

Methodological Approaches to the Concept of "Quality Assurance of Education"

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Abstract. Object: Analysis of the essence of the concept of «quality assurance of education» and the definition of its methodological approaches to the existence and practical implementation.

Methods: Methods of analysis and synthesis, comparative evaluation of strategic and regulatory documents.

Results: The concept of «quality assurance of education» was introduced into the terminology of Kazakh higher education from the standards and guidelines of the European Network for Quality Assurance of Higher Education (ENQA) after the adoption of the parameters of the Bologna process. When analyzing the essence of the concept, special attention is paid to its characteristics, firstly, from the point of view of management, and secondly, as a system for improving the quality of education.

Conclusions: Quality assurance of education in the form of management is the direction, organization and regulation of the impact on the quality of education. Quality assurance of education in the form of a system contains a set of interrelated and interacting elements that are provided at the institutional (internal), national and international (external) levels.

Keywords: quality assurance of education, concept, higher education, methodological approaches, quality management of education.

Introduction

The transformation of Kazakhstan's higher education system is due to the development of globalization, ensuring the competitiveness of Kazakhstani universities in the international market, and as a result, the issue of improving the quality of higher education is on the national agenda, which directly affects the level of education of society and its intellectual potential.

In his Message to the People of Kazakhstan dated September 1, 2020, Head of State Kassym-Jomart Tokayev noted that «Our children should receive a quality education regardless of their place of residence and language of instruction... Here we need a fresh look, new approaches, reliance on international experience» (Message, 2020).

In this regard, the Government has begun to focus more on the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system, which has led to modern reforms in this area. A significant part of the reforms is currently driven by concern for the quality of education, which is seen as a necessary condition for a broader national desire for international competitiveness.

Taking into account international experience,

since 2018, Kazakh universities have been granted academic and managerial independence, which has affected the reduction in the number of regulatory legal acts, centralized norms and restrictions, the transition from state direct management to decentralized management.

In 2020, the structure of the higher education management system was changed. The Committee for Control in the Field of education and Science was renamed the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Field of Education and Science (Committee).

The following key structural changes in the activities of the Committee can be noted:

1. The Business Code provides for preventive control and unscheduled inspections. Initially, the authorized body in the field of education and science pursues the goals of preventive and preventive nature.

2. Until 2020, the inspection of universities was carried out purely on quantitative indicators. Now significant changes have been made to the checklist.

3. Normative legal acts in the field of higher and postgraduate education now have framework requirements, and the main activities and regulation

of internal processes of the university are carried out according to independently developed intra-university documents.

4. Academic, managerial, organizational and financial independence obtained by universities implies more trust in them than control.

Thus, at the country level, the concept of «quality assurance of education» gets a new impetus and assumes a new content for our country.

In this regard, there is a need for additional research to determine the aspects of quality assurance in education and to find out how this is implemented in practice in the higher education system.

Literature Review

The analysis of the essence of the concept of «quality assurance of education» should begin with the definition of methodological approaches to the existence and practical implementation of this definition.

The term «quality assurance of education» is a rather complex, diverse and rapidly evolving concept. It was introduced into the terminology of Kazakh higher education from the standards and guidelines of the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA – European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), aimed at forming a common understanding of quality assurance of teaching and learning at the international level and for all stakeholders (ESG, 2015).

ENQA standards contain main elements and recommendations for the formation of a quality assurance model, in particular:

- development and implementation of the university's strategy for continuous quality improvement, which has an approved status and is publicly available to all interested parties;
- availability of approved mechanisms for the approval, monitoring and regular evaluation of programs;
- assessment of students' knowledge in accordance with consistently applied published criteria, regulations and procedures; formation of high-quality teaching staff;
- functioning of information resources corresponding to the learning objectives and the student support system;
- using of information systems that ensure effective management of training programs and other university activities;
- regular updating and publication of objective and reliable information about the university's training programs and activities (ESG, 2015; Nazarova, 2014; Thune, 2005).

The application of this model has enabled European higher education systems to demonstrate the quality and increase the transparency of learning outcomes, contributing to the formation of mutual trust, improving the recognition of qualifications, programs and other aspects related to the implementation of educational activities.

The most important component of European integration has become the parameters of the Bologna process, ensuring the harmonization of European education systems to create a single European higher education space. According to them, the concept of «quality assurance of education» is defined as a set of procedures applied at the institutional (internal), national and international (external) levels for the qualitative implementation of educational programs and the awarding of qualifications (ESG, 2015).

In turn, in the dictionary of terms in the field of education, quality assurance of education is interpreted as a continuous process of improving the compliance of the quality of education with state educational standards and (or) accreditation standards (Dictionary of terms, 2021).

ISO 9000 standards define the term «quality assurance» as a set of measures for the management of educational services aimed at achieving the established educational requirements and at instilling confidence in participants that their requirements will be met (Kulekeyev et al., 2004).

In modern education, one more concept of «quality assurance of education» should be noted – this is a paradigm that creates a qualitative landscape of the education system through the efforts and actions of all stakeholders to meet their expectations and goals (Guideline, 2022).

Many scientists use quality assurance interchangeably with other concepts such as quality assessment, quality audit, accreditation or external evaluation in higher education. Although there are subtle differences between these concepts, quality assurance is a broader general concept used to represent these concepts, since similar processes and methods are used in evaluation activities (Brennan and Shah, 2000; Harvey and Newton, 2007).

In the system of modern education, quality assurance is a system for improving the quality of education. At the same time, the political authorities use quality assurance as a political tool to achieve their goals (Dill, 2007). Shin (2018) in his research, drawing on the work of Schneider and Ingram, reports that similar but slightly different typologies are proposed, based on powers, incentives, capacity building, symbolic and learning tools.

Thus, the views on the definition of the category «quality assurance» are aimed at achieving quality education. The main areas of quality assurance are quality assurance objectives, process control, areas covered, procedures and the use of results. These five areas form the basis of management approaches, which gives us a reason to consider this definition from a management perspective. In this regard, management consists in directing, organizing and regulating the impact on the quality of education.

Methods

Retrospective analysis and analysis of secondary data were used. The necessary information was obtained from open sources, including statistical

data of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Content analysis and comparative analysis of legislation, strategic and program documents were also carried out.

Results

The history of management development as a science has a huge amount of material on conceptual and theoretical developments of management activities, methods of evaluating management effectiveness, as well as a description of practical management.

In foreign publications, in particular in the work of Meskon et al (1992), management is considered as a special type of activity and a stimulating element of social change, as well as as a process of planning, organization, motivation and control necessary in order to formulate and achieve the goals set.

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan «On Education» defines education quality management as a category aimed at implementing a unified state policy in the field of education and includes state and institutional structures that make up a unified national system for assessing the quality of education, the rational use of funds allocated for financing education, and in general the effectiveness of the functioning of the education system (Law, 2007).

In scientific research on the problems of quality management of education, Naumov et al (2010) identify three important areas.

The authors in the first direction combine works that consider the methodology of innovative methods of quality management of education and scientific organizations of the management process, as well as various aspects of assessing the quality of education (Andreev V.I., Bermus A.G., Kachalov V.A., Mayorov A.N., Makarov A.A., Monakhov V.M., Panasyuk V.P., Potashnik M.M., Subetto A.I., etc.). Within the framework of this direction, there are studies on education quality assurance systems.

The second direction is connected with attempts to standardize the quality management process of education. It includes work on the creation of state educational standards and educational quality management systems based on ISO 9000-2000 standards (Aristov O.V., Isaev V.A., Kachalov V.A., Selezneva N.A., Sokolov V.M., Solovyov V.P., Tatur Yu.G., Firsov V.M., Negrey E.A., etc.).

The third direction consists of theoretical and methodological research in the field of assessing the state, changes and trends in education (Avanesov V.S., Bakhmutsky A.E., Bolotov V.A., Efremova N.F., Kovaleva G.S., Korotkov E.M., Kuznetsova O.Z., Legostaev I.I., Mayorov A.N., Pereverzev V.Yu., Sevruk A.I., Tatur A.O., Chelyshkova M.B., Shmelev A.G., etc.). Trends show that in education, the tasks of education quality management come first, subordinating a more specific task – the development of education quality assessment systems.

However, despite the rather wide range of definitions, scientists tend to understand the impact

on the managed system under management in order to maximize its functioning, in order to effectively make transitions to a qualitatively new state that contributes to achieving the goals set.

This understanding of the phenomenon of «management» captures several important points: firstly, all management is a purposeful activity; secondly, management as an activity is different from all other types; thirdly, the separation of the controlling and controlled subsystems; fourthly, the need for the transition of the system from one qualitative state to another, more high.

According to OECD research (2008), governance consists of structures, relationships and processes that become the basis for the development, implementation and revision of higher education policy at both the national and institutional levels. Management contains a complex network of the legislative framework, the characteristics of organizations and how they are connected to the entire system.

Middlehurst (1999) separates management from the procedural aspects of management, despite the fact that a strong difference can create analytical difficulties, since the management process itself can affect the management mechanisms. In this direction, Reed et al (2002) consider institutional leadership and administration as components of management. In particular, institutional leadership refers to the strategic direction, management refers to monitoring institutional accountability and efficiency, and administration refers to the implementation of procedures.

The Guidelines on Governance and Quality in Higher Education (OECD, 2008), taking into account the Zgaga study (2006), suggests three levels of governance:

- internal or institutional: university management;
- external or systemic: management of the higher education system(s);
- international or global: management of higher education systems in an international (global) perspective.

Obviously, there are interdependencies between these levels.

de Boer, Enders and Schimank (2007), investigating management models in higher education, distinguish two main directions. The first creates a theoretical framework in which different types of higher education systems can be located. The second one works more inductively and creates typologies of higher education systems based on their individual characteristics.

Taking into account these two directions, researchers have developed a model of higher education management, which is an appropriate management tool and is regulated independently of others, which means changes in one area do not necessarily have to affect others. This model includes:

- state regulation, referring to the original concept of regulation management through control through government. It measures the detail and rigidity of

government leadership;

- stakeholder management measuring the impact of stakeholders not through control, but through setting goals and recommendations. Stakeholders are important social actors who have a strong interest in higher education, such as industry, trade unions or the government itself;

- academic self-government concerning the role of academic specialists at the university. Their influence is ensured by collegial decision-making and self-management of academic communities based on expert assessment;

- managerial self-regulation, including the degree and development of the internal hierarchy of university management, as well as internal goal setting, regulation and powers of key participants, such as rectors, presidents and deans;

- competition related to the construction of quasi-markets and competition for limited resources (money, personnel and with the help of quality indicators such as ratings, performance ratings, customer satisfaction, etc.) and their impact on the management of universities.

Following their concept, the number of subjects involved in the national and institutional management of higher education can increase in various forms.

Based on the general theory of management, it can undoubtedly be argued that «management is an objectively conditioned phenomenon that relies on the laws and interrelations of the functioning of systems» (Balykhin, 2003).

This gives grounds to apply classical management approaches to quality assurance of education (Table 1).

Considering these approaches in relation to quality assurance of education, it should be noted that they are somewhat limited.

Thus, a systematic approach is one of the prerequisites for the integration of various approaches, concepts and achievements of sciences. With a systematic approach, the organization is considered as a complex organic system of interrelated elements. It should be noted that the basis for building a control system with this approach is a

generalized model of the decision-making process. The ideas of a systematic approach have had a great impact on the development of managerial thinking. Their importance is very great for management at the upper levels of the organization when making strategic decisions.

The situational approach is characterized by the fact that management methods can change depending on the situation. These approaches consider only individual subsystems, this was manifested by its narrowness.

The process approach develops the ideas of classical management theory, enriching them with ideas of behavioral, systemic and situational approaches. Management tasks are solved on the basis of a set of models for the implementation of management functions. At the same time, various decisions are made, the development of which is carried out according to different schemes (Kulekeyev et al., 2004).

In this aspect, the quality management of education based on the principles of universal quality management (TQM) is particularly noteworthy. Universal quality management is a philosophy and methodology that helps various institutions, including educational ones, to implement changes that meet modern socio-economic requirements (Kalanova and Bishimbayev, 2006).

Universal quality management is a new approach to management based on the desire for quality management by meeting customer requirements. According to the authors, total quality management is an approach to the management of an organization based on the participation of all its members and aimed at achieving long-term success by meeting customer requirements and benefits for the members of the organization and society.

In our opinion, it is impossible to consider universal quality management as a means to solve all educational problems. Rather, it is a tool that can be used by educational organizations in the management of a quality assurance system.

From these positions, it seems scientifically correct to investigate the main characteristics of

Table 1 – Management approaches to quality assurance of education

Approach	Context
A systematic approach	Quality assurance of education is considered in interaction with the external environment, its effectiveness is determined not only by systemic qualities, but also by environmental conditions. These conditions are constantly changing, so the system must evolve and acquire new qualities in order to remain effective.
Situational approach	Management solutions are being developed for certain situations to quality assurance of education. The article examines which management models, in which environmental conditions are the most effective.
Process approach	From the perspective of this approach, the quality assurance of education is presented as a hierarchical structure of interrelated processes for the implementation of management functions: planning, organization, analysis, control.

Note: Made up by authors

quality assurance of education as a system.

In the traditional sense, a system is a set of elements interconnected, interacting with each other, having a common goal and forming integrity. Each element of the system can fulfill its functional purpose if it interacts with its other elements (Andreenkova, 2003). Therefore, the education quality assurance system is not just a set of elements, but a set of interconnected and interacting elements. It is in this case that the system acquires new integrative qualities. The unity of the elements of the education quality assurance system is ensured at the institutional (internal), national and international (external) levels. In this chain of relations, each subsequent link includes the common features of the previous ones and performs certain managerial functions in relation to them: organization of interaction, allocation of resources, formation of standards and norms of activity, transformation and specification of tasks put forward by society.

Thus, we believe that together this chain of relations is the result of the functioning of the quality assurance system and its stakeholders as the state, accreditation bodies and universities. At the same time, each participant in this chain of relations has the opportunity to influence the functioning and development of the quality assurance system of education and is responsible for creating the conditions necessary for the quality assurance system of education to perform its functions.

It seems to us that a detailed analysis of the powers of the participants in quality assurance of education is justified, since this will help to reveal the methodological foundations for the study of the problems of the quality assurance system of education.

The modern development of education quality assurance has been influenced by the «Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area» designed to become a means of realizing responsibility to society, involving stakeholders in the process, informing public circles about the results that do not depend on the decisions of governments, various groups or individual universities (Quality Procedures in European Higher Education, 2003).

From these positions, the experience of European agencies that carry out external evaluation of universities is interesting. Among them are network associations (the European Network of Quality Agencies – ENQA, the Scandinavian Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – NOQA), specialized agencies (for example, in the UK it is the Quality Assurance Agency, the Agency for Statistics of Higher Education, the Analytical Institute of Higher Education), various university associations. Their activity is to survey consumers of educational services, as well as the opinions of representatives of the business community (Suleimenova, 2021).

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, quality assurance of higher education is controlled at three levels: by

the state, independent accreditation agencies and higher education institutions.

It would be natural to start the research with an analysis of each level. Thus, the state has various control mechanisms. These include legislative support, licensing, the State Mandatory Standard of Education, quality assurance of educational materials, state control over the implementation of legislation.

One of the legislative acts is the Guidelines for the Quality assurance of Education, which is a set of norms regulating the systems of internal and external quality assurance of education, as well as tools for improving the quality of education and teaching, taking into account the recommendations of international organizations and standards in the field of quality assurance, including:

- Standards and Guidelines for Quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (The Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area – ESG);
- EQAVET (European Quality Assurance System for Vocational Education and Training);
- Recommendations of the Council of International Schools (CIS);
- Educational Inspection Framework (EIF) and others (Guideline, 2022).

This document defines a National Quality Assurance Model based on a quality culture characterized as a system of values and beliefs of participants in the educational process about the quality of education and a focus on its continuous improvement.

Accreditation in international organizations is a mechanism that allows you to correlate educational systems of different countries with each other. This is a kind of quality scale that allows you to guarantee the level of education.

Independent accreditation of universities in the leading countries of the world today is the main mechanism for improving the quality of the higher education process. This mechanism has two important advantages. Firstly, accreditation activities are carried out according to international standards, which, when conducting the accreditation of a university or a program, automatically leads to the introduction of international best practices into the activities of the university. Secondly, accreditation agencies provide real assistance to universities in the post-accreditation period, monitoring and assisting the university in mastering world experience in the field of quality assurance of higher education.

In Kazakhstan, accreditation activities are carried out in accordance with accepted international standards, in particular the Bologna Process. There is an established requirement – accreditation agencies operating in the Kazakh market must necessarily be part of reputable international associations for quality assurance of education, and in their work be guided by their best experience and recommendations.

The changed conditions of the beginning of the

XXI century brought to the fore the international standards ISO 9000 series.

The history of the ISO 9000 series of international standards begins in 1987. It was this year that the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), based on the British BS 5750 standard, adopted the very first version of universal standards for the organization of quality management systems, called ISO 9000/87. The basic basis of ISO 9000 standards in methodological terms has become an integrated approach to quality management (Total Quality Management) (Mutanova et al, 2011). These standards regulated the requirements for quality assurance systems. Their main advantage: universality and principle applicability to all types of activities without exception. ISO 9000 Series International Standards (ISO MS) describe an effective quality management system in which all processes and actions are monitored and documented. The basis of quality management, in accordance with MS ISO 9000 series, is based on eight principles: customer orientation; leadership role of management; employee involvement; process approach; systematic approach to management; continuous improvement; a fact-based approach to decision-making; mutually beneficial relationships with suppliers.

Thus, Kazakhstan's system of quality assurance of higher education is characterized as a multi-subject system that ensures interaction at the state, university and international levels (Table 2).

Discussions

The analysis of the concept of «quality assurance of education» allows us to draw the following conclusions.

1. «Quality assurance of education» is a complex, diverse and rapidly evolving concept characterized by a variety of approaches in concepts and terms.

2. The main areas of quality assurance are quality assurance objectives, process control, areas covered, procedures and the use of results. These areas form the basis of management approaches and consist in guiding, organizing and regulating the impact on the quality of education.

3. Management of higher education includes:

- state regulation, referring to the original concept of regulation management through directives through the government. It measures the detail and rigidity of government leadership;

- stakeholder leadership measuring the impact of stakeholders not through directives, but through setting goals and recommendations. Stakeholders are important social actors who have a strong interest in higher education, such as industry, trade unions, or the government itself;

- academic self-government concerning the role of academic specialists at the university. Their influence is ensured by collegial decision-making and self-management of academic communities based on expert assessment;

- managerial self-management, including the degree and development of the internal hierarchy of university management, as well as internal goal setting, regulation and powers of key participants, such as rectors, presidents and deans;

- competition related to the construction of quasi-markets and competition for limited resources (money, personnel and with the help of quality indicators such as ratings, performance ratings, customer satisfaction, etc.) and their impact on the management of universities.

4. The unity of the elements of the education quality assurance system is ensured at the institutional (internal), national and international (external) levels. In this chain of relations, each subsequent link includes the common features of the previous ones and performs certain managerial functions in relation to them: organization of interaction, allocation of resources, formation of standards and norms of activity, transformation and specification of tasks put forward by society.

Conclusions

Together, this relationship represents the result of the functioning of the quality assurance system and its participants. The education quality assurance system is a sphere of interaction between the state, accreditation agencies and higher educational institutions. At the same time, each of the participants has the opportunity to influence the functioning

Table 2 – Kazakhstan Higher Education Quality Assurance System

Level	The main elements of the system
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State compulsory standard of education; - state control over the implementation of legislation; - licensing of educational activities; - monitoring in the higher education system
University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quality management systems of universities (QMS); - self-examination, assurance the functioning of the internal system for assessing the quality of education; - information openness of educational organizations
International	- international accreditation of universities in international organizations and networks.

Note: Made up by authors

and development of the quality assurance system of education and be responsible for creating the conditions necessary for the quality assurance system of education to perform its functions.

Quality assurance of education is crucial for the development of higher education in the Republic of

Kazakhstan. On the one hand, this is dictated by the need to accept the challenges of global changes in the requirements for training specialists. On the other hand, the program of reforming the Kazakh higher education system stimulates the transition to a new quality assurance policy.

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«Білім беру сапасын қамтамасыз ету» ұғымына әдіснамалық тәсілдер

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²Қазақстан Республикасы Ғылым және жоғары білім министрлігі Жоғары және жоғары оқу орнынан кейінгі білім комитетінің Білім алушылардың мемлекеттік тапсырысын және контингентін қалыптастыру басқармасы, Қазақстан, Астана, Мәңгілік Ел даңғылы, 8,

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Аңдатпа. Мақаланың мақсаты: Білім беру сапасын қамтамасыз ету ұғымының мәні және осы анықтаманың іске және практикалық жүзеге асыру.

Стратегиялық және бағдарламалық құжаттарды салыстырмалық бағалау жүргізілді. Білім беру сапасын қамтамасыз ету ұғымы Болон процесінің параметрлері қабылданғаннан кейін Еуропалық жоғары білім беру сапасын қамтамасыз ету желісінің (ENQA) стандарттары мен нұсқаулықтарынан қазақстандық жоғары білім терминологиясына енгізілді. Тұжырымдаманың мәнін талдау кезінде оның сипаттамаларына ерекше назар аударылды. Біріншіден, менеджмент тұрғысынан, екіншіден, білім беру сапасын арттыру жүйесі ретінде.

Бұл ұғым басқару ретінде білім беру сапасына бағыттаушы, ұйымдастырушы және реттеуші әсер етеді. Білім беру сапасын қамтамасыз ету ұғымы жүйе ретінде институционалдық (ішкі), ұлттық және халықаралық (сыртқы) деңгейлерде қамтамасыз етілетін өзара байланысты және өзара іс-қимыл жасайтын элементтердің жиынтығын білдіреді.

Кілт сөздер: білім беру сапасын қамтамасыз ету, ұғым, жоғары білім, әдіснамалық тәсілдер, білім беру сапасын басқару.

Методологические подходы к понятию «обеспечение качества образования»

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Аннотация. Цель: Анализ сущности понятия «обеспечение качества образования» и его методологических подходов к существованию и практическому воплощению данной дефиниции.

Методы: Методы анализа и синтеза, сравнительная оценка стратегических и нормативных документов.

Результаты: Понятие «обеспечение качества образования» вошло в терминологию высшего образования из стандартов и директив Европейской сети обеспечения качества высшего образования (ENQA) после принятия отечественной системы высшего образования параметров Болонского процесса. Особое внимание уделяется характеристике данного концепта, во-первых, с позиции управления, во-вторых, как системы повышения качества образования.

Выводы: Обеспечение качества образования как управление заключается в направляющем, организующем и регулирующем воздействии на качество образования. Обеспечение качества образования как система представляет собой совокупность связанных между собой и взаимодействующих элементов, которые обеспечиваются на институциональном (внутреннем), национальном и международном (внешнем) уровнях.

Ключевые слова: обеспечение качества образования, высшее образование, методологические подходы, управление качеством в образовании.

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