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The top questions of the higher education: openness, availability, elitism

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Abstract

The article presents the main features of the university education and their transformation after appearance of commercialisation in the university activities. The changes combined with the globalisation of the higher education and new ways of managing the system of higher education are pointed.

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1. Introduction

The modern society of education is the basement for transition from the monocultural to the multicultural principle, which could be characterized as the next one: the national features have been eliminated or are in the background, the features of universalism and flexibility of educational system come to the first position. All this leads to eliminating borders of national education (Rozov, 1992).

According to this context the university education could be considered as a special social model. In this model the dialog of educational and scientific activities brings to the integration and mutual understanding of people representing different religions and political values, having their own opinions to the ways and forms of economical, cultural and social development. The new model of university education offers openness and mobility as the main system quality. This feature reflects being ready to transformation of existing structures.

2. Review of related research

2.1. Elite education

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The modern societies are open; knowledge and competence belong to the most important terms for entering the society elite. Mobility is one of the main quality characteristics for university education. The openness of elite education can be defined as following: the representatives of every social level with high intellectual abilities have very good chances to become subjects of elite education. The choice criteria are not richness, nobleness or well-connections but intellectual qualities and personal talent.

All changes are connected with the reexamination of knowledge as the result of education what is bringing a very wide social content to knowledge. The knowledge is recourse of socio-political, economical, ideological power. As the result of education a person gets qualification, as the result of elite education the person gets metaqualification, it means system of knowledge which helps in searching and getting new knowledge. As elite education we mean high quality education, the main purpose of such education is preparation of elite (political, economical, cultural) (Rozov, 2007).

From the beginning of the 30th years of the last century in the USA there is the prestige etalon of higher education in form of “Ive League”, association of eight eldest American universities: Harvard University, Princeton University, Yale University, Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth University and University of Pennsylvania. Today the name of the university a person graduated from plays more important role than the subject studied.

The elite education is the education of the highest level and is based on criterion of abilities. To master knowledge and values of this education the person has to have a very high level of intellect. The university has got a new task to build a new educational model which can enable to fix a quite new content of university education. This new system has the purpose to form and collect new knowledge which can be determined as “capital of intellect”.

2.2. Liberal educational system

In the last 25 years the percentage of young people getting elite university education with the purpose to enter the elite level has increased from 25 to 80%. But not every person trying to enter university is able to study intensive as well as master the programs in full volume. There is one more important point necessary to be mentioned: market economy dictates its rules in building of educational activity of the university, which is changing from the elite to the liberal principles. To lose the problem of elite specialists preparation in the modern university the liberal educational concept is getting an especial status role. In this role individualism has priority with the natural human rights, freedom and democracy, equal possibilities almost at every university of the world.

Concept signs of liberal educational system are based on some values bringing personality to the center of educational activity. Pluralism of values in the open educational environment puts individuality to the first place, but the educational system (in Russian educational model) is based on the group oriented study ways. This system does not let to realize individual forms of education and does not give the person all the chances for maximal development of professional skills. The process of liberalization and commercialization of university education has provoked two different problems in the world educational system: quality of the mass higher professional education and quality of the elite university education (Hughsen, 1992).

The modern universities try to find positive decision of financial problems in attracting more students. One of the ways is to adapt educational programs for the average school graduates. This moment is one of the most important in determining the quality of higher education, because the orientation to the average school graduates deteriorates the quality of university education: not the best are getting this education, but the main part of the young people. As the result of such approach we can constant that the elite education is losing its position, but there is a big demand in the world labor market in graduates with the elite education.

2.3. Russian educational system

Nowadays the next paradigm in Russia takes place: there are a lot of graduates from the universities, but at the same time there are not enough qualified specialists according to the labor market needs. The way from this dilemma could be found in changing the system of Russian education from the existing model to the many steps model. This model consists of different preparation types and levels in specialists' education, such as bachelor, specialist, master,

applied bachelor, doctor. A very important point is connected with the problem of commercialization of education in Russia, because it leads to less quality. In many foreign universities with paid educational system a big experience is collected in specialists' preparation. It could be very useful in building elite education in Russia.

2.4. Knowledge industry

Under conditions of commercialization the university education is turning into the goods at the international level of one of the most important modern branches - knowledge industry. As the basement of communicative knowledge industry we can see not only the graduate with all the collected skills and competences but the whole system of scientific- research and design-experimental works which are inclusive into the process of science and practice integration. At this process the knowledge industry cannot manage without consulting and transfer of scientific knowledge into the practical spheres, where the universities keep traditionally the leading position. From this point the commercialization of the university education can be characterized not only from the point of negative consequences but is the leading force in development of scientific-research university potential.

In the frames of commercialization of university activities there are some changes in knowledge character and its production. The new direction can be called "industrialization of the science and education". It means that the industry is producing knowledge. Knowledge appears not only based on the theoretical fundamental basements and transferred into practice, but there is such a process, that practical knowledge gathered in practical industry, can be transferred to the educational system (Achtyamov, 2009). At such a way we can see the formation of inter department benchmarking; this makes an influence to the formation of the modern cultural university paradigm.

2.5. Technological transfer

One more phenomena of building elite universities under financial support of high technology corporations was called technological transfer. In France such companies as Thomson, Fiat, Shell, and Siemens are controlling activities of more than 40 universities, having their representatives in academic councils, taking part at the works of scientific-research teams. The point is that the fundamental science is becoming the field, where the big investments are necessary and these investments could be got from industry. The process of scientific technology transfer in the university researches can build the new model of university education, which is more open for joint projects and researches in different professional spheres at international level (Tsvetkova, 2008).

3. Conclusion

In conclusion we can constant, that the globalization process is changing the quality features of the university education and is forming the terms for coming from the university of classic type (cultural center with the purposes of elite specialists preparation) to the university of communicable and not stable type (reacting to the changes of educational sphere at the international level under consideration of economical basements of society development).

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