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Research paper

Main Directions of Higher Education Regionalization Process as an Integral Part of Social Partnership in Society (the Problems of Inclusive Education)

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Abstract.

The key problem of current Russian regional economics is a shortage of professionals. The aim of Higher Education Institution of Inclusive Education is to build such a system of social partnership, which would include all structures fascinated in qualified professionals. Education regionalization processes need to be spread to all structures that make up the system of social partnership, so that regional universities' graduates would strive to work in their home region and in order for them to be able to meet professional standards. Authors concluded that standardization would provide an ability to create comprehensive student assessment that will allow businesses to recruit employees that match their requirements better.

Keywords: *higher education institutions, regionalization, regionality, professional education, standardization, inclusive education.*

1. Introduction

Nowadays one of the key problems of Russian economy is the deficit of qualified employees. Shortage of qualified professionals is felt in all industries, for example in healthcare and agriculture. The first cause of this issue is a total disparity between government's educational resources, quality and quantity of higher education institution graduates on the one hand, and the job market on the other hand. The second cause is graduates' lack of desire not only to be employed in accordance with their professional degree but in their region as well. Thus, the essence of regionalization is the transition from centralized state regulation of administrative division units' developmental processes to civilized federalism. The only way to reach this balance in inclusive education is to engage all the participants to take part in social partnership institute. This institute should be the foundation of working and actively growing society.

In this research under region-oriented competencies are assumed special skills and knowledge that are demanded in the particular regions, and under region-oriented workers are employees which have these competencies. Previous study provided the relevance for regionalization of higher education. Survey conducted among the social partnership subjects revealed that the maximum need for region-oriented competencies among employers had correlation rate with regional specifics of 0.84. However students preferences and needs about higher education and regional specifics had a bit lower correlation (0.79), and higher education institution faculty members had the minimum need in understanding regional specifics (correlation rate – 0.64) [2]. In other words, regional employers have more necessities of region-oriented workers, than it is available on the market. Simultaneously, universities do not provide special programs and courses to graduate specialists of this kind.

2. Research method

Currently the majority of Russian higher education institutions do not pay enough attention to the social needs for professionals. According to the generalized data that was received during the survey about the education of social workers and medical specialists, the majority of higher education institutions (57%) conduct initiative research. Moreover, 76% of higher education institutions report that they monitor their graduates' employment needs and take them into account for future education programs [7]. However just in 29% of higher education institutions lecturers are engaged in education programs adaptation and just 12% of the institutions have specialized departments for education programs development.

Insufficient student motivation for work in their field after graduation is another problem. On the one hand, the research demonstrates during the course of study students' interest in their work grows. For example, has been reported the growth of the following motivational factors affecting students:

- integration into academic and business processes (from 38% during the 1st year to 45% during the 5th year);
- practical seminars with the participation of employers and reference visits (from 33% to 43% accordingly);
- students' ability to choose additional classes on their own (from 37% to 41% accordingly).

On the other hand, the percentage of graduate students getting jobs in the study areas during their education or within several months after graduation is extremely low.

Generally, experts suppose, the mechanisms of social partnership in the work of educational institutions are not worked properly. In particular, it is impossible to talk about sustainable links between educational institutions and the social partners due to the lack of a

unified educational space, and fragmented interaction between subjects [3].
In order to resolve aforementioned issues in the framework of regionalization a higher education institution has to become a center of social partnership, which would combine two main directions [9]:

- regional businesses and power structures that are interested in influx of professionals, that have been already adapted to a region's need;
- young people that aim to receive a relevant education and a well-paid job without leaving their region.

In addition, it is proposed to use in the management of the education system and its subjects a number of business management methods. In particular, those methods include strategic planning, quality assurance system, the involvement of stakeholders, management of material and human resources [6, 12].

3. Results and analysis

3.1. Higher education institution

A couple of key directions intended to raise regionalization of higher education as a part of social partnership framework can be established in each higher education institution. In order to simplify the task that a higher education institution would face, it is necessary to group all the structures involved in this social partnership into two key blocs: internal and external. Internal bloc's structure is a set of functions and actors raised up by a higher education institution itself [15, 16]. External bloc is based on comprehensive, systematic, mutually advantageous interaction with third party organizations (Fig. 1).
As it was mentioned above, in order to faculty members could work in the area of regionalization of education effectively, they need additional professional development. Additionally, a higher education institute should offer its faculty members contacts with local government representatives [16]. The main aim of a higher education institution , accordingly to provided statements, is to assure faculty members a maximum number of opportunities for realization of educational process's practical bloc.

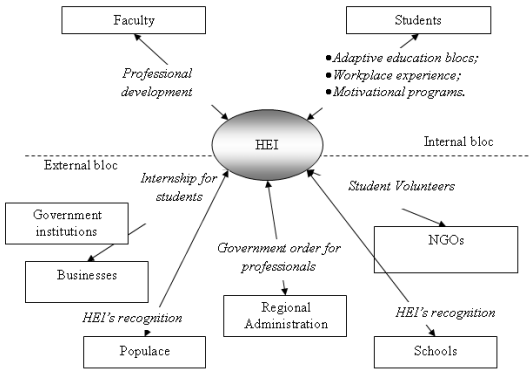

Fig.1: Diagram of social partnership in terms of regionalization of higher education

3.2. Standardization of professional education

According to Russian education modernization concept the main goal of professional education is training of "qualified worker of suitable level and type, competitive on the job market, competent, responsible, well versed in his profession and sufficiently familiar with adjacent professions, capable of performing in his profession efficiently based on international standards, ready for professional growth and social and professional mobility". Educational quality requirements that are growing in response to changing environment demand new educational methodologies. However, it should be noted that massive paradigm shift in education has not happened to this point.
It is appropriate to differentiate between two kinds of learning standards:

1. Professional standards, that include specific graduate requirements and should be developed by specific industries and companies;
2. Russian national learning standards (FGOS) which should standardize learning standard in a way for professional standards to be met, they should be developed by educational institutions themselves.

Thus, standard development for professional education institutions should be in accordance with: professional industry standards; standards of businesses of this industry in this region; dedicated HEIs standards; FGOS.
Federal state learning standard (FGOS) is "a collection of requirements, which are mandatory for basic learning programs of elementary, middle, high school, vocational school and college education given by institutions licensed by the state" [10].
In terms of higher professional education, it should be noted that extremes of a "narrow specialist" or "universal specialist" are unacceptable. An adequate goal is training "a specialist in a certain field": a graduate of a professional HEI has to be able to work not only in his profession, but also in an entire industry.

3.3. Learning standard functions

Naturally federal state learning standards for higher education possess functions that are important for all subjects of the learning process. Their essence in concise form is below.
Harmonization of rights and requirements in education. Standardized definition of requirements for an education level allows to keep balance between student's rights and obligations: he is required to follow government requirements for an education type, but also has the right to demand satisfaction of his educational needs per standards in full. An additional opportunity for receiving orderly information about learning standards and standards of a particular educational institution allows for a possibility of a conscious choice of an institution and field of study most fitting for perspective student.
Higher education quality. Expectations of quality and level of education that evolved through history are self-contradictory: on the one hand, level of education offered was aimed at complete mastery of material and fairly high level of knowledge, on the other hand lowest level of accepted knowledge was absent. Standard introduction will allow to mark the minimum required from students in certain fields of knowledge, which will allow to raise education quality as a whole. In addition state standards have to be the basis for attainment of a stable education level and qualification of graduates irrespective of the learning type and particular educational institutions.
Management of education as a state system. Introduction of standards enables to exclude voluntarism in education quality assessment, which allows for appropriate management decisions on all levels.

3.4. Student progress assessment

Some authors go as far as saying that: "such concepts as 'failing student' and 'student repeating an academic year' should not have a place in a democratic society" [11]. One can agree with the author in a sense that «in a regular (non-therapeutic) educational institution it is intolerable to have failing students in regular classes and especially have students repeat an academic year. However, the matter is examined from the "democratic society" point of view and, therefore, has a totally different emphasis, to state it simply: "children should not be given bad grades; teachers should find something good in each child and support it". Such principles work well for social adaptation of children with learning disorders, but are impossible in professional education,

where as it was said before a standard defined "low bar" has to be present.

There is also a positon which calls upon using grading experience from other countries. One such example (Turri 2013), talks about the American system "Compare to the Russian system, where a teacher is not in any way limited by how many grades of each kind he can assign in a single class, be that failing, passing or highest, in the American system a number of kinds of grades is limited by math statistics requirements: this distribution has to conform to a Bell curve. An instructor can give a perfect grade only to 15% of the best students, and 15% of the worst will get a failing grade".

On the one hand, the three grade scale is too general, on the other hand, some researchers are carried away too much by offering to count whole "rating tree" [4], which is possible given current state of computer industry, but is senseless from stand point of appropriately grading a student: exceeding detail inevitably leads to formalism in certain grading aspects, but on the other hand, general grades do not factor in student's individual traits.

Issue with grading completion of one competency or another is that the competencies are usually defined in an extremely general way, without descriptions of certain knowledge and skills, which a graduate has to possess. As a result choosing competency completion rating is difficult as it pertains to weakly systemized standards [1].

3.5. Qualimetric approach in higher education standardization

Author believes, that qualimetric approach is most important, and that learning standards and educational institution organizational standards should use this approach as a benchmark. Thus, "grading basis" during education quality assessment is a qualimetric object and as a consequence qualimetric procedures are required for designing efficient grading criteria, such as: algorithmization, taxonomization, validation and certification. Since, as it was previously mentioned, current learning standards ignore systematic approach, development of aforementioned qualimetric procedures complies with a need for their use as it pertains to research into developing theoretical and practical basis of learning standard qualimetry for professional education, which professional educational institution standards have to correspond to [20].

At the same time definition concept of "learning achievements" has to be understood not only as a collection of abstract theoretical knowledge and formally learned skills, but as a complex of competencies with a high level of understanding and involvement, that assumes stability of educational results with projection to the future, as well as a high probability of sustained motivation for self-development and self-learning, both professionally and personally [1, 4].

At the same time it is important to formalize and standardize competencies in such a way that academic achievements would not only be easily measurable but also easily transferable from one type of activity to another within a profession [12] — systemic understanding of a subject is needed, not just memorizing of standard actions and opinions.

It is imperative to understand that receiving an education is not an isolated process, quite the opposite; it is an integral part of social life.

3.6. Student's independent work

Another example of a term that needs standardization is student's independent work. Despite an intuitive understanding of the term, a diversity of its understanding is present [17]: "independent work is viewed as a type of learning (A.V. Usova and others), teacher assigned work (B.P. Esipov), action motivation (B.P. Esipov and others), form of organization for learning activities (I.E. Unt and others), type of learning activity (V.I. Zazvjaginskiy and others), means of organizing and managing learning activity (P.I. Pidkasistyj and others)". In order to raise efficiency of independent work and optimization of pedagogical experience exchange the standardization of the term is needed. A revealing example of this is an often-occurring substitution between the concept of student's independent work with completion of separate tasks without any supervision form a teacher, i.e. a formalized approach with all sense lost [18]: instead of developing skills of acting independently, which implies periodic advice from a teacher as necessity dictates, a distorted image of independent work is formed, which is accompanied by helplessness when difficulties are encountered, which is harmful for formation of both personal and professional competencies. Meanwhile teacher's work implies student's involvement in actions that correspond to his psycho-physiological and age characteristics in full [13], which supposes mastering corresponding skills of planning, realization and result assessment [14], i.e. self-organization competencies

In addition it is important to understand the role of modern information and communication technologies [8]. Thus, teaching with the use of information technologies allows to raise lesson and lecture efficiency by more than 50%, practical lab classes in science by no less than 30%, and knowledge control objectivity by 20-25% [5, 7].

4. Conclusion

The higher education regionalization process has to encompass all possible structures within social partnership framework at a higher education institution level including: local government, regional government and private enterprises, appropriate NGOs, schools, populace, higher education institution faculty members and students themselves. This statement is especially relevant for federal level higher education institutions. The main goal for the regionalization of higher education system is to create an environment, which will enable graduation of professionals that will be in demand in their native region and will not try to migrate in order to find a better job.

It should be noted that professional-educational achievements should not be formally reduced to general and professional competencies exclusively, which are formed at a respective stage of educations including inclusive education. Development of personal qualities of future professionals are highly important, since they provide competitive advantage in professional environment given normal work environment, where other members of a company share the same values.

It is especially important to point out that professional education's orientation towards not just receiving a diploma and etc., but towards students' forming constant self-improvement motivation of professional-educational and personal achievements is appropriate.

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