

## Management of the Higher Education System of Kazakhstan: Current Status and Effectiveness of the Reform

<sup>1</sup>Kasenova Bayangul Temirbolatovna and <sup>2</sup>Alexey Vladimirovich Boretsky

<sup>1</sup>Innovative University of Eurasia, the Republic of Kazakhstan,  
Pavlodar 140000, Pavlodar, M. Gorky St. 102/4, Kazakhstan

<sup>2</sup>Innovative University of Eurasia, the Republic of Kazakhstan,  
Pavlodar 140000, Pavlodar, Mairya St. 49-257, Kazakhstan

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**Abstract:** Currently, a reform of the education system and in particular the higher education system is conducted, along with the reform of the political and economic systems in the Republic of Kazakhstan. During the period of the educational reforms, Kazakhstan has made some progress in this area; however, there are certain issues that require further consideration and resolution. In a scientific article the authors examine some problems of management and reform of the higher education and suggest some solutions.

**Key words:** Higher education system • Reform of education • Educational policy • Educational services

### INTRODUCTION

Education reform in the Republic of Kazakhstan (hereinafter RK) - is a nationwide problem. The active subjects of educational policy are institutions of higher education, vocational pedagogic communities, public institutions, national and regional institutions of state power and the citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The state system of higher education requires constant attention, as it forms the basis of formation of the intellectual potential of the country.

Questions of higher education management were considered in the works of Vladimirova, S.A. [1], Vasilyeva, I.P. [2], Yarullina, L.D. [3], Pavlova, N.G. [4], Monear, Daryl A. [5], Walstrom, John Albert J. [6], Hurst, Christine M. [7], Berret, Beth A. [8] Ignatova E.V. [9], etc.

At present the new State Program of Education Development for 2011-2020, developed at the request of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, came into force in the Republic of Kazakhstan. This is one of the four key government programs, along with the state program of forced industrial-innovative development, promotion of health and development of the state

language. The amount of funding of the first phase of the program - 2011-2015, - from the national budget is 461,1 billion tenge [10].

The objectives of the State program are: to improve the funding system focused on providing equal access to educational services, raising the prestige of the teaching profession, the formation of state-public education management system; ensuring equal access for all the educational process participants to the best educational resources and technologies.

In connection with implementation of plans for the forced industrial development of the country, the access to technical and vocational education is being expanded. Currently, there are 139 higher education institutions - 53 public and 86 private, attended by more than 570,000 people. Preparation of students is performed on 248 specialties, including bachelor's degree - 122, Master - 126 specialties [11].

The state order for the higher education training in the 2012-2013 school year is 33,815 educational grants. The state order for the training of masters increased by 1,795 units, reaching 6809 units, an order for training of PhD doctors amounted to 500 units [12, 13].

**Corresponding Author:** Kasenova Bayangul Temirbolatovna, Innovative University of Eurasia, the Republic of Kazakhstan, Pavlodar. 140000, Pavlodar, M. Gorky St. 102/4, Kazakhstan, Tell: 8 (10) (701) 2801229,

The big event, marking the beginning of a new stage of development of the higher education in Kazakhstan, was «Nazarbayev University», opened in 2009. The preparatory department of the new university adopted 500 students under the state order.

Speaking to the University students at the end of last year, President Nursultan Nazarbayev said that Kazakhstan, gaining pace of development, needs professionals with advanced knowledge that can accept and execute the right decisions. He recalled that since 1992, the program «Bolashak» has provided training for more than 20 thousand young professionals. Tens of thousands of young Kazakhs are studying abroad in private. But Kazakhstan needs its own industry of science and knowledge, able to prepare their professionals at the international level. Therefore, the national education system needs a XXI century standard of higher education [14].

However, it is worth noting the significant achievements of the higher education institutions of Kazakhstan in the international arena of higher education and research in recent years. So according to the rating agency «QS World University Rankings» 8 Kazakhstan universities have been included in the ranking in 2012. Two of them hit the top 400 universities (Al-Farabi Kazakh National University and L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University), whereas, for example, in 2009 not a single Kazakhstan university was enlisted in a similar ranking [15].

All the above demonstrates the need for research on the effectiveness of management and education reform in Kazakhstan.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodological bases of this study were: the dialectical method of cognition of social and legal phenomena, as well as systematic and structural, comparative legal, logical-theoretical and private scientific study methods. In addition, the study used such sociological methods as questionnaires and interviews with teachers of higher educational institutions. To achieve the objective results of the study these methods were applied comprehensively.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analyzing the reform of education, we have revealed some of its shortcomings. The first -is the lack of understanding between the top and the bottom. Between

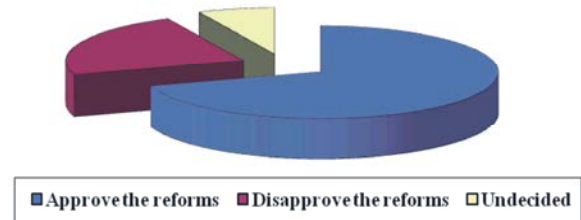


Diagram 1:

Table 1:

	Teachers of natural sciences	Social and human sciences	Economic and business	Technical subjects
Approve	80	71	65	60
Disapprove	20	29	35	40

the organizers and executors of the reform, i.e. between the government and the leaders of scientific and educational institutions on the one hand and scientific and teaching staff on the other hand there is a significant difference in attitudes, values and business units.

The survey of university teachers, conducted in 2012, showed that the need for reforms was recognized by most of the academic community and their main vector is gaining support among professors. However, teachers are ambiguous for some areas and the results of the reforms. There are also significant differences in the positions of age, profile and status groups of the teaching staff. 70 % of the teachers surveyed said that the reform of higher education in general, go to the right direction in Kazakhstan.

The opposite view is held by 23 % of respondents. 7 % were undecided (Figure 1).

However, when the course of reforms is supported by more than 80 % teachers of natural sciences, then the social and human sciences - 71 %, among the faculty of Economics and Business - only 65 % and teachers of technical subjects - 60 % (Table 1).

It is reasonable to assume that the reforms gain a lot of support from those teachers for whom work at the university is a «no alternative» occupation. At the same time those who have the opportunity to combine work at the university with the production and business or move out of the university into these areas, those who actually meet problems with the practice of learning due to their activities, have more exacting attitudes toward the reform.

The lack of understanding between the top and the bottom: evaluation of reforms in the professional community of teachers of high schools in general is in the middle level.

The most positive ratings (slight excess of 4 points and closeness to 4 points) gained results in improved international relations of Kazakhstan universities, including on a personal level.

The following are the results expressed in improving the technical equipment of the educational process. Positive trends slightly, but dominated in the estimates of such outcomes as raising the economic freedom level, the integration of the Bologna process, the quality of staff training.

This estimate is significantly different from those of the employers, who according to previous studies by BISAM, expressed negative trends. Obviously it affects that the teachers have to assess the main indicator of their own work. But the scores on the items relating to the competitiveness and international prestige of Kazakhstan universities were very low. Note that here we are talking about the goals and indicators of the reforms that play a key role in the state educational policy. The practice of public administration of education and regulation of the market of educational services is low-priced.

Finally, dissatisfaction with conditions for research and teaching among teachers was fully expected. This is true concerning the means for research and, in particular, the level of wages.

The vast majority of teachers disagreed with the statement that the reforms have provided them a decent wage and that the increase in their salaries was ahead of the cost of living increases.

Factors of the reforms, which are prerequisites for their success and which are not always in sight or, more precisely, in the continuous monitoring of the reformers: the paradigm of educational reforms. In the basic documents and speeches of the President it is stated quite clearly: the modernization of the educational system in order to achieve a higher quality of national education, to meet the requirements of a rapidly changing socio-economic development and its integration into the world educational space, the development of fundamental science under increased commitment to the implementation of scientific achievements in economic and social practices. Recently, however, came to the fore a sign designed to be minor if not at least secondary. This is the recognition of diplomas of Kazakhstan abroad.

This objective is threatening to become the main paradigm of reform, blocking much more important, fundamental components of the change.

Content analysis of speeches and articles on the problems of higher education shows that the plot of the recognition of diplomas is mentioned much more often than the «quality education». And we are talking about the formal recognition.

Avoiding excessive eclecticism, control and timely resolution of the contradictions that arise. Kazakhstan national model of higher education formed on the experience of almost all the basic learning models in the world existing today - the Anglo-American and European (mostly - German), Japanese. The Soviet model could not but had a significant impact on it. In general, priority was given to the Anglo-American system.

Today Kazakhstan's model has gained its own face. However, eclecticism and inconsistency in it are preserved. The main contradiction is between liberalism, expressed in a large proportion of the private sector, in the broad declaration of the rights of educational institutions, the principles of university autonomy and overly rigid state centralization of the structure and content of education.

In theory of the education administration, there are two basic models for the functioning of universities:

- The English, in which education is provided for everyone and then trade unions decide will the graduate work or not. In this model, everybody study as long as they want for a fee.
- Prussian, later developed into the Soviet, where there is a certain state order, then due to it a state distribution of graduates occurs.

Currently, in the RK the two models are combined, as there is a government order and the elements of Anglo-Saxon education model.

Unfortunately, the system of higher education is based not on the training of specialists, but on temporary occupation of youth, i.e. higher education is a method of youth employment. In this connection, in our view, it is expedient to choose a concrete model.

Every year the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Kazakhstan produces a bulletin of the most popular specialties, while grants from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan on certain specialties, often do not coincide with them.

If we consider higher education as an industry, then it should be really competitive.

In international practice, the higher education system reproduces high-quality human capital, professional, highly demanded in the economics.

The demand - is a measure that is why higher education there - is a competitive industry, part of the market economy, business. Our initially incorrect sight distorts all the reforms, hence inefficient business model of higher education institutions, management, marketing, business processes. Human resources management should occupy an important place, because the key asset of the university - are teachers.

Teachers, who give interesting knowledge and skills, create technologies and scientific research; make the educational process complete, interesting. Then the output is a professional, intellectual, thinking specialist.

If we consider the activities of the university sector as a market economy, as in any good corporation, their activities should be accountable and transparent. In this case, the system of independent ratings, proposed by one of the speakers, could shift the situation.

In addition, in terms of regulation - Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan substituted the concept of efficiency to the control process, so the teachers instead of the creative work are mired into paperwork and red tape.

The international education market continues to evolve: increasing volume and variety of educational services, the number of market participants.

Every year the competition gets tougher in the market. High competitive position in the market of high school indicates the high quality educational services and brings significant financial benefits. In 2012, the proportion of foreign students enrolled in higher education institutions of Kazakhstan, was 1,8 %. It speaks of the backwardness of Kazakhstan from the market leaders and the need to take additional measures to improve the situation.

Along with the need to attract foreign students, Kazakhstan faces the challenge of reducing the outflow of Kazakh students to foreign universities. To do this, firstly, it is needed to ensure that offered educational programs correspond to the world standards. Attracting highly skilled foreign professionals to work in local schools is one of the mechanisms to address these issues.

Note that the leading universities in the world have international composition of the teaching staff and the index of the share of foreign teaching staff is used in the calculation of one of the most famous world rankings of the universities - QS World University Rankings.

Kazakh universities tend to attract foreign professionals who already have experience in leading foreign universities. Their knowledge and skills are called to contribute to the development of competitive advantages of the university, which include:

- Expanding the range of educational services for new priority specialties; creation and implementation of new competitive and profitable educational products in the English language in accordance with standards recognized by leading universities in the world;
- Adaptation of the basic learning technologies to new conditions through the improvement of curricula, creation of integrated training courses and joint training programs;
- Conducting active research activities, development of new research directions and approaches to research;
- Increase in the number of publications of the Kazakh universities staff in leading peer-reviewed journals;
- Brand recognition abroad;
- the internationalization of the university.

Educational market of Kazakhstan, as in many countries around the world, is regulated by the state. The government is aware of the need to bring into the higher education sector the highly skilled professionals from the international labor market and provides significant support to higher education institutions in addressing this issue.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus, we can conclude that at the moment a lot of work is done to reform the higher education system in the Republic of Kazakhstan and that the modern Kazakh system of higher education is moving in the right direction in its development, by integrating into the international scientific and educational space, but the historical experience of the national education system requires careful multilateral approach to the issues addressed.

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