could explain the decline of student participation in philosophy and humanities courses, and the constant calls from politicians for the production of more scientists and technologists.

One of the researcher's noted in his previous study that the vision of the Fijian HA was outlined as "To be the leading housing finance company providing competitive and quality service to advance the vision of government towards better housing and living standards for its people" (Sharma, 2000, p. 114). Similarly, a corporate university's vision would be the encouragement of industry-based education in business schools as a complement to, or even a substitute for, functional-based education; with emphasis on a user-pay philosophy and less dependency on state assistance (Craig et al., 1999). The HA's principal products are the houses and the loan finance. What would the corporate university's product be?

Valuable knowledge can be considered to be the product of a corporate university like DXL. However, it is not built in accordance to a specific design like the house. Rather, it is the outcome of discovery, enquiry, analysis and synthesis (Craig et al., 1999; Edwards et al., 1999; Baldwin & James, 2000; Hyland, 2000). Valuable knowledge is expected to highlight significance and give meaning to human endeavour and foster worthwhile learning. It needs to enable people to ask questions about how the world works. Valuable knowledge, unlike loan finance, is life-long and facilitates full flowering of personality. Ideally, it allows individuals to be different, whereas vocational training aims to make people the same.

BSC at DXL University

The financial dimension of the BSC at the DXL University encapsulates indicators such as cash flow, liquidity ratio, debtors age, collection efficiency, profitability measured in terms of return on assets, return on equity, and so on. Discussion about progress in universities are infused with rhetoric of performance measurement, and there is thought for more "sound financial indicators" (Draft Policy Paper, 2001). The strategic requirement of DXL University through its financial perspective of BSC is to operate as a successful and efficient business. This demonstrates a significant redefinition of the function of universities, and supports Habermas's contention that instrumental reasoning associated with capitalism has penetrated even deeper into everyday experience.

The "internal business process" of the university can be assessed in terms of quality of services (the relevant and cost effective education for the corporate university). Research undertaken by the staff of universities, measured in terms
of their numerical contribution to international conferences and refereed journals, contributes to the internal business perspective of the university. Increasingly, universities adopt as a measure of research success the amount of external funds attracted by their researchers. More and more, research has to have a commercial value. Academics are, thus, commodified as productive achievers of research rankings, and attractors of funding. The DXL University emphasizes research and the clocking of publications in proliferating journals. It can be argued that, like other employees, DXL academics sell their labour to provide a level of subsistence for themselves and their dependents.

The internal business perspective sees university systems offering diversity and choices in programmes. It is explicit that the quality and usefulness of a student's time at a university is seen as a sufficient return for the investment of time, money and for the support of the state, families and sponsors (King, 1995). Academics thus become coded in terms of their efficiency, as measured by perceptions of their effectiveness in meeting the demands of students/employers (Puxty et al., 1994). Students and their sponsors are increasingly aware of their rights, enshrined in student charters, and of the need for a university to offer programmes, which fit their varying needs.

University teachers can feel overwhelmed if scholarly competence is equated with the value of research contracts or number of research papers published (Brookfield, 1995). The publish or perish syndrome is evident in most universities. This is an important indicator in many countries for deciding whether to award merit payments to their lecturers. Most universities have undoubtedly adopted a policy that teaching and research will be given equal weight in determining hiring, promotion or tenure of their staff (see Brookfield, 1995; Rigby, 1995). There is a positive side to this. The innovation and learning perspective saw the DXL University identifying shortcomings of their staff through their performance appraisal programme, and running short-term training courses to remedy this shortcoming. For example, the graduate certificate in tertiary teaching programme facilitates more effective teaching–learning at the university. The university also sends its staff abroad for doctoral studies, conferences and on sabbatical leave. This enables the staff to develop better research practices, thus boosting the university's research profile. Figure 2 summarizes the BSC perspective for a corporate university.

Thus, the above argument is that academics become coded in terms of efficiency as measured by perceptions of their teaching “quality”. Academics are further commodified as productive achievers of research rankings. Academic capitalism is practised to attract funds in the university. Activities such as consultancy were included under innovation and learning perspective of BSC so long as the revenues entered the university accounts. There has been a movement towards valuing university endeavours in terms of intellectual capital, a form of academic capitalism. This trend is also noticed in large research universities that have developed commercial aims and links with industries to exploit intellectual capital to generate funds for universities (Currie & Newson, 1998). In academia, commodification of academic labour occurs as its use value in terms of its contribution to the development of a student as a person and carrier of culturally valued knowledge becomes displaced by doing those things which increase its exchange value in
Commodification

Vision
To encourage the maintenance, advancement and dissemination of knowledge by teaching, consultancy and research and otherwise with emphasis on user-pay philosophy.

Strategic Goals
- Customer satisfaction
- Continuous improvement
- Cost effectiveness
- Quality Education
- Life-long and flexible learning

BSC dimensions and related key measures:
Financial (or Stakeholders):
- Cash flows, Profitability, Debt to equity ratio and Collection efficiency.

Customer:
- Value for money, Average assignment turn around time, student complaints, employer complains., Students rating of teachers

Internal business process:
- Quality services and research undertaken
- Academic capitalism

Innovation & learning:
- Continuous improvement, Training taken up, and empowered workforce
- Academic capitalism

Outcome (organizational effectiveness):
- Achieve desired performance
- Increased employee empowerment

Figure 2. The Strategy–BSC linkage at a corporate university—DXL University.

terms of the resources that flow towards a strong performance on the measures of research output and quality teaching.

Recent reforms in higher education have sought to shift the orientation of academic labour in the direction of exchange value. The work of academics has
been represented in the direction of exchange value, rather than in terms of its use value. As a consequence, students have been explicitly constituted as "customers", which further reinforces the claim that a degree is a commodity or "meal ticket" (Willmott, 1995, p. 1001) that can be exchanged for a job rather than as a liberal education that prepares students for life, citizenship and full flowering of personality.

Greater emphasis is also placed upon visible, measurable activities such as the quantity of publications, and in particular the refereed journals. As a consequence, traditional responsibilities such as student counselling are considered as secondary matters and very little institutional value is attached to them. It can be argued that performance measures such as those of BSC at the University is an approximation of market discipline facilitating faculties and institutions to compete with each other for rankings, which are linked to the provision of valued material and symbolic resources (see also Willmott, 1995).

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper utilizes Habermas's critical theory of societal development to evaluate the incidence of TQM and BSC implementation in corporate universities. They are managerial techniques associated with attempts to bring greater efficiency to public sector organizations.

The introduction of BSC is likened to setting up markets within a university and thereby introducing the quasi-market mechanism into a service which has previously not been seen as a marketplace, but as a provider for students in need of higher education. Through BSC, performance indicators were used at the DXL University. The use of KPIs is undoubtedly problematic, as output of higher education is complex and difficult to measure (Perry, 1994).

The need to make savings and to be cost effective necessitated the introduction of TQM and BSC in DXL University. Thus, higher education is likely to be re-conceptualized through a market-based economics. Accounting and economic technologies were invoked as the changes were introduced in the guise of efficiency and effectiveness. The argument of this paper is that the BSC and TQM conception can be seen as part of a more general societal development, which increasingly commodifies education and academic labour. Universities now produce employable, marketable "labour" for the knowledge economy. Education is no different from buying other commodities (like cars). Students need to pay for their education, as the benefit is considered to be a private one and not a social good.

Individuals opposing the running of higher education as a business would not be considered suitable for employment. In Habermasian terms, this would constitute a colonization of the lifeworld by the instrumentalism of business. A new language of economics and business would pervade in new structures.

The capitalist view on running universities as efficient businesses through BSC has brought into question the legitimacy of the higher education reforms. The BSC is indeed a steering mechanism motivated by money and power that is designed as a means of bringing universities more in line with the needs of the interest groups currently in power. It is an attempt to subvert the educational and democratic
process in favour of business interests. It is the silencing of the opposition to capitalist interest, which Habermas emphasizes in his theory of distorted communication. All communications may be distorted to some extent in the sense that they fall short of the ideal situation of perfect communication (Lawrence, 1999).

Examples of such distortion include pretence by politicians that a political problem is technical, misrepresentation of benefits and dangers to the public by private, profit seeking interests and when established interests in society avoid humanitarian social and economic policies (such as comprehensive education services) with misconceived rhetoric and falsehood. This includes suggestions such as that the public sector is always less efficient than the private sector. The distorted communication and ideology act against democratic institutions and are disabling and immobilizing. The losers have been the poor. The state's policy has been to begin to support the strong and sacrifice the weak in the name of economic performance. Thus, education becomes unaffordable to the poor because of rising costs, and this inevitably widens the gap between rich and poor, between educated and uneducated, and between those who can and cannot participate in the knowledge economy.

BSC, as an accounting rationality, seems to be invoked to support the state's commitment to efficiency and effectiveness. The public, however, seems un convinced with the reform policies. The steering media of BSC seem to be driven by interests which are not being made explicit. They are not regulative of long-established traditions in places of higher learning, but constitutive of a new managerialism. Accountability increasingly relates to financial performance, the ubiquitous measure of people who view management as some separate, specialized function. Academics are being managed through imported evaluation techniques. The danger is that, in that management, the essence of their true function is obliterated. Rather than standing out as critics of societal trends, they are expected to become an uncritical part of them.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Professor Jesse Dillard of University of Central Florida and Kala Saravanamuthu of University of South Australia for their constructive comments and suggestions. The paper has significantly benefited from the “symposium 2001 on the role of university in the corporate world” at the University of South Australia. Special thanks are extended to the participants at the symposium for their useful comments. The authors also wish to thank Peter Hodson of Glamorgan University in the UK for his useful comments. The anonymous reviewers are also thanked for their useful comments and suggestions.

Notes

1. Universitas 21 is an international network of 18 universities in 10 countries. Collectively, its members enroll about 500,000 students, employ 544,000 academics and researchers, and have a combined operating budget of about US$9.5 billion. This network allows member universities to pursue significant global initiatives that would be beyond their individual capabilities.
References

Commodification


