

Opportunities to Ensure Competitiveness Through the Improvement of Higher Education Institutions Quality

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Keywords: Education, Higher Education, Quality of Education, Educational System, Competitiveness, Labor Market, Financial Resources, Innovation, Organizational Economic Mechanism.

Abstract: The present paper examined the status of the tertiary education system in Uzbekistan, drawing on an analysis of developed countries' strategies for enhancing the quality of education and maintaining higher education institutions' competitiveness. Proposed were organizational and economic strategies aimed at boosting the quality of education and the competitiveness of universities.

1 INTRODUCTION

Institutions of higher education (HEI) are operating under intense competition to strengthen and expand their position in the world education market, and the education system is rapidly developing, and competition in the global education market is increasing today. HEIs strive to increase competitiveness by developing their scientific and pedagogical potential, quality of education, and international cooperation. In this article, we analyze the possibilities of improving the competitiveness of HEIs and make suggestions based on the quality of education, educational services, science, and innovation, as well as rating indicators.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

During this research, we reviewed the main literature covering topics related to improving the competitiveness of HEIs, quality of education, educational services, science and innovation, as well as rating indicators. D.G. Bajutkin.

Core formation and development of the higher education market: theory and methodology, V.S. Bazhenova, the issues of continuous education in the context of changes in the economic system, A.N. Boeva, ways to evaluate and increase the effectiveness of the educational activities of state higher education institutions and the competitiveness of higher education programs E.N.Letiagina,

J.A.Grinevich, A.V.Gutko , problems of educational services marketing, G.N.Akhunova, D.Kh.Nabiev, problems of increasing the efficiency of training management of highly qualified personnel, A.Ochilov who covered in detail in their scientific works.

In particular, the article "High Participation Systems of Higher Education" by S. Marginson, a foreign researcher, analyses the intercontinental development and competitiveness of tertiary education systems. The author discusses the necessary strategies of increasing the place and competitiveness of the globe's tertiary education institutions.

J. Hemsley-Brown, I. Oplatka in the scientific article on the topic "University ranking systems for marketing and management decision making" considered the role of university ranking systems in marketing and management decision making. The authors analyse strategies for improving ranking indicators and their impact on the competitiveness of higher education institutions.

Author D. Bock's "Higher education in America" analyses the country's higher education system and highlights the value of research, creativity, and high-quality instruction. It provides strategies for enhancing educational offerings and enhancing the social function of universities.

"From National Systems and 'Mode 2' to a Triple Helix of university-industry-government relations: the dynamics of innovation" by H. Etzkowitz, L. Leydesdorff. The authors use the triple helix model to examine the dynamics of innovation across academia,

business, and government. They will talk about how to further research and develop initiatives, and boost their economic impact.

It was studied how to make higher education institutions more competitive, but not how to train highly qualified personnel or how to assess the efficacy of educational activities. Instead, theoretical issues like the nature, content, and development characteristics of the market of educational services were examined.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

We used methods of qualitative and quantitative research methods, questionnaires and interviews, SWOT and PESTLE analysis, etc. in the research.

4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Ensuring the competitiveness of the higher education system in global practice is based on specific attributes and development models of education quality improvement.

Evaluation of intramural HEIs, with an emphasis on efficient extramural HEI evaluation through state and public institutions, serves as the foundation for the French model. In addition to Germany and most of the Scandinavian nations, France was the country that introduced the "English (Anglo-Saxon)" model. The model states that HEIs' internal self-evaluation is very important and that the standard of expert evaluations of their exterior social and professional education is also considered. This is a prevalent scenario in the majority of industrialized and emerging countries, including Taiwan, the Philippines, Great Britain, the USA, Ireland, and Latin American countries.

The principles of the "continental" model of managing educational institutions build ground for the "French model" of higher education quality assurance systems:

- By the authorities towards the country of tertiary education.
- The development regulations governing tertiary education are consolidated under the Ministry of Education, a governmental administrative body.
- Independence of HEIs in terms of finance and academics.
- Government's property becoming dominant in education.

In this case, education quality improvement is implemented by the competent state bodies and financed by the government. Systems of quality improvement in HEIs are controlled by the state. They are licensed, accredited, and certified by the state, compared within different HEIs indicators, and financed.

"England (Anglo-Saxon) model is organized on the basis of the principles of the "Atlantic" model in house:

- Independence of the country of higher education (development of universities).
- A liberal approach to strategy.
- Higher education institutions have great autonomy, including rational financial and intellectual independence of each university.
- The service of the higher education system is paid.
- The share of non-state property in the education system is high."

Based on the accreditation of HEIs and educational programs, the "American model" of enhancing quality in the tertiary education system is seen as a successful fusion of the "French" and "English" models. In the modern era, American universities have established a self-evaluation system, and HEIs now have solid authority over the country's higher education system. The accreditation of universities is carried out by the association of regional universities and colleges. Within these associations, specialized commissions of the postsecondary education system work and grant regional HEI certification. The intricate group management structure that accredits higher education institutions in the United States ensures that their responsibilities to the public are consistent while upholding the right to academic freedom. based on the United States' self-control system

Tasks completed in Austria are coordinated with the Ministry of Education and the university's administration. Based on research of the demand for professionals in the market of higher education services in the fields important for the country's socioeconomic growth, the Ministry of Higher Education of Austria orders and pays the training of specialists in these areas at the universities. In Austria, universities organize and are responsible for the development of the necessary training programs that cover the innovation achievements necessary for the training of highly qualified specialists based on market demands.

The following are core concepts of higher education system quality: freedom to participate and the preservation of national identity, as well as the

convergence of national tertiary education systems. Its essential guidelines are established in the Bologna Declaration, which was ratified by 29 European countries in 1999. The goal of this strategy is to gain entry to the European school system and improve its international reputation and competitiveness.

The "Bologna Process Model" is based on the following principles:

- Centralized control of HEIs' academic and research activities, leading to increased independence and responsibility.
- Educational institutions and higher education evaluation organizations independent from the structure of state education supervision.
- Convenient parameters for assessing the quality of higher education.
- Full participation of HEIs in evaluation.
- After following this approach, the self-assessment report should be compared to the external auditor's expert view.

In our opinion, higher educational institutions operating in the market of educational services of our country should be strengthened in all aspects with international HEIs.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has focused on significant reforms in research and education. On October 8, 2019, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan issued Decree No. PF-5847 "On approval of the concept of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan's higher education system until 2030". This concept envisages such strategic directions as "developing public-private partnership in the field of higher education, increasing the level of higher education coverage by 50 percent based on the organization of activities of state and non-state higher education institutions in the regions, and creating a

healthy competitive environment in the field." Ensuring stable economic growth in the new Uzbekistan, as one of the strategic directions, the formation of a new continuous education system was defined as one of the priority tasks.

As a result of major changes adopted in our nation to ensure the long-term development and competitiveness of the higher education system, the number of HEIs has increased significantly in recent years.

Uzbekistan now has 154 higher education institutions, a 2.2-fold increase over the previous years. In the studied years, the number of students studying in HEIs increased from 268.3 thousand in the 2016/2017 academic year to 808.0 thousand in the 2021/2022 academic year, in proportion to the number of HEIs. Higher education is not only considered a social necessity, but also shapes the supply of specialists at the national and regional levels. At the next stage of the analysis, we carried out the distribution of OTM by regions.

The number of regional tertiary education institutions in Uzbekistan was merely 70 in the 2016/2017 academic year, and this figure increased to 154 in the 2021/2022 academic year. As can be seen from the table, the number of HEIs has increased several times in almost all regions except Navoi and Namangan. In the city of Tashkent - from 39 to 67, in Samarkand region - from 6 to 14, in Fergana region - from 3 to 11. Such a situation can be evaluated positively.

Table 1: Number of higher education institutions operating in Uzbekistan (per academic year, unit).

Indicators	Years						Growth in 2016-2022, times
	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	
Number of higher education institutions, unit	70	72	98	119	127	154	2.2 times
Including branches of foreign higher education organizations	7	7	9	18	20	25	3.8 times
They have a thousand students	268.3	297.7	360.2	441.0	571.5	808.0	3.0 times

Table 2: Number of higher education institutions by region in the Republic of Uzbekistan (per academic year, unit).

The name of the areas	Years						2016-20 22 y.y. increase, times
	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	
Republic of Karakalpakstan	2	2	6	9	9	10	5.0 times
<i>regions:</i>							
Andijan	4	4	4	5	6	8	2.0 times
Bukhara	3	4	5	5	5	6	2.0 times
Jizzakh	2	2	2	3	3	4	2.0 times
Kashkadarya	2	2	3	6	6	6	3.0 times
Navoi	2	2	2	2	2	2	100.0
Namangan	3	3	3	3	3	3	100.0
Samarkand	6	6	8	11	12	14	2.3 times
Surkhandarya	1	1	7	7	7	7	7.0 times
Syr Darya	1	1	1	2	2	2	2.0 times
Tashkent	1	2	5	5	8	8	8.0 times
Ferghana	3	3	7	10	10	11	3.7 times
Khorezm	1	1	3	3	3	6	6.0 times
Tashkent s.	39	39	42	48	51	67	172.0
by republic	70	72	98	119	127	154	2.2 times

Currently, the main tasks of HEIs are the development of innovative activities, the determination of the future demand for specialists, the development of effective integration processes between education and business, the expansion of external sources of financing of scientific research and experimental constructional developments in HEIs, and the widespread use of modern methods of cooperation with foreign HEIs.

While innovative development of the economy is witnessed, one of the issues is to achieve a balance of supply and demand for qualified specialists for modern economic sectors. All these are management (structure and management, scale and number of educational organizations), cognitive (knowledge, thinking, professional knowledge and skills), methodological (organization of the educational process based on modern educational technologies and tools), values (the content of the educational process, the role of HEIs and revising its activities at the international, national, regional levels) requires a serious transformation.

Currently, as a result of the commercialization of higher education services, the higher education

system is emerging as part of the market. Financial instruments have an important place in higher education institutions, and a correct and smooth transition from resource management to results management, that is, from "control at entry" to "control at graduation" of students in higher education institutions is taking place. The representation of higher education services as an economic resource that supplies qualified personnel to the market of specialists, the introduction of economic factors, methods and effective mechanisms into the educational system strengthens the integration of the labor market of specialists and the market of educational services.

In recent years, the number of specialists graduating from higher education institutions in our republic has a trend of regular growth. In 2017, the number of graduates was 64,100, and in 2021, it was 103,900. The number of graduates of higher education institutions increased by 1.6 percent in the analysed years at the national level (Table 3).

Graduate employment is a significant indicator of a higher education institution's competitiveness in the job market. As a natural continuation of Table 3, we

examined the level of competitiveness of graduates-bachelors from higher education institutions on a republic scale (Table 4).

Table 4 shows the percentage of graduates of tertiary education institutions who have employment, and their competitiveness levels within the national level has peaked in the academic year 2017/2018 (85.3%).

Also, in the following years, the level of competitiveness of graduates and bachelors had a relatively decreasing trend. A systematic increase in the number of students in HEIs and the mismatch between the demand and supply of highly educated specialists in the labor market is considered as the main reason for the above-mentioned pattern.

Table 3: The number of specialists who graduated from higher educational institutions in the Republic of Uzbekistan by region, thousand people.

Name of regions (provinces)	Years						2016 - 2022 growth, %
	2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	
Republic of Karakalpakstan	3.9	4.3	4.5	4.3	5.5	6.5	1.7
<i>regions:</i>							
Andijan	4.0	4.2	4.8	4.3	4.6	6.4	1.6
Bukhara	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.8	4.8	6.2	1.8
Jizzakh	2.3	2.7	2.9	2.9	3.9	3.6	1.6
Kashkadarya	3.1	3.6	3.8	3.9	5.2	5.9	1.9
Navoi	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.9	1.9
Namangan	2.7	2.9	3.0	3.2	4.1	5.5	2.0
Samarkand	6.0	6.4	6.9	6.8	7.2	8.5	1.4
Syr Darya	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.6	2.2	2.2
Surkhandarya	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.1	3.3	3.6	2.1
Tashkent	1.8	1.7	2.7	2.8	4.1	3.7	2.1
Ferghana	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.8	5.8	9.3	2.0
Khorezm	2.0	2.2	2.2	2.4	3.2	4.2	2.1
Tashkent s.	25.5	26.1	26.1	26.1	27.5	34.4	1.3
by republic	64.1	67.4	70.3	70.8	83.9	103.9	1.6

Table 4: The level of competitiveness of graduates and bachelors of higher education institutions by region (%).

Name of regions (provinces).	Years					
	2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	2020/ 2021
Republic of Karakalpakstan	75.8	78.4	82.4	83.0	74.8	74.3
<i>regions:</i>						
Andijan	86.8	84.6	86.4	84.5	91.4	90.7
Bukhara	88.1	86.4	77.9	90.8	74.1	74.0
Jizzakh	96.9	91.2	98.6	90.4	74.0	74.5
Kashkadarya	89.9	89.5	86.2	79.2	85.5	86.5
Navoi	77.6	81.0	80.5	72.3	73.3	73.8
Namangan	70.0	74.5	84.8	83.6	90.4	90.2
Samarkand	85.1	85.5	90.5	83.4	88.7	88.4
Surkhandarya	88.9	87.1	94.8	96.4	88.9	88.1
Syr Darya	90.6	82.5	85.5	84.2	85.8	85.3
Tashkent	88.9	81.0	91.4	88.4	84.2	83.9
Ferghana	70.7	78.6	81.5	60.5	48.9	48.3
Khorezm	86.3	82.6	75.4	79.1	86.9	86.5
Tashkent s.	81.8	82.8	84.6	81.1	85.4	85.4
by republic	82.5	83.0	85.3	81.6	81.6	81.4

The educational policy of higher education institutions that have chosen the path of innovative development is to solve the issue of modernizing education, making it maximally compatible with the requirements of the new "knowledge" economy. Based on the distribution of students by academic fields at higher education institutions in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the following percentages apply: 46.9

percent are in the humanitarian sector; 1.1 percent are in the social sector; 13.0 percent are in economics; 1.0 percent are in law; 22.3% are in development, production, and technical sector; 4.8% are in agriculture and water industry; 6.0% are in health care; 0.3% are in social security; and 4.6% are in the service sector.

Table 5: Distribution of students of higher education institutions in Uzbekistan by educational fields (per academic year, thousand people).

Indicators	Years					2016-2022 growth, %	
	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021		2021/2022
Humanitarian field	108.4	124.0	166.7	213.1	268.6	379.4	3.5 times
Social sphere	2.5	2.5	3.2	3.8	5.2	8.6	3.4 times
Economy	23.6	24.1	25.4	36.0	60.3	105.2	4.5 times
Right	2.7	3.1	3.9	4.3	5.8	8.4	3.1 times
Production and technical field	78.8	87.7	97.8	108.5	134.2	180.4	2.3 times
Agriculture and water management	21.0	23.9	24.4	26.6	30.7	38.5	18 3.3
Health care	19.6	20.0	23.8	28.6	39	48.3	2.5 times
Social security	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	1.2	2.2	4.4 times
Services sector	11.2	11.9	14.4	19.0	26.2	37.1	3.3 times
Total	268.3	297.7	360.2	440.9	571.5	808.4	3.0 times

If we pay attention to the growth trend of the data presented in Table 5 for the years under analysis, the highest growth dynamics are in the economy (4.5 times), social security (4.4 times), the humanitarian sector (3.5 times) and the social sector (3.4 times), the education sector with the lowest growth was observed in agriculture and water management. It was demonstrated, supported by the above-mentioned analytical facts, that raising the standard of instruction in higher education institutions is now objectively necessary to maintain competitiveness. Because of this, we think that improving the quality of education greatly depends on HEIs' ability to effectively organize and operate the following organizational and economic mechanisms. The higher education system is covered by these organizational-economic processes, which when put into practice offer the chance to improve education quality and make HEIs more competitive by producing workforce that satisfies labour market demands. It is especially important to analyse the present and future needs of the labour market to periodically update higher education programs in response to business requests. To increase internship programs for students and internship opportunities for

professors and teachers, it is imperative to actively involve companies in this process and work in partnership with them.

In order to create more opportunities for students to gain practical experience in their fields, higher education institutions should create "practice laboratories" for students, as well as establish practice bases that will improve students' practical skills in cooperation with educational institutions and employers.

In order to modernize the educational content, it is necessary to enrich the educational programs with modern knowledge and technologies, and at the same time bring the educational content to the level of international standards. Due to this, it will be appropriate to expand cooperation and exchange of experience with foreign educational institutions.

The qualifications of teachers in "modern innovative pedagogical technologies" must be improved. They must also be given opportunities for ongoing professional development, encouraged to incorporate modern pedagogical technologies into the classroom, and given access to contemporary educational resources and literature. In addition, there has been a greater integration of contemporary

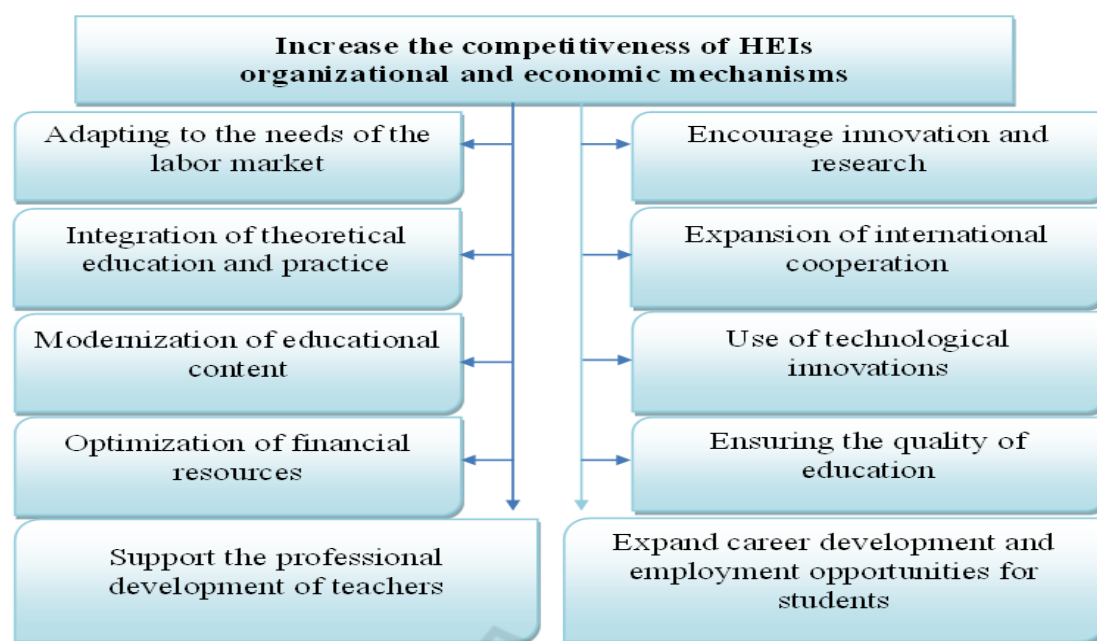


Figure 1: Organizational and economic mechanisms of increasing the competitiveness of HEIs and enhancing the quality of education in them.

technologies like virtual tools and platforms for remote learning into the educational process. The instructional process will become more effective and efficient as a result.

Higher education institutions should make sure that they participate in international research projects and arrange for teacher and student exchanges through international cooperation programs. This enhances the standard of instruction and enhances the standing of educational establishments globally.

Establish and expand career centres for students, providing them with advice and guidance on employment and career development. Also, strengthening of cooperation with employers on employment of graduates, diversification of sources of funding for grants, scholarships and scientific research projects is of great importance to work on the requirements and ensure the stability of the quality of education.

5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it should be highlighted that maintaining competition in postsecondary educational institutions ensures a high concentration of innovative, material, and technological potential, which raises the quality of educational services.

The subject of the fundamental reformation of the local education system is receiving the most

attention from the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sh. M. Mirziyoev. The rise in the proportion of young people with higher education from 9% in 2016 to 25% in 2025 explains the first effect in this regard. This indication will eventually be raised by 50–60%. Going forward, these figures will rise even further, as a result of the creation of pertinent terrain. After establishing competitiveness, graduates of higher education institutions must become more competitive, according to a summary of the socioeconomic variables mentioned above.

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