

Tendencies of State Management of the Russian Higher Education in the XXI'st

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Abstract— The article presents a survey of the major management models of higher education institutions in Russia. Integration of the Russian Federation into the European Common Education Space is of controversial nature since unconsidered adoption of international practices has never been a success. Con-sideration must be given to national specifics and traditions, historical experience of social, economic and political development of the country which is different from other countries' experience. Integration for the sake of integration can have rather deplorable results. It is important to understand the fact that an integrative process can be properly carried out only providing there is a relative equality in the levels of social advancement.

Keywords— *higher education, university, management, reforming, development trends.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is currently one of the priorities of social and economic development of the country. Modern social processes lay down the rule regarding higher education improvement. The primary purpose of higher education should be to ensure the development of the individual.

The adopted Strategic Vision of Long-Term Social and Economic Development of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2020 states that higher education nowadays is one of the prerequisites for modern knowledge-based economy, the basis for vibrant economic growth and social modernization, one of the factors for the society's well-being and national security [1]. Improvement of the national education system should take place with regard to social requirements, project methods implementation, competitive spotting and supporting of leaders who can successfully implement new approaches for managing higher education and making interdisciplinary decisions.

The higher education issues are continually touched upon in mass media. Moreover, opinion research centers constantly take regular opinion polls to identify vital issues related to people's education needs, status and quality of higher education in Russia.

1.1 TOPICALITY AND SCIENTIFIC MERIT OF THE ISSUE WITH A BRIEF REFERENCE REVIEW

Long-running over the years, higher education reforming in Russia reflects the complicated socioeconomic status of the Russian society today. The need in reviving the value of education and students' motivation to acquire knowledge and skills, bringing back core functions to teachers and professors, enhancing the role an educational institution plays in upbringing, shaping a community-focused and creative personality is what determined the search for new forms and methods of higher educational institution management.

The reference review allows us to claim that the issue of management efficiency in the system of higher education has been paid considerable attention.

The matter of higher education reforming in Russia and university management methodology today is addressed in research papers done by A.A. Panova [2], V.V. Repina [3], S.V. Arzhenovskij [4], A.O. Grudzinskij [5] and others.

The article by sociologist E.P. Tavokin presents a thorough and critical review of the current state of Russian education [6]. Philosophers V.I. Parshikov, N.V. Nalivajko and B.O. Majer from Novosibirsk published several articles devoted to tendencies in Russian education development in the context of contemporary global problems [7].

It should be noted that foreign researchers also address the issues related to management efficiency in education, and in the system of higher education, in particular (e.g., J.D. Millett, P. Goodman, H.M. Stroup, M. Drăgan, D. Ivana and R. Arba, G. Srikanthan and J.F. Dalrymple) [8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13].

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The aim of this article is to identify the major tendencies in higher institution management in Russia based on university management models analysis and public opinion research.

Methods employed to fulfill the task set in this article are reviewing and analysis of references related to higher education management and empirical data based on the results of social research. At the first stage, there was used the method of involved observation, which allowed the authors to obtain primary information on the status of higher education management. The authors, being professors of higher educational institutions themselves, are directly involved both

in the educational process and in internal and external auditing of higher education quality.

2. THEORETICAL PART

According to both public opinion research and contemporary scientific social research on education issues, it is noted with increasing frequency that during the Soviet era the sphere of higher education was characterized by steady high achievements. As a rule, school leavers who graduated school with honours and entered a university by passing serious entrance tests would continue to develop their abilities and skills under the guidance of highly professional professors and instructors. Russian professionals were appreciated abroad. The existing then system provided high moral responsibility and pecuniary liability of the academic community for the quality of education [14]. Paying tribute to the Soviet system of higher education, some researchers nostalgically note that “the Soviet system of education was based on rich national cultural and learning traditions and was aimed at shaping a well-educated, scientifically knowledgeable, many-sided, hardworking person, who possesses a high sense of citizenship and moral responsibility, a sense of duty and love for the Motherland... Graduates of those Russian schools and universities that preserved major traditions of the Soviet educational system were highly appreciated in the West until recently” [6].

It is believed that traditional management methods, which are used in most universities in Russia, prove themselves to be good under conditions of a limited market and weak industry competition. Their key features are stability and consistency. It cannot be ignored that the Soviet academic learning was one of the best in the world, and many of its core principles used in the university management system nowadays still work. The existing management systems are characterized, among other characteristics, by collective leadership, a scientific character and high level of competence. At the same time, with rapidly changing environment, fierce competition and highly intensive economic and social processes, traditional management methods cannot keep up with changes, and become an obstacle to innovation implementation [15]. There is taking place wide learning commercialization of educational institutions, and in the current competitive world universities are eager to carry out any kind of orders, including one-time and non-typical ones. Researchers rightfully suggest that “the economic crisis, systemic changes and underdeveloped labor market force the higher education system to function under risk and uncertainty” [4].

Moreover, the processes concerning Russia’s integration into the common education space have a rather mixed impact on the university management character and quality of education. Unconsidered adoption of international practices has never been a success. Consideration must be given to national specifics and traditions, historical experience of social, economic and political development of the country which is different from other countries’ experience. Integration for the sake of integration can have rather deplorable results. It is important to understand the fact that an

integrative process can be properly carried out only providing there is a relative equality in the levels of social advancement, including equality in economy, politics, etc. While social systems remain fundamentally different, and the levels of social advancement are different on a deeper scale, too, one cannot count on significant and positive results of the integration process.

Against this background, it is highly required to study different approaches to university management mechanisms and successful innovative implementation in the educational management, to specify fundamental principles for reforming the higher education system that will not compromise democratic and moral values. These principles, in their turn, will be based on historical achievements of the national higher education.

The social science studies are not the only ones that take interest in the higher education controlling mechanism. For instance, the Spanish economist J. Mora started analyzing typical trends in this sphere as far back as 2000s in a number of European countries and came to the conclusion that the research attention paid to the higher education controlling mechanism was contingent on the changing nature of relationship between the state and universities [16]. Evidently, this factor is of significant importance regarding the study of forms and methods of controlling mechanism of Russian universities at present. Establishing market relations in Russia made a serious impact on the condition and prospects of the national higher education.

As of today, there are various approaches to university controlling mechanism building. For instance, A.A. Panova points out that there can be singled out four major models of university controlling mechanisms in the literature, such as: top-down structure, collective leadership, anarchistic and political models [2], among many. Characteristics of these models can be found in the works of foreign supporters of this classification. For example, a collective leadership model is described by J.D. Millett and P. Goodman [8, 9]; a top-down structure by H.M. Stroup and W.R. Scott [10, 17]; a political (coalition) model by J.V. Baldrige [18]; an anarchistic organization model by M.D. Cohen, J.G. March and P.A. Olsen [19].

These models do not exist in their pure forms and, and, as a rule, higher education institutions implement mixed models.

Besides traditional management models, the following approaches to university controlling mechanisms are considered as innovative ones by many researchers: project-oriented, process-related, system-related and strategic approaches.

The founder of the project-oriented approach is A.O. Grudzinsky. He claims that the main issue of the university management system is creating a social controlling mechanism that would promote universities’ adjustment to modern conditions of the information-oriented society. This mechanism is based on the project-oriented concept of university management [5]. Several foreign researchers share this approach as well, making emphasis on the fact that it

helps shaping certain students' skills and meets expectations of both graduates and employers [11].

F. Taylor, H. Fayol and G. Emerson are considered to be the founders of the *process-related approach* [20, 21]. In Russia, this approach to university management got widespread in the context of implementation of the quality management system. The application of this approach is based on the international standards of the ISO series. It regards the controlling mechanism of a higher educational institution as the management of a series of continuous interrelated processes [3]. Many opponents of this approach believe that the quality management system strategy does not suit the higher education system. Some researchers emphasize the importance of the total quality management model (TQM) for service-providing activities within higher education institutions, but these models are not suitable for so-called "academic activities" [12, 13]. Universities should quit these industrial approaches and develop a more holistic model which will better match the academic objectives in their management. Modern approaches look more like "managerialism" as a result of misunderstanding the differences between the education and production spheres [22].

The *system-related approach* was developed in the middle of the 20th century by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, who was also a creator of the general system theory [23]. In the system-related approach, a university is viewed as an open system which consists of interrelated elements including people, tasks, resources, structure, technologies, etc., is responsive to changing conditions of the environment and can interact with it. The system-related approach takes into account the differences in the socio-cultural characteristics of people who work in the university, as well as the cultural traditions of the society. That is why a university as an open system seamlessly blends in the external environment and is considered to be its subsystem.

One more approach to university controlling mechanism is a *strategic* one. Russian universities realize that they need strategic management as the most important element to support their activities. This approach to management determines the university activities at the present moment to obtain the desired results in the future. "The concept of strategic management is an attempt to answer the question about managing mechanisms in the context of the conditions that are not transparent, can vary and depend on many factors, such as other people's actions who make independent decisions and strive for their own goals" [24]. Strategic management helps higher education institutions to survive on a long-term horizon in the highly competitive environment. Both Russian and foreign researchers support the strategic approach, among the latter are colleagues from South-East Asia, who emphasize the importance of strategic planning as an effective tool in university management [25].

2.1 RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The Levada Center in Russia publishes its annual reports on the polls conducted. It always includes the parameter of how much Russian people are satisfied with the national education system as an important criterion for identifying the level of social advancement in Russia. The report of 2017 states that the level of satisfaction with the current Russian education system decreased significantly from 2009 till 2016 [26]. The question "How much did the quality of Russian education system change over the last year?", those surveyed answered as follows: answers "Significantly improved" and "Somewhat improved" got 10% both in 2009 and 2016; the answer "Somewhat worsened" got 20% in 2009 and 24% in 2016; the answer "Significantly worsened" got 9% and 16% in 2009 and 2016 respectively. Such results tend to signify a negative assessment of changes in the education system in Russia. The question "Can you, your children, or grandchildren get good education at the present moment?" got 43% for the answers "Definitely yes" or "Rather yes" in 2008 of those surveyed; in 2016 the same answers gave 33% of the respondents. The same question got the answers "Rather no" and "Definitely no" with 53% of respondents in 2008, and 59% in 2016.

The Levada Center report of 2016 presents the results of the answers to the question "Are you satisfied with the current system of education in Russia?" [27]. 2% of those surveyed answered "Definitely yes", 18% answered "Yes", 29% answered "Neither yes nor no", 27% answered "Rather no", 18% answered "Definitely no" and 7% answered "Difficult to answer" that year. Such data, in our opinion, suggest that the Russian education system reform is not supported by the citizens of the country.

2.2 CONCLUSION

The integrative process bringing Russian higher education into unifying levels, forms and content of education akin to the European ones advances requests for new university management mechanisms. We share our Novosibirsk colleagues' opinion that globalization processes which determine integration of Russian education into the common educational space are very controversial because globalization as a process of development includes both integrative and disintegrative components [7]. The key trend of globalization is the world community integration into a singular entity, which, at the same time, triggers cultural and national disintegration on a local level (i.e. segregation and disappearance) that can have a devastating effect on a person, up to a complete loss of identity within their own culture.

This does not mean "hiding" behind home issues and not implementing successful practices used internationally. However, the "cut-and-paste job" concerning somebody else's experience and neglecting national traditions and achievements in order to be accepted in a certain "global club" obviously cannot provide the Russian higher education system with a true opportunity to become a powerful resource for further development of the Russian society.

From this perspective, it is necessary to define the key principles of project-oriented management following which will promote efficacy and further development of higher education in Russia. They are as follows:

- it should be both the requirement and result of a university management approach to maintain sustained order and quality at the institution;
- it is crucial for education management and leadership to revive and use in-house expertise, experience, traditions and resources with an allowance for foreign good practices;
- there should be a reasonable ratio between the amount of the government involvement in controlling mechanisms of the higher education system and a university autonomy. The determining factor in this relationship, in the context of education reforming, should be the equitable will of the entity (the president of the university, a professor, a student) as true participants of educational activities;
- integration processes should not be inevitable and with a disastrous impact on universities. On the contrary, universities should see the need in such processes and implement them taking into account real-world conditions and opportunities.

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