

Internationalization in high education

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Abstract. The article describes one of the most important contemporary trends for social evolution – internationalization. This term is used for higher education and includes such characteristics as the mobility of students and teachers, the internationalization of curricula, the establishment of regional and international networks of educational institutions and relevant problems of education quality. The authors trace the internationalization peculiarities in the higher educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan under the principles of the Bologna Declaration. The article shows the influence of the internationalization of higher educational institutions on the integration of the Republic of Kazakhstan into the common education area. Besides, it shows the influence of internationalization on training highly-skilled, competitive, in-demand specialists.

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Introduction

The main strategic target put forward by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev is to bring up new citizens of Kazakhstan and to transform Kazakhstan into a country with competitive human capital [1].

Only if they modernize higher education in the Republic and integrate it into the global education area, it is possible to increase the quality of human potential and to provide future Kazakhstan with high-skilled personnel. Higher education is the main priority of contemporary economic development in the country because the quality of education is the thing that predetermines the long-term competitiveness of the country under globalization.

Integration into the global education area is an essential part of the consolidation and expansion of the role of Kazakhstan on the world stage. Besides, the intention to integrate into the global education area and to adopt the best foreign education standards meets the interests of higher educational institutions and the country.

Due to the globalization and internationalization of economy and business, higher education obtained new targets – to train professional personnel able to work effectively in the changed conditions of global market.

The analysis of the education system in recent years shows that Kazakhstan achieved

significant results in creating social and economic conditions for education and its resourcing.

For example, according to the report of the UNO “Overcoming barriers: Human mobility and development”, Kazakhstan for the first time entered the list of countries with high Human Development Index (HDI). According to the Global Monitoring Report of UNESCO “Overcoming inequality: Why governance matters” connected with the movement Education for All, Kazakhstan took the premier place in the development index among 129 countries [2].

Methods

The internationalization of higher educational institutions is the most important trend of the higher professional education system.

In UNESCO policy document “The reform and development of higher education” they denote that the activity in the field of higher education under global changes should be ruled by three slogans which determine its role and functions on local, national and international levels: the compliance with contemporary requirements, quality and internationalization. Quality is a key factor for confidence, relevance, mobility, comparability and attractiveness in the European higher education area [3].

The reform of the higher education system in the country was also aimed at enhancing internationalization. There were a number of

purposeful actions which fulfilled such tasks as the establishment and development of international relations and curriculums on the level of both government and higher educational institutions.

Internationalization (from Latin “inter” – “between” – and “natio” – “people”; German – Internationalisierung) means 1. Contemporary development consisting in the interconnection and interdependence of various countries and organizations and leading to the establishment of international communities in different spheres (economic, political, cultural, military and other ones”); 2. In international law – the acceptance of common international use.

Generally speaking, the internationalization of higher education can be considered a systematic integration of international component into education, researches and public activity in higher educational institutions.

Education internationalization has the following targets:

- to diversify and increase financial revenue by involving foreign students for paid classes;
- to extend curricula and to train students in foreign institutions by agreement;
- to broaden the local institution network for the efficient use of its resources;
- to improve the quality of education and research by involving students and teachers into the international knowledge exchange, etc.

The development of international cooperation of higher educational institutions enables joint research projects, exchange programs for students and teachers, and special programs for foreign students.

The most known form of education internationalization is the mobility of students. It means the increase in the number of students studied abroad. For the last 40 years, the development rates of these student flows exceeded the rates of education itself. According to UNESCO, the international mobility of students has increased by 300% over the last 25 years. Experts state that the number of such students will grow up to 4.9 million by 2025.

The mobility of students is encouraged by various state and regional programs. The most famous European programs are “Erasmus”, “Socrates”, “Comet” and “Lingua”. They are aimed at creating the European model of higher education. The exchange of students is considered a powerful means for the development of all-European market of specialists and skilled employees. The international mobility of students is not only an intercontinental but also a regional phenomenon. The integration of regional economies stimulates student mobility. The important role in it belongs to such international

agreements as NAFTA, ASEAN and APEC. Nordplus is a special program for student exchange between northern European countries. It is based on the principle “money follows the student”.

The mobility of teachers can be treated the second most important form of higher education internationalization. Traditionally, the international mobility of higher-education teaching personnel is caused by researches and scientific work. However in some regions and some fields, such as management and business administration, there are special schemes of regional and international training for young researchers and specialists.

The programs of student mobility promoted local mobility programs for teachers, such as the Fulbright Program.

The mobility programs for students and teachers developed with the aim to stimulate international curricula that is to change the curricula of cooperating institutions and departments.

Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE) is an international community which includes business companies, higher educational institutions and government authorities. They are in charge of the quality, accreditation and certification of higher education programs proposed outside their countries. This community accepted the following variants of agreements between higher educational institutions:

- Franchise – foreign educational institution allows the local one to use its curricula and issue its diplomas according with the conditions of a franchise contract.

- Twin programs – such contracts are signed by higher educational institutions from different countries for the development of joint educational programs. In both institutions students have the same curricula, textbooks and exams, though usually local teachers.

- Mutual acceptance of programs – despite the previous contract, cooperating institutions do not form joint curricula. Students are enlisted to foreign programs, and all their grades are considered valid in their domestic educational institution. Or students can study in their local institution in the first step and get grades accepted by a foreign institution where they will study in the next step.

Mutual acceptance of diplomas and academic degrees is an important part of internationalization. Kazakhstan signed and ratified Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education. Kazakhstan performs this work bilaterally. This refers to those countries which did not sign the Lisbon Convention and those which did not joined any international agreements. Thus, Kazakhstan

signed an Agreement on Mutual Recognition and Equivalence of Education Certificates, Degrees and Titles. Kyrgyzstan and Russia are the parties of this Agreement.

Similar work on forming a global education area in the CIS is performed within the framework of the EurAsEC. It includes law making concerning the establishment of uniform assessment criteria for higher educational institutions in member countries.

We studied the experience of higher educational institutions, and it showed that the internationalization of higher education promotes the deep reconsideration of curricula and the orientation of future specialists towards global view and thinking. They acquire knowledge and skills which will allow them to be competitive on the international labour market. Internationalization presupposes the international context of studied disciplines at all levels of higher education [4].

In recent years, the number of exchange programs, in which Kazakhstan students and teachers take part, has increased considerably. These exchange programs are implemented under bilateral agreements between institutions and such international programs as Tempus, Tasis, Erasmus Mundus, IREX, USIS, CNOUS and others. However, it should be noted that, in spite of the great increase of Kazakhstan students going abroad, the number of students who come to study in Kazakhstan remains not very large. That is why the potential of this development line of internationalization should be strengthened. Study abroad has several principal lines:

- international education exchange;
- government grants from foreign countries and international organizations;
- international grant “Bolashak”;
- privately.

Main part

The Republic of Kazakhstan, in its international activity connected with higher education, is oriented to mutually beneficial links with many countries from different regions – the USA, Western and Eastern Europe, Asia and the CIS. One can see the development of contacts through international organizations which try to be conductive in interaction in the sphere of education, culture and science – the European Commission, the British Council, the American Council on the Cooperation in Education and Studying Foreign Languages, German Academic Exchange Service, National Center for University Programs of France and others.

The establishment of interaction at the governmental level made it possible to expand the

opportunities for Kazakhstan citizens to study abroad. This was done within the scope of programs supported by such international organizations as: European Community, UNESCO, UNDP, ACTR ACCELS, the Peace Corps, United States Information Service (USIS), USAID, Soros-Kazakhstan Foundation, Фонд «Сорос-Казakhstan», International Research and Exchange Board (IREX), the British Council, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the National Center for School and University Programs of France (CNOUS) and the Bureau on Linguistic and Pedagogical Cooperation of the French Embassy in Kazakhstan.

The Sorbonne Declaration and following Bologna Declaration became an important step in the internationalization of higher educational institutions. The Sorbonne Declaration was signed by education ministries of France, Germany, Italy and the UK on May 25, 1998 at the meeting dedicated to the jubilee of the Sorbonne University. In the Sorbonne Declaration the countries admit that they are devoted to the mission of internationalization through gradual unification of diplomas, academic degrees and educational cycles, and thereby through the creation of real “global area for European higher education”.

This goal can be achieved only by purposeful actions for the internationalization of higher education including:

- the mobility of students and teachers;
- the internationalization of curricula and educational programs;
- the creation of international networks for higher educational institutions and cooperation agreements;
- the use of international systems for quality control and accreditation [5].

In the Bologna Declaration, the quality of education received a key role in the row of fundamental academic values without which it is impossible to create a European educational area. The quality of education is considered an essential condition for confidence, mobility, comparability and attractiveness in the European area for higher education.

Conclusion

The basic lines for the implementation of the Bologna Declaration are reflected in State Program on Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2011-2020. This Program has the following strategic goals:

- to provide personnel with higher and post-graduate education for the projects of industrial and innovative development of the country;
- to ensure the integration of education and science, to create conditions for the

commercialization of intellectual property products [6].

In compliance with the State Program and in order to join the Bologna Process, the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan improves the legal and regulatory basis for higher education [7].

For example, significant changes occurred after the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Education" was passed, both in the structure and the content of higher and post-graduate education. The three-step training model – bachelor-master-doctor – was legislated and the transition from quality control to the quality assurance system was made. Progressive systems and technologies for training process are introduced. The list of professions provided by higher education is reconsidered in accordance with the International Standard Educational Qualification (ISEQ) [8, 9, 10].

Drawing on the experience of higher school in advanced countries, national education builds a system which will ensure that the graduates of higher school will be in demand on labour market. Thereby, higher education brings curricula into the compliance with international requirements, favours the succession of curricula at different levels and adapts curricula to labour market [11].

Findings

So, the system of higher and post-graduate education in the Republic of Kazakhstan responds adequately to the accelerating globalization and internationalization owing to technical base modernization, competence model used in state educational standards, the intensification of student mobility, the strengthening of the role of information technologies and the improvement of academic base in compliance with global educational trends.

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