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PHILOSOPHICAL AND LEGAL MECHANISMS FOR ENSURING THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN HUMANITIES INSTITUTIONS

MECANISMOS FILOSÓFICOS Y JURÍDICOS PARA GARANTIZAR LA CALIDAD DE LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR EN INSTITUCIONES DE HUMANIDADES

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ABSTRACT

The article aims to analyze the current issues of using philosophical and legal mechanisms to ensure the quality of higher education in humanities universities. The authors use comprehensive methodology, theoretical analysis, document examination, comparative analysis, systems thinking, and structured component analysis. They describe the application of philosophical and legal mechanisms ensuring the quality of higher education in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Both general and specific features of this process are highlighted. It is established that the common philosophical basis for ensuring quality in both cases is the concept of sustainable development, whose implementation is ensured by a set of legal, organizational, and economic mechanisms. It is concluded that the implementation of these mechanisms to ensure the quality of higher education occurs autonomously. The documents do not sufficiently present the program-target method and indicative planning. While assessing the effectiveness of education quality management in humanities universities in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, the authors conclude that humanities education cannot be regarded as a resource for sustainable development since there are opposite

opinions of politicians and academic philosophers in scientific publications and government documents.

Keywords:

Mechanism, quality, higher education, human resources, human capital, sustainable development.

RESUMEN

El artículo tiene como objetivo analizar los problemas actuales del uso de mecanismos filosóficos y legales para garantizar la calidad de la educación superior en las universidades de humanidades. Los autores utilizan una metodología integral, análisis teórico, examen de documentos, análisis comparativo, pensamiento sistémico y análisis de componentes estructurados. Describen la aplicación de mecanismos filosóficos y legales que garantizan la calidad de la educación superior en Kirguistán y Uzbekistán. Se destacan tanto las características generales como específicas de este proceso. Se establece que la base filosófica común para asegurar la calidad en ambos casos es el concepto de desarrollo sostenible, cuya implementación está asegurada por un conjunto de mecanismos legales, organizativos y económicos. Se

concluye que la implementación de estos mecanismos para asegurar la calidad de la educación superior se da de manera autónoma. Los documentos no presentan suficientemente el método del programa-objetivo y la planificación indicativa. Al evaluar la eficacia de la gestión de la calidad de la educación en las universidades de humanidades de Kirguistán y Uzbekistán, los autores concluyen que la educación de humanidades no puede considerarse un recurso para el desarrollo sostenible, ya que existen opiniones opuestas de políticos y filósofos académicos en publicaciones científicas y documentos gubernamentales.

Palabras clave:

Mecanismo, calidad, educación superior, recursos humanos, capital humano, desarrollo sostenible.

INTRODUCTION

Changes in social life and the labor market place new demands on the system of higher education as a factor of socio-economic progress (Isaeva et al. 2023a). The requirement for efficient education comes to the fore. Its provision determines the global and local sustainable development of each state in the context of fundamental changes in the labor market (Zinevich & Melekhina, 2023). High-quality education contributes to the formation of human capital which has resource potential from the philosophical viewpoint and represents a full-fledged mechanism (Kulzhanova, 2023).

Efficient higher education lies at the heart of discussions between theorists and practitioners (Shishov et al., 2022; Mikova et al. 2023). Problems in this area form the basis of ideological and political contexts which are influenced, on the one hand, by the understanding of the goals and objectives of educational policy by scholars and politicians and, on the other hand, by the objective needs of production. These factors determine the directions and mechanisms for reforming higher education (Belenkova et al. 2022; Ling et al. 2023). They are closely related to democratization which stipulates the need to ensure efficient education and update its content in both formal and legal aspects.

The identified global trends relate to higher education in the humanities in Kyrgyzstan (Isaeva et al. 2023b). The issues of ensuring its quality constitute the current agenda of the educational policy of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. There are sufficient formal grounds for its implementation: the TazaKoom Program, the Concept for the Development of Education in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2021-2030, etc. Since 2014, the Agency for Accreditation of Educational Programs and Organizations has been functioning in the

country. In 2021, state standards for higher professional education were approved. The top officials of Kyrgyzstan approved the Strategy for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040 (President of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2018). Kyrgyzstan connects the modernization of higher education with the need to interact with international institutions (Murzaliev, 2020; Medeshova et al., 2022). Thus, the state pursues an active policy in the development of human resources, whose quality is the object of management in the higher education system (Sailaubekov & Mynzhanova, 2018; Efremova et al. 2022). However, achieving the intended goals faces many unresolved issues. From the viewpoint of philosophy and law, we need to understand to what extent these measures represent a single integration mechanism for ensuring the quality of education.

The article aims to analyze the current problems of using philosophical and legal mechanisms to ensure the quality of higher education in humanities universities.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study uses a comprehensive methodology to investigate the implementation of philosophical and legal mechanisms in ensuring the quality of higher education in humanities universities, with a special focus on Central Asia (in particular, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan). The methodological approach combines theoretical analysis, document examination, and comparative analysis of international experiences, adopting some elements from philosophy, law, and quality management.

The reliability and validity of the results obtained are ensured by a theoretical analysis of Kyrgyz and foreign scientific studies and documents, as well as an analysis of Kyrgyz and foreign experience in the quality management of higher education. In general, we considered studies from neighboring countries and beyond.

The topic outlined in the article is at the intersection of the philosophy of law and the philosophy of quality. Thus, we applied such research methods as systems thinking and structured component analysis.

The term “philosophical and legal mechanism for ensuring the quality of education” should be understood as a single integration mechanism of motivation, combining legal, organizational, and economic components based on the synergy of competences and resources to ensure the quality of education. The result of this mechanism is high motivation for the inter-organizational integration of stakeholders in the direction of ensuring the quality of education.

The problems stated in the article are considered by both Kyrgyz and foreign scholars. The study covers various aspects of philosophical and legal mechanisms in ensuring the quality of higher education in the humanities. However, a holistic idea of such a mechanism has not been formed at the national level yet. According to scientists in each state, the experience of sustainable development and providing citizens with efficient higher education in the humanities is unique. Education must have its operating philosophy. For a long time, legal mechanisms have been reflecting two main concepts: education as a right and education as a service. Modern methods and technologies for ensuring the quality of education act as complex humanistic systems aimed at improving the quality of life.

It must be recognized that the need to use philosophical mechanisms in managing society and the need to use the concept of sustainable development to solve social problems is addressed by Kyrgyz scholars. One such study is the doctoral thesis on social philosophy and modeling sustainable development by Abykeyeva-Sultanalieva (2023). This scientific work represents a theoretical core for further development in the field of education quality management because the author systematized the conditions for Kyrgyzstan's transition to the path of sustainable development and determined both national and regional factors, features, and prospects for such a transition. Abykeyeva-Sultanalieva views education as a strategic mechanism for the sustainable development of society in Kyrgyzstan. The researcher draws attention to the low status of the humanities in society, which is confirmed by the state educational standards that make humanities subjects optional. This problem suggests that the issue of integrating national-philosophical and legal mechanisms to ensure the quality of education is difficult to resolve without the regulation of educational policy. Based on foreign experience, an urgent task from the strategic perspective (2018-2040) is to develop a network of humanities universities in Kyrgyzstan and improve the status of the humanities to ensure sustainable development in the country. Considering long-term and short-term measures of influence, a confrontational approach based on the confrontation of parties involved (state, university administration, business, or teachers) will be productive on the part of humanities scholars. If the idea of improving the quality of humanities education is relevant, humanities scholars should propose a system of activities aimed at improving the quality of humanities education.

Similar trends can be observed in the higher education system of Uzbekistan: the country is paying much attention to the quality of education as a tool for its sustainable development. According to the Uzbek philosopher Namazova (2022), the situation with the humanities and

education is better in Uzbekistan, and their prestige is not questioned. The president declared 2023 the year of quality education. The country complies with sustainable development and sets strategic goals and objectives, including those related to improving the quality of higher education. Indicative planning is used to monitor the quality of higher education (Ibragimova, 2022). Obtaining quality education in Uzbekistan is challenging since the problems of other levels of education are transferred to the level of higher education: the number of weak students (future applicants) correlates with the number of weak teachers.

According to the Russian scholar Borisova (2012), the philosophical understanding of the mechanisms forming the quality of education is an important methodological basis for assessing the quality of higher education. The quality of higher education should respond to the balanced goals, needs, expectations, and interests of stakeholders which are mostly multidimensional. Its elements are a system, process, and result focused on consumer satisfaction and the graduate's readiness to realize their competence to ensure their quality of life. The author believes that the quality of education as a variable depends on the available resources and actions of subjects who, on the one hand, are customers interested in the work of humanities universities and determine the social order, on the other hand, participants to the educational process. However, all consumers have their views on the value of higher education. Under the philosophical foundations of quality management, the activities of a university are improved in the context of meeting the needs and interests of stakeholders, i.e., they increase the competitiveness of a university.

According to some foreign scholars, the challenge is to integrate legal mechanisms with organizational and economic mechanisms for achieving sustainable development goals at the global and local levels. The German researcher Schaab & Schaab (2021), claims that this problem can be solved based on the methodologies of structured component analysis and systems thinking. This viewpoint is supported by other scholars. In a joint monograph, Brce et al. (2020), emphasized the idea that the philosophical and legal mechanism focuses on creating an organizational structure for the interaction of parties involved and forming a responsible attitude towards their use of economic mechanisms through legal mechanisms.

Considering the opinions of the authors that this mechanism allows to effectively solve social problems, it can be extended to education, in particular to managing its quality, since the latter is globally recognized as one of the goals (indicators) of sustainable development. We should agree with the authors that it seems possible to implement

such an approach in the field of ensuring the quality of higher education through indicative planning. The basis of indicative planning is the procedure for transforming indicators (goals) into a unified system for the sustainable development of the country at the level of a specific social or economic sphere and the level of a specific territory (municipality, district, etc.).

Since the quality of higher education might be geographically uneven, authorities should partially apply incentive mechanisms to level the situation and enhance the priority goals of education. To do this, it is necessary to consolidate legal instruments aimed at achieving the legal goals of ensuring the quality of higher education at the level of specific public entities and territories. In the applied aspect, attention should be given to the structure of sustainable development goals represented by subgoals, indicators, and deadlines.

The analysis of the German experience shows that such an integration of philosophical and legal mechanisms gives indicators (goals) the status of a legal document that is binding. However, it can already be noted that such a section as “Quality system of education and science” within the “Strategy for sustainable development of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040” is purely declarative. This section recognizes that the solution to such a problem as providing citizens with a quality education has not been fully resolved. The document does not adequately represent the “Monitoring and Evaluation” section, identifying only the need to define goals and indicators for change management. The document does not establish persons authorized to use mechanisms to improve the quality of education.

In the context of systems thinking, the integrity of quality assurance is procedurally determined by socio-cultural integration and coordination of the goals of parties to the educational process. In this case, there are two groups of goals: to ensure the competitiveness of graduates in the labor market and to increase the competitiveness of universities in the education services market. Therefore, the key task is to improve the educational activities of universities based on many requirements placed on the university by consumers and target audiences. This position is shared by researchers from the Netherlands Van Vught & Westerheijden (2012), who emphasize the need to use a quality assessment system to determine the current state and prospects for the development of education quality with due regard to multiple requirements for it. To attain this end, they propose a multidimensional ranking tool.

CONCLUSIONS

Summing up the study results, we can conclude that attempts to build a philosophical and legal mechanism for ensuring the quality of higher education in Central Asia look contradictory. This trend also applies to humanities universities.

The analysis of the educational policies of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan identifies common and specific features of mechanisms aimed at ensuring the quality of education. A comparative analysis establishes that they are characterized by the use of legal and economic mechanisms to ensure the quality of education. According to the assessments of Kyrgyz scholars and philosophers, it can be concluded that the philosophical mechanism for ensuring the quality of education is not fully represented in Kyrgyzstan.

Adherence to the Western philosophical concept of sustainable development does not sufficiently determine the need to use mechanisms built on the national philosophy. Based on the opinion of philosophers from Uzbekistan, it should be emphasized that such a philosophical mechanism as sustainable development is being introduced into all spheres of society and is developing indicators of efficient education. However, based on the opinion of the country's top officials, the system of higher education, including the humanities, faces a wide range of problems that require solutions.

The term “philosophical and legal mechanism for ensuring the quality of education” should be understood as a single integration mechanism of motivation, combining legal, organizational, and economic components based on the synergy of competences and resources to ensure the quality of education.

The analysis of advanced foreign experience in sustainable development demonstrates that the basis of the philosophical mechanism for ensuring quality is the concept of sustainable development. To ensure the quality of higher education, it is advisable to form an integration mechanism for sustainable development built over philosophical, organizational, economic, and legal components.

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