

Interdisciplinary Research at Universities in Austria

David F.J. Campbell (University for Continuing Education KREMS)

Theoretical Framework / Definition of Concepts.

The focus is on how research and innovation are changing. The emphasis places on university research and its cross-networking and co-evolution with innovation in the economy. These interactions are becoming increasingly non-linear, in which the context of application matters for basic research. Interdisciplinarity and new forms of interdisciplinary research, also integrating scientific and artistic research, transform to transdisciplinarity, where academic research communities cooperate with communities of practitioners in society and the economy, by this altering work and dynamics in the labor markets. What follows is a transition toward the knowledge economy and knowledge democracy (Campbell, 2019), co-creating economy and democracy. The theory of the “Quadruple and Quintuple Helix Innovation Systems” (Carayannis and Campbell, 2021) serves as a conceptual explainer of global trends in these directions.

Methodology.

The empirical work of this article will focus on the CAP (The Changing Academic Profession) and APIKS (The Academic Profession in the Knowledge-Based Society) surveys among faculty personnel at public universities in Austria (the major sector of Austrian higher education). CAP was performed in 2010, and APIKS in 2021. Both, CAP (Campbell, 2013) and APIKS (<https://www.donau-uni.ac.at/de/universitaet/fakultaeten/bildung-kunst-architektur/departments/hochschulforschung/forschung/projekte/apiks.html>), were representative and comparative surveys, carried out in several countries (around the globe), to a large extent also mutually compatible, meaning several of the CAP questions were reproduced in the APIKS survey. The analysis is to identify key questions of CAP and APIKS, which, in a compatible way, address interdisciplinarity at Austrian public universities (contrasting the years 2010 and 2021).

Data Analysis.

Interdisciplinary (multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary) research is being regarded as particularly crucial for the knowledge production (research) and innovation (knowledge application) of universities (higher education institutions). Interdisciplinarity (transdisciplinarity) is motivated to integrate a diversity of research approaches for a better comprehension of complexity (Wagner et al. 2011). This clearly expresses characteristics of an “entrepreneurial university”, networking with society, democracy and the economy (and here different types of companies, also academic firms). At least in terms of an expectation, certain cross-associations between third mission and interdisciplinarity are to be assumed, even though the empirical verification of such a hypothesis still would have to be delivered and accomplished.

(4) Conclusions.

The inquiry has a three-fold interest: (a) to identify patterns, (b) to identify possible trends, and (c) to test, how this may be associating with interdisciplinary research.

References:

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