GLOBAL TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The sphere of education is undergoing today a stage of serious transformation due to the internal features of the existing system, and moreover, due to external factors, the number and significance of which cannot be left unnoticed. The development of technologies in all spheres of life leads to the transformation of teaching methods and approaches, makes us think about what people engaged in higher education should do in order to ensure high quality educational services, their accessibility, flexibility and relevance. This article is a study of trends affecting the higher education system, especially in Russia. We came to the conclusion that the most significant environmental aspects for the universities are as follows: globalization aspects, digital economy and information technology, knowledge economy, Industry 4.0., mass of higher education, concept of lifelong learning, financing features of the universities, advanced teaching methods and individual development path. We believe that the future competitiveness of universities depends entirely on how successful the current stage will be and whether it will be able to fully meet the challenges of modern world.

KEY WORDS: higher education, trends, universities, education perspectives, future of higher education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education is quite complex and debatable as an object of study. What it is and should represent, what functions to carry and tasks to solve - all this is not a complete list of pressing and relevant issues. And it is rather a dialectical question of what will be behind the future of higher education. Various groups of interested parties (teachers, students, experts, scientists and others) put forward their views and forecasts.

In this article, we tried to highlight key trends that affect the higher education system and its elements.

Russia as an element of the global economic and political system is increasingly exposed to external factors that have both positive and negative consequences. Global trends in the modern world, of which our country and part of its entities are a part, are aspects of the current agenda. And the creation of trends or following them is one of the factors of the future competitiveness of a country, region, or separate economic activity subject.

2. METHODS

Where higher education is today, what factors it is exposed to, where it will develop in the medium term - all these questions are posed by the scientists, researchers, states, commercial companies, and universities themselves. We analyzed the existing points of view of all interested parties to this process and tried to present a comprehensive view of the higher education system in order to understand what to prepare for in the future and how to change in order to remain competitive.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Globalization and international cooperation as a priority for the university development and the search for its place in the global academic division of labor.

Speaking about global trends in higher education, it should be noted that there is a certain lag, despite the ongoing globalization processes, for Russia and the processes occurring inside. Thus, the researchers at the Center for the Study of International Higher Education at Boston College, as well as OECD data, say that the era of higher education internationalization (1990–2015) is ending or the landscape of higher education internationalization is changing under the influence of geopolitical factors [1, 2]. Whereas in the practice of Russian universities, especially regional ones, this direction has retained its attractiveness, and moreover, it is at the development stage.

They talk about the negative impact of English language on the quality of education in Germany, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands. Of course, English is the main language of scientific communication, but its dominance is coming to an end, according to researchers. The situation in Russia, as well as in India and China, indicates the opposite. Programs in English language are one of the target areas for the development of universities.

The positive impact of the higher education internationalization is expressed in expanding opportunities for students of any country to obtain the desired higher education. In addition to foreign students themselves, the international education is also an opportunity to expand cultural diversity, build intercultural dialogue, and the ability to adopt ethics, culture, ideas that are different from traditional ones. Cross-cultural interaction, along with the interdisciplinarity, give a powerful intellectual and creative impetus to research and development.

In addition to the obvious benefits of globalization, the higher education is facing new challenges created by the same globalization. The newly created unified space of international higher education has become a common field for most of the world's leading universities, which have now become competitors for mobile students. In the struggle for leadership in the higher education market, the universities not only improve the range of opportunities offered, but also create strategic alliances with partner universities within and outside the country of localization in order to strengthen their positions [3]. Another aspect of openness is the competition for highly qualified scientific personnel in their scientific laboratories, since the scientific field is subject to high competition outside the teaching one. At the same time, active internationalization may decrease over time subject to the development of internal higher education in the developing countries, which are the most active supporters of international education [2].

2. New information technologies and digital economy as integral elements of the new model of higher education.

It should be recognized that digitalization as a global trend is increasingly becoming a factor of existence, rather than an option. The transition to "digital" accompanies most of the processes of human life: production, management and other processes. In this regard, the university, together with managerial functions and business processes, is moving to digital organization and electronic document management. Along with this, the educational function of the university follows its consumer online and offline. The students as representatives of a new generation are ready to refuse offline meetings, prefer independence and greater flexibility.

Online learning has become one of the answers to this trend. The development of online learning in the form of distance learning courses made it possible for a wide range of educational organizations, experts, and scientists to prepare their own educational programs in the format of MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses). Initially, online learning was predicted for a great future, up to a change in the model of higher education and a complete abandonment of offline forms. It was assumed that technology would provide freedom of choice, as well as become a platform for free education with the world's best professors, destroying inefficient universities. However, the available statistics refute such ambitious statements. Thus, only 3% of students of online courses have successfully completed their studies and received loans to obtain a diploma of higher education. The limited access to the Internet for a large category of people is still called as restrictions on the use of online learning (59.6% of the population of the Russian Federation have access to the Internet). [3, 9]

Separately, it is worth noting that online courses are a good alternative to continuing education, advanced training and other continuing education programs. Thus, for a separate category of potential students, working people and adults, this model can become an equivalent analogue of classical education in many ways. In this regard, many experts are of the opinion that it is necessary to integrate the MOOCs into classical training formats, moving to hybrid formats.

3. The knowledge economy as the basis of the modern and future economic structures and a key criterion of efficiency in the modern world

The knowledge-based economy is no longer a new trend, but still retains its relevance. It is even more correct to say that this is not a trend, but a new form of economic organization, new values and guidelines. It is difficult to disagree with the fact that knowledge and competencies have become a key resource of modern business. G.B. Kleiner calls knowledge one of the factors of production along with labor, land and capital [4]. In this regard, the university is an important and equal participant in the new economic space as one of the key suppliers of the new resource.

It is fair to say that not every university is able to provide the economy with new knowledge and highly qualified graduates - carriers and creators of new knowledge. However, this is the only criterion for the survival and effectiveness of the university in market conditions. With the growth of high-tech products in the GDP structure and the share of human capital in the national wealth structure, the value of knowledge will continue to grow. This is of particular importance for the Russian Federation, the benchmark of which has shifted from raw materials to innovative and knowledge-intensive products in recent years. And the achievement of targets will be impossible, if the existing system of science and higher education remains unchanged.

4. Scientific research as the basis of Industry 4.0 at the threshold of change in technological patterns

Industry 4.0 or the fourth industrial revolution is associated with the concept of smart manufacturing, artificial intelligence, machine learning, which implies a fundamental change in the traditional workplace. The basis of the new structure should be machines connected to the Internet and integrated among themselves, in other words, the Internet of things or the industrial Internet.

However, there are many questions that need to be resolved before a complete transition to a new structure. In particular, it is necessary to develop a single "language" for all machines and the possibility of their integration, ensure a new level of technical and technological safety, form new regulations and legislation, train and retrain a large number of categories of the employees.

It is superfluous to write about the role of the university in the new technological realities. Industry 4.0 as a continuation of the knowledge economy is possible provided that a large number of tasks faced by humanity are on the verge of a new industrial revolution. The formation of a university that meets modern requirements, a university that can provide the necessary knowledge and competencies, a university that can become a provider of technological solutions is a guarantee of the stability of the future university. However, the university can secure a place in the new coordinate system in case of timely transformation and adaptation to the realities of modern and future world. In these conditions, the university is not allowed remaining traditional, classical and conservative.

5. The mass nature of higher education as a factor of the new time in the new world.

OECD research data show an increase in the number of students [5, 6]. The massiveness of education is associated with various factors, among which are an increase in the availability of education, an increase in the number of universities, the availability of student loans, online education, the requirements of the market and employers.

The growth in the number of universities, including commercial ones, ensured the growth in the number of graduates until some time, albeit with a different level of knowledge. In these conditions, the state acted as a kind of regulator, preferring to leave large universities with a guarantee of the quality of education, reducing various educational organizations. This process continues to this day, moving into the direction of unification, integration, standardization of the higher education system itself, as well as internal regulations, and educational programs and directions. The accreditation of universities, which allows establishing minimum quality requirements, is of particular importance in these conditions. [5,14] Thus, the aspect of mass nature is waning, but is offset by other decisions that allow giving higher education to a larger number of interested people.

The number of universities and the mass of higher education do not always guarantee its quality, and knowledge itself tends to become obsolete over time. In the context of the need for retraining and advanced training, corporate universities are being created as part of the new corporate culture and personnel management system.

Large corporations like Sberbank, Gazprom, MTS, Severstal not only created their corporate universities, trained hundreds of students, but also moved to a non-core education market, offering the third-party companies to take training programs. And this trend shall be taken into account when creating programs and when working with

the students, who may prefer a corporate university together with a master's degree at some point.

6. The concept of life-long learning is approved as the main path of human development

At today's rates of changes, in the context of updating knowledge as a key resource, and with a high development level of online learning, new types of demand for education are being created. It is now difficult to imagine that there will be only one job, profession or specialty during a person's life. In this regard, the concept of life-long learning is a natural transformation of the classical approach to higher education at the career beginning.

A large stratum of people already included in the life-long learning system includes: managerial staff, who climb the career ladder, but do not have a completed higher education: employees of companies with a moving career growth system; when a student comes to the position of assistant, the employee grows to manager or director with new features and competencies that also need to be trained.

Another aspect is the simple need to integrate into the ongoing socio-economic changes, offering completely new working and living conditions. A similar type of training leads to a change in the composition of professions, which also expects a significant change, while maintaining the trend for technological transformation in Industry 4.0.

With the strengthening of this trend and the involvement of a large number of people in the life-long learning approach, transformations of the educational system itself are possible with an aim of adapting it to the urgent needs of both young people and working population.

7. Individual trajectory of professional and personality development as the basis of a long-term educational strategy

Individualization is largely a common trend in today's world. Just as manufacturers of various products and services strive for customization and individualization, which consumers demand, the universities change in the wake of global consumer transformations [7, 8,13]. It should be noted that this is a positive signal for the universities that are considered conservative.

The above trends in terms of online education, self-education and life-long learning - all this once again confirms the irreversibility of education personification. There are no people, who adhere to rigid educational programs, in the modern world. Let's say more, the universities themselves, expanding their range of educational methods, are moving away from uniformity and standardization, allowing adding more and more additional blocks of interest to modern students.

The Russian education system may not be ready for such dramatic changes and concessions at the moment, but it will inevitably have to move towards increasing the flexibility of both the system and educational programs, allowing variability for each of its students. This is not to say that the universities will be trapped in chaos and uncontrollability taking a step towards meeting flexibility. On the contrary, these will still be ordered structures, but with more complex relationships and with a large number of options with many initial parameters. Thus, the student will not be limited by the framework of one program, but will be free to supplement the core subjects with not only optional, but also non-core one at the beginning.

But the personified trajectory of education is not limited to only one university. It is connected with the trajectory of a person's life from birth to the last days of his/her

life, including kindergartens, additional circles, school subjects, online courses, and continuing education courses. Thus, a person forms a personal educational and competency card, which allows him/her determining the scope of application of his/her own skills, as well as allows the employers approaching selection more carefully, increasing the number of possible selection parameters at the initial stages of searching for candidates for a vacancy [10,11,12].

4. SUMMARY

Higher education has made tremendous progress in expanding access and increasing educational opportunities. But the world is rapidly changing, which leads to cultural, demographic and technological changes in the educational process.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Higher education shall demonstrate resilience in order to preserve its rich heritage, devotion to academic freedoms and institutional autonomy, but it shall be able to adapt to the expectations of society at the same time. This is not an easy task that requires courage and leadership. Time will show how higher education will cope with all the challenges it faces. [5] And this is especially true today, when we are witnessing the emergence of a "knowledge-based economy," the effect of globalization and the importance of digital communication. All this has a direct or indirect effect on higher education.

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