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The system for assessing the quality of education in the universities of the leading countries of the world

O sistema de avaliação da qualidade da educação nas universidades dos principais países do mundo

El sistema de evaluación de la calidad de la educación en las universidades de los principales países del mundo


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Abstract: The main purpose of the article is to study the most successful experience in the implementation of the education quality assessment system in the leading countries of the world. The world is constantly changing and developing. Together with it, we are changing, our ideas about the natural and anthropogenic environment, about our capabilities and needs are changing. We strive to know more, be able to do better, learn faster. And on this path, education is a powerful tool capable of changing the world. As a socio-cultural institution, education is acquiring new properties and characteristics. But the desire of people to form or receive education of the highest quality remains unchanged, especially in the context of systemic transformations. Universities have always been the main producers and providers of knowledge in society, but today they are recognized as the main generators of knowledge. In the context of global competition, a complex of interrelationships between high-quality higher education, scientific research both in the academic environment and outside it is becoming more important for ensuring the innovative and productive development of the state. As a result of the study, the most effective mechanisms for the implementation of the education quality assessment system in the leading countries of the world, as well as the most optimal methods for their adaptation, were analyzed.

Keywords: Anthropogenic environment, Education quality, Higher education, Pedagogy, Universities.

Resumo: O objetivo principal do artigo é estudar a experiência mais bem sucedida na implementação do sistema de avaliação da qualidade da educação nos principais países do mundo. O mundo está em constante mudança e desenvolvimento. Junto com ele, estamos mudando, nossas ideias sobre o ambiente natural e antropogênico, sobre nossas capacidades e necessidades estão mudando. Nós nos esforçamos para saber mais, ser capaz de fazer melhor, aprender mais rápido. E nesse caminho, a educação é uma poderosa ferramenta capaz de mudar o mundo. Como instituição

sociocultural, a educação está adquirindo novas propriedades e características. Mas o desejo das pessoas de formar ou receber educação da mais alta qualidade permanece inalterado, especialmente no contexto de transformações sistêmicas. As universidades sempre foram as principais produtoras e fornecedoras de conhecimento na sociedade, mas hoje são reconhecidas como as principais geradoras de conhecimento. No contexto da competição global, um complexo de inter-relações entre ensino superior de qualidade, pesquisa científica tanto no meio acadêmico quanto fora dele ganha cada vez mais importância para garantir o desenvolvimento inovador e produtivo do estado. Como resultado do estudo, foram analisados os mecanismos mais eficazes para a implementação do sistema de avaliação da qualidade da educação nos principais países do mundo, bem como os métodos mais otimizados para a sua adaptação.

Palavras-chave: Ambiente antropogênico, Ensino superior de qualidade, Pedagogia, Qualidade da educação, Universidades.

Resumen: El propósito principal del artículo es estudiar la experiencia más exitosa en la implementación del sistema de evaluación de la calidad de la educación en los países líderes del mundo. El mundo está en constante cambio y desarrollo. Junto con él estamos cambiando, nuestras ideas sobre el medio natural y antropogénico, sobre nuestras capacidades y necesidades están cambiando. Nos esforzamos por saber más, ser capaces de hacerlo mejor, aprender más rápido. Y en ese camino, la educación es una poderosa herramienta capaz de cambiar el mundo. Como institución sociocultural, la educación va adquiriendo nuevas propiedades y características. Pero el deseo de las personas de formarse o recibir una educación de la más alta calidad se mantiene invariable, sobre todo en el contexto de transformaciones sistémicas. Las universidades siempre han sido las principales productoras y proveedoras de conocimiento en la sociedad, pero hoy en día son reconocidas como las principales generadoras de conocimiento. En el contexto de la competencia global, un complejo de interrelaciones entre la educación superior de alta calidad, la investigación científica tanto en el ámbito académico como fuera de él cobra mayor importancia para garantizar el desarrollo innovador y produtivo del estado. Como resultado del estudio se analizaron los mecanismos más efectivos para la implementación del sistema de evaluación de la calidad de la educación en los principales países del mundo, así como los métodos más óptimos para su adaptación.

Palabras clave: Ambiente antropogénico, Calidad de la educación, Educación superior de calidad, Pedagogía, Universidades.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of education is a very difficult category: philosophical, political, managerial, pedagogical, economic. It determines the quality of life of both an individual and society as a whole, since it is characterized not only by the amount of knowledge and skills acquired in professional activity, but also by the quality of the personal, ideological, and civic development of each individual.

The ideas about the quality of education and its content are not static. They reflect a certain historical era, the level of spiritual and technological development of society. High-quality education for all citizens is the basis for the creation of a high-quality and just society that mankind dreams of, which from time immemorial served as a kind of indicator of the development of our civilization. High-quality education can change ourselves and our perception of the world, the surrounding reality and the future. The course of historical civilizational development led to the transition from an industrial to an information society, in which the product of the highest value is information, and the cost of a human resource (as a source that produces this information) in

the developed countries of the world reaches 80% of national wealth (Lyfenko, Savchenko, 2017).

In this context, the topical task of the state weight is to ensure the high quality and prospects of education in the country. This is a very difficult, difficult task, the solution of which requires new approaches and a different attitude. And how not to mention here the expression of A. Einstein that "the big problems facing us cannot be solved at the same level of thinking that we were at when they arose." The solution to this problem should be provided in a comprehensive manner: the formation of an appropriate state policy, the creation of an adequate institutional structure of the education system and governing bodies, the preservation and accumulation of a powerful scientific and educational resource aimed at training highly professional scientific, managerial and pedagogical personnel for all levels of education, including for higher, a change in the system of public and human motivations.

Ensuring the quality of higher education presupposes the creation of appropriate conditions for the personal and professional development of the applicant (student, listener), the successful implementation of his educational goals and the achievement of planned results. The mission of a modern university is to create a favorable educational environment for each student, direct it to independent educational and cognitive, research, professional and practical activities. And also to navigate in a competitive environment, to determine their own educational and professional priorities, to build an individual trajectory of education and upbringing, to develop an effective algorithm for the implementation of the set goals. Thus, the strategy of "ensuring the quality of higher education" determines the interconnected and mutually agreed activities of all subjects of the educational process, which is subject to the achievement of a common goal (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

The leading role in ensuring the quality of higher education belongs to universities, which are entrusted with the tasks of forming their own strategy for high-quality educational activities, introducing and constantly improving internal mechanisms for ensuring it, implementing an educational mission aimed at promoting common European academic ideals and values, fostering a culture of quality, attracting cooperation all interested parties. At the same time, it is necessary to maintain a balance of interests and areas of responsibility for quality between the main subjects of educational interaction, to give it a purposeful and constructive character, and therefore it is inappropriate to reduce the problem of the quality of higher education to the institutional level, transfer all responsibility exclusively to universities (Marciniak, Cáliz Rivera, 2021).

The quality of education is traditionally associated with the content and form of the educational process, based on the qualifications and experience of teachers. However, in the modern fast-moving world, the educational process should be directed not only at mastering basic knowledge, but also at the formation of needs, abilities and skills of independent assimilation of the latest knowledge throughout life, their

effective use in practice. It is also important to discard old experiences and stereotypes of behavior. The quality of higher education includes a certain set of components, in particular (Doorwar, Meraj, Hassan, 2019):

- the quality of the educational and methodological base (resource provision of educational institutions, the involvement in the educational process of new methods and means of cognition associated with modern technical capabilities);
- the quality of research and teaching staff;
- the quality of training of specialists capable of effective professional activity and adaptation to the conditions of scientific and technological progress, possessing technologies within their specialty and the ability to use their knowledge to solve professional problems.

The quality of education can be considered as the degree of satisfaction of the expectations of various participants in the educational process from the educational services provided by educational institutions, or as the degree of achievement of the goals and objectives set in education.

Consequently, the definition of criteria for the quality of education is one of the key problems of its assessment. Scientists conditionally divide them into four groups (Olmos-Gómez, Luque-Suárez, Ferrara, Cuevas-Rincón, 2021):

1. Criteria of the fact (accounting for quantitative indicators);
2. Quality criteria (give an idea of the depth and strength of the processes occurring in a person);
3. Attitude criteria (which allows one to draw conclusions about the motives of behavior and action, about the choice that a person makes, etc.);
4. Timing criteria (showing stability in measuring knowledge, skills and abilities).

Some researchers prefer criteria based on tracking the cognitive results of education: the degree of achievement of specific learning goals, mental characteristics (Crawford, et al, 2020).

1. Criteria for the quality of the conditions for the implementation of the educational process (potential of applicants, personnel potential of universities, educational and methodological support of educational programs, information and library resources, satisfaction of students and staff with social conditions, material and technical support, quality of teaching, scientific and innovative potential);

2. Criteria for the quality of the functioning of the educational process (target, content, technological, resource and organizational support), i.e. ensuring compliance with the mission, the main directions of the strategy of universities to the set goals; implementation of educational programs; implementation of academic mobility; the implementation of educational work and the provision of various types of student practices; implementation of general management at the university, including the management of personnel, infrastructure, material and information resources, technologies, etc .; implementation of internal quality assurance;

3. Criteria for the quality of the result (the effectiveness of the recruitment of students and their academic performance, the level of formation of their professional key competencies, the satisfaction of employers, the results of improving the quality of training of specialists)

The development of higher education is assessed by universal indicators, namely (Campbell, Nehm, 2013):

- the number of students in absolute terms;
- the number of students per 10 thousand of the population;
- the number of students studying at the expense of the budget and on a contract basis;
- the number of those admitted to the first year;
- number of graduated specialists;
- number of teaching staff.

Assessment of the quality of education belongs exclusively to state structures. The high degree of dependence of educational institutions on state governing bodies leads to the fact that they are perceived only as bodies of restriction and control, on which the fate of the institution depends. Any quality assessment is relative, since it depends on many objective and subjective factors. Therefore, no institution can have a monopoly on the only correct assessment of quality in the field of education. It is necessary to involve public assessment agencies that would complement each other. These can be public associations of representatives of interested circles and international organizations. Public assessment of the quality of education should be open and public, and should also take into account different assessment criteria (taking into account the public administration system, local government, professional groups, students, business circles, etc.). Their access to the assessment of the quality of education should be ensured. Public assessment of the quality of education should be carried out through accreditation associations for higher education institutions, which are able to develop uniform assessment criteria for various types of educational institutions. The result should be a ranking of educational institutions aimed at attracting applicants, the best research and teaching staff and state support.

METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the article is to study the most successful experience in the implementation of the education quality assessment system in the leading countries of the world. For this, a number of methods were applied, which form the research methodology. The study was carried out using the following theoretical methods: systems analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, comparison, classification, generalization and systematization, idealization and abstraction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ensuring the quality of education is one of the most pressing and multifaceted problems of higher education, which in the context of globalization is acquiring the character of a worldwide trend. Consistent and purposeful work in this direction of educational institutions, the state and organizations involved in quality assurance can be traced in the evolution of systems for assessing the quality of higher education, and is reflected in the variety of approaches, functions, goals, principles, forms and methods of assessment (Trškan, 2017):

In the practice of assessing the quality of the work of universities, there are three main approaches: reputational, effective and general.

The reputation approach uses an expert mechanism to assess the level of professional educational programs and educational institutions in general.

The effective approach is based on measuring the quantitative indicators of the university's activities.

The overall approach is based on the principles of "Total Quality Management" (TQM) and the requirements for quality management systems of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

The main factors for the effectiveness of the system for ensuring the property of higher education are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

The main factors for the effectiveness of the system for ensuring the property of higher education.

¹⁶ Meaning of the factor

1 Attitude towards higher education as the highest value, the guarantee of social progress, national security, competitiveness of the state, universities, and an individual

2 Adequate financing of institutions of higher education, decent wages for scientific and pedagogical workers, realizing educational goals and ensuring the quality of teaching

3 Educational activities of universities, constantly informing applicants, the public, employers, and other interested parties about their own quality assurance strategy, general objectives and measures to improve the efficiency of the educational process

4 Promotion of academic virtue, intolerance to any form of its violation (complicity, plagiarism, falsification), practical implementation of a nationwide anti-plagiarism system and punishment for various manifestations of academic disadvantage (civil servants and officials of all ranks, university leaders, education teachers)

5 Personal responsibility of stakeholders for the results of educational activities (teaching, research, organizing professional and practical training, making managerial decisions)

6 Contrast monitoring of the effectiveness of the systems of external and internal quality assurance of higher education by the state, society, public organizations, independent agencies

7 Transparency of mechanisms and measures to ensure the quality of higher education, open access to information on the activities of the relevant management bodies, higher education institutions, scientific institutions related to the improvement of external and internal quality assurance systems

In the context of globalization, the general approach has been widely used in the system of quality management of goods and services of enterprises, organizations and institutions in all spheres and industries, including educational activities.

At the present stage of development of higher education, the composition of methods for assessing educational activities, the content of functions, principles and goals of assessment are increasingly becoming universal and are used with varying degrees of regularity in almost all existing systems of quality assurance and control. The main factor that makes it possible to identify and, accordingly, classify these systems is the nature of the distribution of powers to ensure quality by levels of its management: the state is an educational institution.

Scientists National systems for assessing the quality of education that currently exist in different countries differ significantly not only in goals and objectives, criteria and procedures, but also in many other parameters, including the degree of involvement in this process of government

(state) and public and professional bodies and institutions. For example, in Germany, until recently, the main role in ensuring the quality of training was given to the internal component, which in turn was based on the competence and responsibility of the teaching staff, heads of universities and educational departments [2]. Internal control of the quality of education in German universities was carried out mainly by faculties, more precisely, by their special commissions responsible for the educational process. The external one on the part of the regional governing bodies of educational institutions was aimed at the formation of the teaching and management staff of universities and the opening of new specialties (areas of training). All of these issues, including staff appointments for some teaching positions, were subject to approval by the Ministry of Education of the respective region (state). (Aviram, 1996).

In recent years, the country came to the conclusion that the listed control methods are not enough, and in 1995 a system of external quality assessment was introduced, operating according to a complex multi-stage scheme under the auspices of the Conference of University Rectors. At the first stage, the university subject to the assessment procedure prepares a report based on self-certification, containing information on intellectual potential, material and technical base, research activities and other aspects of educational activities. The university commission conducting the assessment pays special attention to the questioning of students in order to obtain their generalized opinion, which becomes one of the main indicators in self-certification of this direction of training. The next step is external evaluation. The conference of university rectors forms special certification commissions in different areas, which at the next stage of their work assign the verification of the same educational program implemented by all universities in a particular region, which happens almost simultaneously. This procedure, which allows for a comparative analysis of the quality of training in different universities, is considered the most objective and economically less costly (Waltman, Wouters, Eck, 2017).

Until recently, there was no accreditation of educational institutions at the federal level in Germany - state universities received accreditation automatically. As for non-state ones, their accreditation was carried out by the Ministry of Education of each state in accordance with its own regional legislation on accreditation. The introduction of new qualifications for bachelor's and master's ("master") in connection with the participation of Germany in the Boulogne process served as an additional incentive for the extension of the institute of accreditation to the federal level. For this purpose, the National Accreditation Council was established, whose tasks include: coordination of procedures for evaluating educational programs; accreditation of regional and interregional agencies authorized to conduct assessments; ensuring objectivity and transparency of the assessment rules. This allows for a more objective and unbiased assessment of educational institutions.

In the United States of America, universities themselves play a major role in assessing the quality of education, and many have their own assessment centers, as well as independent assessment organizations. In the United States, this type of assessment is very well developed, there is even a whole series of journals devoted only to the assessment of higher education.

The main objectives of the structures that assess the quality of higher education are as follows. First, ensuring the quality of higher education in different contexts: economic, social and cultural. Secondly, support and support for higher education institutions in the implementation of measures to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Third, stimulation of mutual exchange of information on quality assurance in education.

The main assessment methods are assessment, accreditation, audit and ranking. "Evaluation" is a global term for quality assurance, but quite often it is considered in parallel with other methods, such as auditing. Consider several types of assessment that are most common in the West. The first is "subject assessment" - it focuses on the quality of a particular subject, as a rule, in all programs where this subject is presented. The second type of assessment is "program evaluation" - it focuses on the activities of the curriculum. The third - "assessment of the educational institution" - here the quality of the university's work, its organization, financial issues, management, material and technical base, as well as teaching and research work are studied.

The latter type - "topic assessment" - examines the quality or practice of a specific educational topic, for example, student counseling. The most common assessments used in both Europe and the United States are program and institution assessments. This is due to the fact that the other two types are more capacious and require more effort for assessment, while the more popular types of assessments allow you to quickly give an idea of the state of the university (Wariyo, 2020).

One of the most difficult questions in the course of the assessment remains - the problem of the choice of educational indicators and systems of indicators. The system for developing indicators is the same as for developing indicators in the economic or social sphere. The problem with educational indicators lies in the difficulty of determining the criteria for quality education, since there are no direct indicators indicating the effectiveness or inefficiency of this process. Here it is necessary to take into account data on both students and teaching staff. Indicators are usually grouped according to indicators of the conditions for the implementation of educational activities (concept of an educational institution, personnel, educational resources), indicators of the process (university management, content of educational programs, social infrastructure), outcome indicators (quality of training bachelors, masters, level of employment, research efficiency) (Blaskova, Blasko, Kucharcikova, 2014).

A feature of the American assessment system is the development of a self-assessment system. This fact is due to the fact that until recently,

control over universities by state administrations and government agencies in general was rather weak. Despite this, American universities have always strived to improve the education system, the emphasis in this endeavor was placed precisely on the self-assessment system carried out at the educational institution level.

England historically combines the “English model”, which is based on the internal self-assessment of the university academic community, and the “French model”, based on the external assessment of the university in terms of its responsibility to society and the state.

In Europe, there is still no unified system of institutional assessment of the performance of educational institutions, similar to the accreditation system in the United States. However, each country has its own approaches to ensuring and assessing the quality of higher education.

In the UK, a multi-stage system of accreditation of universities and their educational programs has been created with the leading role of the government organization Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). A number of British universities evaluate the educational programs of other educational institutions according to the criteria agreed with the QAA. For example, The Open University (OU) in 1992 created its own structure - The Open University Validation Services (OUVS), engaged in the accreditation of educational institutions and the validation of educational programs, including outside the UK (Trapitsin, Granichina, Granichin, 2017).

In Australia, a new approach to accreditation of educational programs, developed in 1996 by the Australian Institute of Engineers in conjunction with the Australian Council of Deans of Faculties of Engineering, places great emphasis on the use of internal mechanisms for quality assurance systems. The new accreditation criteria for engineering programs are focused on results rather than processes. The accreditation procedure includes, along with internal assessments and quality assurance, external criteria and recommendations from industrial enterprises. In general, the accreditation process is aimed at innovation and development of engineering programs in accordance with the requirements of modern production.

The main criteria for accreditation are (Wang, Sun, Jiang, 2018):

- the quality of the initial training of students admitted to the university;
- requirements for graduates;
- requirements for teachers and students;
- academic programs;
- professional practice.

The peculiarities of these criteria are that these criteria allow: more freedom for universities in the formation of curricula; providing special attention to the quality of training of specialists; the need for continuous improvement of educational programs in order to improve their quality; stimulating innovation in educational standards

A new approach to accreditation of study programs in Australia calls for attention to the use of internal mechanisms and quality assurance systems.

In New Zealand, the fundamental difference between the national policy in the field of ensuring an independent assessment of the quality of education is the fact that all key organizations working in this area carry out their activities in accordance with the uniform principles formulated by the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education - INQAAHE) [4]. INQAAHE was founded in 1991 and is one of the most recognized international organizations dealing with the quality assessment of higher education in the world. The network brings together accreditation agencies and other organizations interested in the high quality of post-secondary education institutions or educational programs.

The main objectives of INQAAHE are (Yetik, Ozdamar, Bozkurt, 2020):

- collection and dissemination of information on the current state and new developments of theory and practice in the field of assessment, improvement and maintenance of quality in higher education;
- organization of scientific research in areas of interest to the quality assurance system in higher education;
- expressing the collective opinion of its members on issues of interest to the quality assurance system in higher education;
- promoting theory and practice to improve the quality of higher education;
- expressing the collective opinion of its members in cooperation with international bodies / organizations and the media;
- ensuring good practice in maintaining and improving the quality of higher education;
- support of scientific research in the field of quality management of higher education and its effectiveness;
- providing advice to existing agencies, conducting expert reviews at the request of interested organizations and supporting the development of new accreditation agencies;
- facilitating communication between accreditation agencies operating across national borders;
- providing support to network members in setting standards for the activities of universities across national borders;
- assistance in obtaining complete information on the recognition of international qualifications;
- assistance in the development and use of credit technology and credit accumulation schemes to ensure student mobility within the country and abroad;
- warning network members about dubious organizations and unfair accreditation practices;
- Organizing, at the request of members, an external survey of the activities of INQAAHE participating agencies.

The adherence of organizations to common principles working in the field of independent assessment of the quality of education allows for a fairly detailed comparison of their main characteristics.

New Zealand's experience in creating conditions for the development of institutions for the formalization of an independent assessment of the quality of education is unique in that the created system of organizations that guarantee the quality of higher education makes it possible to use all aspects of the activities of educational institutions as the subject of an independent expert assessment. In addition, all parties are involved in the accreditation process at different stages and for different purposes, one way or another interested in improving the quality of training: representatives of the public, students, teachers, international experts in the field of quality assessment and others.

A distinctive feature here is also the high status of expert assessments and judgments about the quality of education and the trust given to independent accreditation agencies by state bodies - up to the use of the assessment results in the distribution of the volume of budgetary funding of universities (Apevalova, Gromova, Pasholikhov, Trofimova, 2018).

The benefits of New Zealand's education quality assessment system are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2
The benefits of New Zealand's education quality assessment system

№ The benefits of New Zealand's education quality assessment system

1 The adherence of organizations working in the field of independent assessment of the quality of education to uniform principles allows for a fairly detailed comparison of their main characteristics

2 The accreditation process at different stages and for different purposes involves all parties, one way or another interested in improving the quality of training: representatives of the public, students, teachers, international experts in the field of quality assessment and others

3 The system of organizations that guarantee the quality of higher education makes it possible to use all aspects of the activities of educational institutions as the subject of an independent expert assessment

4 High confidence in the results of an independent assessment of the quality of education, which are brought to the attention of government agencies that finance universities

The disadvantages of the system for assessing the quality of education in New Zealand are: the lack of a single body coordinating the activities of all accreditation councils complicates the use of accreditation as a tool at the state level (for example, for staffing current development priorities).

In China, a unique methodology for assessing the quality of higher education has been proposed. To assess the level of lagging Chinese universities behind the world's leading universities, in 2003 the Institute of Higher Education of Shanghai University ranked the top 500 educational research universities in the world for 2003. The academic ranking of universities has attracted the attention of the world community. The rating group receives a lot of mail: about 30% unconditionally praise the project, another 60% have generally positive reviews and only 5% of correspondents speak negatively about the rating. The rating methodology included a number of criteria for assessing their educational and research work, including factors such as the number of Nobel laureates, as well as laureates of other prestigious scientific prizes, among alumni and teachers, cited studies, the number of publications in natural sciences, references to the works of teachers in the scientific literature.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the quality problem of higher education indicates its primary importance for the democratization of university education in the world, strengthening public confidence, and increasing the authority of the national higher education system at the international level. However, the establishment of an effective system for ensuring the quality of higher education depends on a well-thought-out and balanced state policy in the field of education, on an integrated approach to solving a number of urgent socio-economic, research, managerial, cultural, educational, material and technical problems. proper substantiation, development and practical implementation in the context of modernization of higher education).

World experience is reflected in three main trends. First, countries are either substantially reforming the accreditation format or abandoning it altogether. There was a consensus among experts that the purpose of the assessment system should be to improve the quality of education, for which the accreditation format is not suitable, since it is mainly related to compliance with minimum standards. Secondly, more and more experts see it as necessary to introduce a quality audit, the format of which is aimed at assessing the university's ability to independently maintain high standards of quality in education. Thirdly, it is recognized that it is important to reject a unified assessment of universities, since it leads to a decrease in the diversity of the education system.

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