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SOCIOLOGY & HEALTHCARE, EDUCATION  
VOLUME III



EDUCATION & EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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**Secretariat Bureau**

E-mails: [sgem@sgemsocial.org](mailto:sgem@sgemsocial.org)

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## **GRADUATE TRAINING FOR PROFESSIONAL ADVANCEMENT: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE NATIONAL VOCATIONAL TRAINING SYSTEM**

**Prof. Abdikerova G.O.**

**Prof. Sadyrova M.S.**

**PhD student Omarova A.T.**

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, **Kazakhstan**

### **ABSTRACT**

In modern conditions due to the actualization of competence-based model of learning in the higher educational system of Kazakhstan the attention to the formation of competitiveness of graduates in labor market is increasing. The competitiveness of a modern graduate at work depends on many factors: economic, political, cultural and personal. But the level of education of a graduate plays a significant role.

A qualified specialist training of a new level is impossible without the integration of education, science and industry. According to the results of the interview the potential employers complaint a lot about the level of training of young specialists, graduates of Kazakhstani higher education institutions. The graduates of higher education institutions face typical problems; they are lack of involvement of the obtained knowledge with practice, high self-esteem, psychological unpreparedness to the realities of practice, lack of communication skills, passivity, low sense of purpose, social mobility and etc.

Despite the employers' requirements to specialists of particular profile, Kazakhstani higher education institutions are still focused primarily on the educational needs of the population. To study the current and future labor market needs and to organize vocational students training in accordance with this requirement should characterize the activity of higher education institutions in modern conditions.

The analysis of the integration ability of European higher education institutions showed that the important features of foreign higher technical schools are: cooperation with industry and a close relationship of learning with scientific-research activities; provision of technical higher education institutions with diversified sources of financing and effective system of fundraising; involvement of the teaching staff in all stages of project development and its realization; the development of scientific parks, training and industrial centers; development and introduction into effect of more effective encouragement mechanisms of teaching staff engaged in the training of specialists of technical profile.

A high competitive level of specialist training, good material and technical basis, the market requirement to the results of scientific and innovative work, protection of intellectual property contributes to the development of innovative processes in the society.

The use of innovative methods and technologies in the process of training of high school students, identifying the factors underlying in the imbalance of requirement and suggestion of young specialists in the labor market, implementation of training of young specialists through the system of social partnership, evaluation of results and monitoring of the activity of higher education institutions are considered to be important components and ensure of their successful development in the future.

**Keywords:** professional competence, employer, professional mobility, partnerships, adaptation to the market.

## INTRODUCTION

Today, the global trend of social development is to move to a “society of universal labor”. Therefore, the development of incentives for honest work, creating of public encouragement system of labor achievements is one of the basic issues of social modernization in Kazakhstan [1]. Creating a competitive economy in accordance with the new ideology of society development is impossible without the activity of young people who could think creatively and who are professionally trained, ambitious and business oriented. In this regard the priority task of universities is to shape the educated youth, who will become an important factor of progressive social changes. However, the differentiation of young generation according to the social strata in Kazakhstan already starts from school and professional further education, which bad performs a role of civil education under these circumstances.

There are following stages of the development of higher education in the Republic of Kazakhstan: 1 stage from 1991-1999 – the beginning of the formation of higher education new structure (the emergence of private higher education institutions, the establishment of a regulatory, legislative framework); stage 2 from 2000-2004. – Modernization of the higher education system and updating the forms of the education process; stage 3 from 2005-2010 – a gradual transition to a multi-level training system (Bachelor – Master – Doctor PhD) and updating the content of education [2].

With the adoption of the state program of education development from 2011 to 2020, an important stage in reforming of higher education system starts. A new investment policy of Kazakhstan is aimed at a maximum investment to the training system of technical experts. Here the main emphasis made on the establishment of training centers in cooperation with Germany, Canada, Australia and Singapore [3].

The government has set ambitious goals such as the development of competence in the field of smart technology, artificial intelligence, integration of cyber physical systems, energetic future, designing and engineering [3].

### **Integration experience of high education institutions with employers**

To identify the level of successful integration of young specialists in the workplace after graduation from universities, an in-depth interview with Almaty employers was conducted. 10 employers, including 5 from the sphere of education and 5 from the sphere of industry took part in the interview. During the interview important from their point of view general cultural competences for successful integration of graduates in the workplace were defined:

- understanding of the importance of humanistic values for the preservation and development of a modern society;
- ability and readiness to analyze the ideological, personal and public relevant problems;
- respectful and careful attitude to the historical heritage and cultural traditions, tolerant perception of cultural diversity;
- ability to adapt to new situations, to understand social problems;
- ability to social interaction and cooperation in professional activity for the solution of public relevant problems;
- awareness of the basic provisions of professional ethics and the ability to use them at work.

According to the experts the following important criteria include:

- ability to master computer processing techniques and analyze the collected data;

- data analysis skills to make analytical solutions, expert opinion and recommendations.

So, the life in the information society leads to the creation of adaptation strategies of Kazakh youth who understands that quality education, possession of scientific information and competence based learning is the guaranty of success of social and professional activities.

These mentioned factors are believed to be an indicator of successful integration of students into the community, and subsequently an employee into the labor. That allows drawing a conclusion on that the education is not possible without the cultural aspect; in the walls of higher education institutions the followings should be developed: historical cultural heritage learning, as well as the development of intellectual abilities, democratic views and a sense of patriotism. The employers noted that the current young generation is not resistant to psychological problems at work, and this once again proves the need to train university graduates in psychological terms and to build such qualities as self-control and the ability to handle stress. The personal qualities of the graduates, the desire to learn, self-improving, to find a common language with colleagues, to be active, sense of purpose are important for employers along with a professional qualifications. As a result of the interview with employers, we can conclude that in the professional field the concept of social inclusion disappears, young specialists more often do not support business communication with colleagues, partners, does not show communication skills.

The situation of social exclusion creates a sense of detachment from work, restrictions in the field of social mobility, exclusion of different groups of young people from full participation in the labor process. It could be reasoned that nowadays young people don't have a constant place of work, they always look for a new job.

Market society put new tasks for higher education institutions in evaluation of professional mobility of graduates; it requires a completely different system of distribution of young professionals than ever before. For a successful integration of Kazakhstan into the international system of education the foreign experience of performance and encouragement of scientific-research activities must be taken into account.

The research results of Taiwan scientists showed that students and employers have totally different perceptions regarding the identification of an ideal job. Students stress good pay, good benefits, and job prestige more while employers put much more importance on job security, interesting work content, opportunity for promotion, and comfortable working environment. Employers have to take this result seriously if their aim is to attract more elite and qualified students to serve in their industries [4].

In the USA a trend is clearly defined towards wider involvement of private firms in the financing of university researches, the cooperation between universities and industry has been steadily developing. In fact the cooperation starts when firms use university scientists as consultants in conducting their own research. Then an agreement is concluded on performing a cooperative work. In recent years, a number of design institutes are increasing, i.e. independent from university administrations scientific-research organizations where teachers, students and graduate students work. Another promising form of cooperation of higher education institutions with industrial enterprises is to conduct the scientific researches – research and science parks [5]. In the USA with an increase of requests for young and talented employees by employers the number of employment and career development centers in universities has been increased.

In Germany, the emphasis is made on the formation of a hierarchy of universities and do more "reputation management" in order to attract the most talented students and to have the opportunity to conduct scientific researches at a high level [6].

In modern Russia to enhance the competence of graduates, the practice of activity of training centers in universities organized by employers is used. They direct a target order to education institutions to perform a scientific research or project design. In its turn, the university involves students of final year to fulfill an order, who after that, on completion of the work, could become employees of that company [7].

One of the most important outcomes for universities is the quality of their graduates' integration into the job market. There are higher education systems in which students cease to have any relationship with the university once they have graduated and entered the labor market. Given the importance of that outcome, it is especially important for universities or systems to study their graduates' success in the labor market. The better the success of graduates' integration into the labor force, the higher will be the institution's prestige. For this reason, this indicator is an important issue and one of which administrators should be aware. It could be an important quality indicator in a university's strategy to improve quality and to achieve excellence [8].

In modern conditions of Kazakhstan the industrial enterprises, business organizations as employers are ready to cooperate actively with the universities on the issues concerning the organization of students' practice, to provide a guidance while writing the research paper, as well as the issue of company staff development. However, the training of university teachers in the industrial enterprises is still poorly organized. It is some sort of connection between theory and practice. Special courses, seminars and workshops conducted by the forces of industrial workers, huge companies for teachers could be a real practice and useful experience in their professional activities [9].

### **Main problems of graduates appearing in the course of learning: on the basis of a survey**

We have conducted a sociological survey in order to study and identify the main problems of graduates and to draw a social portrait of young specialists. The number of respondents was 92. They were graduates of higher education institutions of Kazakhstan [10].

According to graduates, first of all, the main concern of higher education institutions in modern conditions should be: the formation of professional qualities of future specialists (57), providing graduates with jobs (38). The lowest rate was the response to the following "to develop own image". Graduates do not consider it as a vital priority. Such responses as "encouragement of initiatives" and "adaptation of the education process to the requirements of employers" were chosen by a small number of students. The obtained results are reflected in the figure (Figure 1).

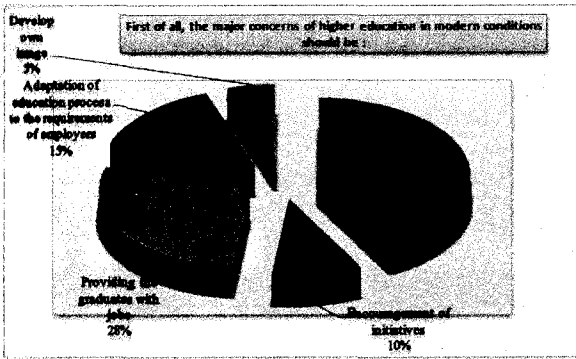


Figure 1 -- Concerns of higher education institutions

To the question "What troubles you most at the moment?" (Figure 2), the most common response (64) both among men (14) and women (50) was the answer "getting a job in the future". It shows that young people worry about their future, in particular about getting a job. The next frequent response was – "to get a quality education", from respondents 46 women and 8 men chose this answer. At present, education is considered to be the main factor and a prerequisite for sustainable economic and social progress. These figures suggest that young people understand that a quality education is the most important value and main capital of modern society. Another frequent response that given by respondents was – "to continue the education". Nowadays such process as the expansion of investment in human capital, investment in the man himself is taking place. These figures indicate that young people, as a generation who starts the life, has a special interest in his/her own future life. The young generation believe in their capabilities, clearly knows what knowledge and skills could be useful for him/her in the future.

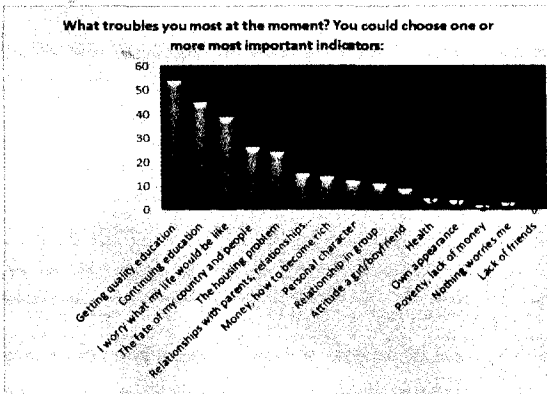


Figure 2 - Social problems that impact on student status



To have a higher education is a sign of social status for many people, and it is interpreted as a compulsive which evidence the results of regular sociological youth survey [11].

1,200 respondents were engaged in the mass survey, where a stratified multistage territorial cluster sampling was used. The young people with higher and secondary special education prevail in a sampling. According to the ethnic background the proportion of Kazakhs, among the questioned respondents were 82.1%, Russians 15%, representatives of other ethnic groups 2.9% [12]. With the quality of education in Kazakhstan are completely satisfied 42.7%, likely to be satisfied 36.3%, not dissatisfied 15% if to add those respondents who found it difficult to answer, this percentage increases to 21%. That is, every fifth young person is dissatisfied with the quality of the education. It is an interesting fact that the sense of satisfaction with career choice is connected with the conditions while entering the university: those who chose a place to study and specialization independently they are most satisfied with their choice. Accordingly, that young people who followed the principle "The main thing is to enter the university" or "parents know what to do best" are less satisfied with the profession, which they are now learning.

It may be noted that the effectiveness of vocational training of young people first depends on the conditions made for their realization. Competitiveness of graduates in the labor market also depends on the economic, institutional, political, cultural, educational and human factors. Here, it is necessary to note the role of the youth policy of the country.

The higher is the level of education of young people, the greater is their interest in the information about the youth policy of the state (Figure 3) [13].

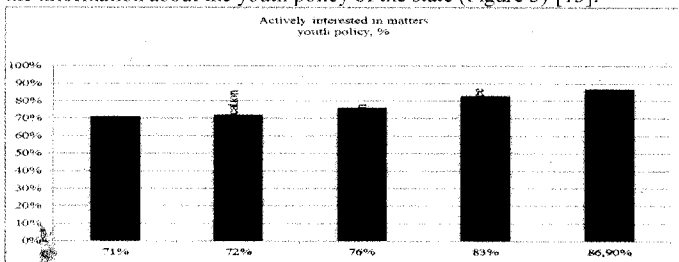


Figure 3. The results of a sociological youth survey (according to the Institute of State and Law of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University)

In general, the data of sociological research about the state of the youth policy for the II quarter of 2015, more than 70.9% of respondents said that the state youth policy had been effectively implementing [13].

The improving the level of education is one of the main stages in the lives of young people, especially in the modern world with its tough competition in a labor market. 455141 young Kazakhstan citizens (Figure 4) are involved in higher and postgraduate education for the end of 2015 [13].

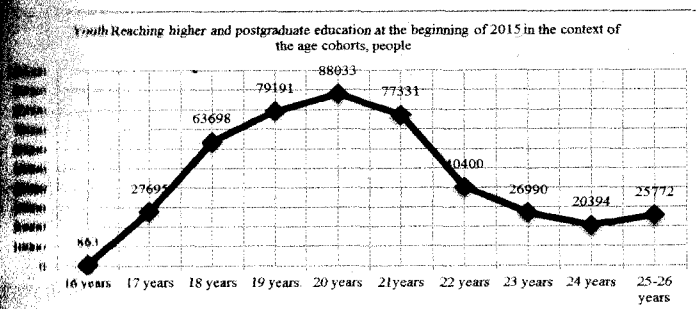


Figure 4. Involvement of young people in higher and postgraduate education for the beginning of 2015 in the context of the age cohorts, people

The structure of the state order for personnel training in 2014-2015 academic year in Kazakhstan was: Baccalaureate – 34165, Master's course - 7220, doctoral PhD - 656 people.

According to the strategic plan of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2014-2018, the analysis of the main problems in the sphere of scientific staff training shows that national and institutional model of higher education institution management does not provide competitive staff training sufficiently and is not harmonized with international practice [14]. The legal form of organization and management system of higher education institutions, including the state limits the effective realization of their potential. The involvement of employers, public organizations and society in ensuring the quality of higher education requires their further improvement. For staff training in accordance with the needs of labor market and the purpose of industrial-innovative development of the country it is necessary to bring into compliance the higher education specialties with the list of professions in the labor market.

## CONCLUSION

Main spheres of society influence directly on the content of the integration processes of higher education institutions and employers. The cooperation of higher education system and employers take into account the changes in society and is aimed at: in the sphere of economy to innovation and intellectual activity, scientific-research activity and professional competence of graduates; in the sphere of policy on the use of democratic methods of interaction of education institutions and businesses; in the social sphere on the maintenance, protection, encouragement and active adaptation of young people to new market conditions; in the spiritual sphere on the use of the positive potential of integration technology, consensus and dialogue as the most important means of communication in a complex modern Kazakhstan society.

Life in terms of market society impacts on the creation of adaptation strategies of Kazakhstan youth, who should realize that getting a quality education, possessing necessary information and professional competence are main thing to become a successful specialist.

Analytical review of the process of integration of education, science and industry of Kazakhstan has shown that it is developing in certain organizational forms, such as national and regional technoparks, research universities, NGOs, consulting firms and

etc. Today the parks play important role in the innovative development of the country, in increasing the integration potential of science and industry.

In the system of higher and postgraduate education the main goal of work will be the achievement of the quality of higher education contributing to the innovative development of the economy and ensuring the competitive staff training.

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