Social transformation of Kazakhstan society in an education system

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Abstract

In article the process of transformation of Kazakhstan society during which sociocultural value of social processes, events, phenomena increases more and more is considered. First of all, these transformations reflect changes in education. Education is one of the main conditions of active participation of the person in political, economic, social and spiritual life of society. Commercialization of this system is especially distinguished from numerous innovations in an education system of Post-Soviet time. In our opinion, education commercialization and individualism contradict an ideal of the humanity stating worthiness of the person, ordering to recreate all equal chances in familiarizing with general welfare to which, undoubtedly, knowledge, intellectual skills, abilities, norms of decency, public disciplines and collectivism values also belong. Commercialization undermines education as all-civil institute. All these tendencies are brightly shown in system of the higher education. We conducted the social research confirming our hypotheses.

Keywords: social transformation, education, society, research;

1. Introduction

In modern conditions of development of society, education is considered the most important factor of social and economic development. The reason for such attention is that the main value and the capital of society is the person capable of searching and development of new knowledge, of adoption of non-standard decisions. There is no doubt that further development at the expense of economic growth and increase of technical power only is impossible in the modern world. Future development will be defined substantially by the level of spiritual culture of this or that civilization.

Intellectualization of work and information explosion at the end of XX and the beginning of the XXI century not only changed a condition of society, but also caused lag of the content of education from the level of an advanced science, thereby having generated "education crisis". There emerged a discrepancy between needs of person and society for knowledge and opportunities of an existing education system.

Major factors generating "education crisis" are, firstly, the contradictions between the education meant for rather stable situation and social world, which is quickly changing and becoming complicated, secondly, the contradictions.
between orientation of education to acquisition of as big volume of knowledge as possible and the snowballing growth of information, thirdly, the contradictions between orientation on narrow specialization and requirement in complete, system outlook, fourthly, the contradictions between national specifics of education and need of the modern world for uniform standards of education, fifthly, the domination of pragmatic and individualistic values over the ideals of humanity of education.

Thus, now the education system finds itself in front of the need for new self-determination. Former arguments in many respects cease to work or do not maintain the competition in comparison to the arguments which are moved forward on behalf of other spheres of activity which are also applying for the position in system of social priorities. Thus it is necessary to appeal not only to the state, but also to the society, which needs convincing and detailed justification of why, in what quality, at what expenses, for solution of which specific task it is necessary to develop and improve the system of education [1, p.3-6].

In Kazakhstan, as well as in many other countries there occur reforms of a national education system, various by depth and scale. Considering the social importance of these reforms, as well as huge amounts of money put in education by the government, the need for development of scientifically reasonable, methodologically verified strategy of development of education is more and more realized.

2. Main body

In the modern world education is the base of a democratic lifestyle and culture. Therefore the modern education level is necessary for free and democratic society. Education is one of the main conditions of active participation of a person in political, economic, social and spiritual life of society. Commercialization of this system is especially distinguished from numerous innovations in an education system of Post-Soviet time. In our opinion, commercialization of education and upbringing contradicts an ideal of the humanity approving a worthiness of the person, ordering to recreate equal chances to everybody in familiarizing with general welfare to which, without doubt, knowledge, intellectual skills, abilities, and norms of decency, public disciplines also belong. The humanization of education assumes revival of the moral beginnings in cultural and creative mission of school, society as a whole. As the spiritual and cultural phenomenon humanity is shown as an ethical standard, a social ideal, a spiritual value, a principle of free will, mutual help and cooperation, respect for the rights and dignity of a person, justice, intolerance to oppression and violence, etc.

The attitude towards the person, degree of their possession of civil rights and freedoms, level of spirituality and character of the cultural wealth always were the main indicator of civilization of society. The anthropogenous principles of the civilization organization, which are being formed now, defined new strategic objectives and social and ideological bases of modern life. They demanded the solution of all problems of social development on the basis of an anthropological determinism, having defined a need for development of humanity of new type.

Forming its contents on the basis of objective processes of social life, the anthropological humanism is the spiritual factor connecting the personality and society. But it becomes a basis of existence and development of society only when it turns into belief of all people, every person, activity of which on its basis is implemented in new life, more perfect in its contents. It demands from each person certain social and spiritual qualities: high consciousness, broad knowledge, culture, professionalism, responsibility and morals.

If consider a humanization and humanitarization as translation of cultural wealth, all ways and forms of the organization of educational process are subordinated to the purpose of person-centered education connected with search of ways of the best satisfaction of informative needs of students and creation of conditions for its growth. Person-centered education assumes the formation of the personality lifestyle of which is based on recognition of absolute values. The personality is formed not only and not so much by set of knowledge, but by filling of the multidimensional inner world. It changes the idea of development of the student which is not any more interpreted in narrowly intellectual, rationalistic sense, but in much wider, personal and semantic sense [1, p.100-123].

Commercialization, momentary pragmatism, from our position as a humanization antipode, as a matter of fact, undermines education as all-civil institute. It seems to us that there is one important point which allows interpreting today's deformations of education as some kind of symptomatology, namely symptomatology of that one era comes
to an end and another one begins. If this is so, modern education with its rational and logical self-discipline, orientation to knowledge, memory enrichment is already insufficient, it ceases to be the main form of cultural continuity. "It is obvious that our market economy, on the regulating role of which such high hopes were laid, was "not the right one" - not modern, but working, as a matter of fact, on old production and technological basis, and it did not naturally claim the experts of new, high qualification. Market environment together with public policy in the sphere of science and education put these infrastructures in front of a problem of survival at any cost. The former system of science and education is ruined. Its place is taken by the model of fast reaction to requirements of market elements and adaptation of educational reforms to new "sociostyles", created by momentary pragmatics" [2]

3. The findings of the study

This problem situation in the education system was analyzed by us in a social research.

Its purpose was the study of the relation of students to sociocultural values of a modern education system. 207 students of 1-4 years of different nationalities studying on the state-subsidized and commercial basis took part in survey. Selection is quota-target. The quantitative and qualitative structure allows considering this selection representative.

In the research we studied the relation of students to commercialization of the education system and its consequences; we determined the main sociocultural values of modern education and studied the identification bases of students.

High extent of identification with universal, civil, professional criteria is rather stable indicator as they allow forming social norms and values, structuring a social order.

The students identified themselves as follows: "I am a student" - 24,7%; "I am a person" - 9,2% of answers. But it is remarkable that the second large number of answers was "I am a person" - 10,2% from total number of the answers, which characterizes rather high rate of individualism peculiar for youth. Further it is possible to predict that this indicator of individualism will go down a little, and universal, civil and professional positions will be presented in a larger amount.

So by results of the social research which has been carried out in 2011 by the Kazakhstan institute of strategic researches at the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (KISR) among the respondents (research was conducted on national selection) universal and civil criteria of identification dominated, 94% and 83,5% respectively. [3]

Besides, the respondents, answering a question about who they identify themselves with, named personal characteristics: responsible, tidy, careful, etc. that also, in our opinion, shows aspiration to personal self-affirmation.

For distribution of answers to the question: "Do you agree that students have to be involved in socially beneficial activities?", none of the respondents agreed fully about such need. The joint, collective work, beneficial activity of public character is not included into the number of significant social values of the student and most part of the students (46,2%) would not like to take part in such activity voluntarily.

By results of the research among the main reasons for participation of students in social activity for the majority of respondents was pressure of higher education institution administration (50,4%) that characterizes unwillingness or disinterest in social activity.

The principles of collectivism which were supported only by 12,5% of respondents, who chose the answer "I want to be useful for other people" are not dominating in the students' environment.

That is, existing collective activity is a force from administration or existence of leadership skills of students (I want to be aware of the latest events, it is pleasant to be the focus of attention, etc.) – 87,5% of all answers.

Identification on personal signs correlates with unwillingness to participate in public work, $\chi^2$ – criterion = 5,948, value of $\chi^2$ кр-criterion = 9,488. We can say that there is statistically significant interrelation and accept a hypothesis of domination of individualistic values.

The questions aimed at definition of the level of knowledge showed initially inflated self-esteem of students. High level of self-esteem of students does not correlate with statistical data on a demand for students of our higher education institution in the international community and low indicators of the academic mobility.
Table 1. Breakdown of respondents’ answers to the question “Which group of students do you refer yourself to, considering academic progress?” (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer options</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year of study</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Total:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«strong»</td>
<td>33,2</td>
<td>20,9</td>
<td>11,4</td>
<td>11,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«medium»</td>
<td>28,7</td>
<td>15,7</td>
<td>12,8</td>
<td>11,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«weak»</td>
<td>0,4</td>
<td>1,1</td>
<td>0,4</td>
<td>0,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>62,3</td>
<td>37,7</td>
<td>24,6</td>
<td>22,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, the Ministry of Education and Science of RK following the results of 2011-2012 academic year carried out monitoring of the academic mobility of students of bachelor's degree. This indicator of mobility made 0,7% from total number of students of RK. [4]

In answers of students the pragmatism tendency is obviously traced during the choice of profession, so the majority consider that the profession gives the chance to make good money, and it is prestigious in society – total amount of answers made 45,8% of respondents.

Table 2. Breakdown of respondents’ answers to the question “Why did you choose this specialty? (Several options can be chosen)”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer options</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year of study</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Total:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have dreamed about it since childhood</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>2,8</td>
<td>0,8</td>
<td>2,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parents insisted</td>
<td>4,9</td>
<td>4,2</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>2,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because of the prestige of this specialty in society</td>
<td>14,2</td>
<td>3,1</td>
<td>7,4</td>
<td>2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest in future profession, receiving knowledge</td>
<td>12,2</td>
<td>10,9</td>
<td>10,1</td>
<td>12,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specialty gives opportunity to earn good money</td>
<td>21,1</td>
<td>7,4</td>
<td>7,2</td>
<td>8,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wanted to receive a draft determent</td>
<td>7,2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>2,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunity for self-realization, self-improvement</td>
<td>11,4</td>
<td>2,0</td>
<td>5,1</td>
<td>4,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know for sure that I will be employed after getting my diploma</td>
<td>9,1</td>
<td>1,5</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>2,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this specialty is very easy to win admission to</td>
<td>10,0</td>
<td>6,4</td>
<td>5,1</td>
<td>3,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>occasionally</td>
<td>13,3</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>7,4</td>
<td>2,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2,1</td>
<td>2,2</td>
<td>2,1</td>
<td>0,8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During consideration whether the relation of students to the chosen specialty after acceptance changed or not, it became clear that it improved for 47,3% of respondents, remained without changes for 24,6%, worsened for 11,1% of the respondents, at a loss with the answer - 17%.
The main reasons for negative attitude to the chosen specialty, according to the respondents, are a set of unnecessary subjects – 15.9%, bad organization of educational process – 13.5%, unfair estimation of knowledge – 5.3%, low level of teaching – 3.4%, disappointment in specialty – 2.8%, extortion of teachers – 1.4%.

Upon graduation from university 50.7% of respondents are going to work in this specialty (at the 4th year this indicator is the highest – 90.35), only 8.6% are not going to work further in their specialty.

After calculation of correlation indexes correlating aspiration to work in this specialty and conscious, pragmatic choice, we received the following values: $\chi^2 = 1.792; \chi^2_{sp} = 3.841, \chi^2_{sp}$, that points to existence of statistically significant connection. This fact is also confirmed by Kramer’s and Kendall’s coefficients, $K=0.133; T=0.112$.

Students are rather loyal to the education system reforms in Kazakhstan that is quite understandable as they are participants of this process and perceive it as a reality, without having possibility of comparison. Generally the positive shifts are noted in improvement of material base of training - 28.9%, four-year term of training – 20.7%, but commercialization of higher education institutions and westernization of education systems are considered positive changes only by the minority – 8.6% of respondents.

According to the results of sociological poll, 49.2% of students consider that the higher education has to be free for everybody, the current system of state financing of higher education by means of allocation of educational grants satisfies 42.9%, only 2.4% of respondents agreed that the higher education has to be paid only.

If there was an opportunity to change the future profession, the majority of respondents (57.7%) answered they would not change their specialty for another, that testifies to satisfaction with the chosen specialty.

Many respondents specified that they would change a profession and become lawyers (9.7%), experts in the economics sphere (7.8%), oil industry workers (4.8%), architects (4.8%), builders (2.9%), logisticians (2.9%), astronauts (2.9%), gynecologists (2.9%), art critics (1.2%), journalists (1.2%), deputies (1.2%).

**Conclusion**

By results of the research we drew the following conclusions:

1. Now there outlined tendencies of westernization and commercialization of education.
2. Students are aimed at pragmatic aspect of education.
3. The principles of personal freedom and self-realization dominate over the principles of collectivism, ideological conviction and consciousness in the course of study.

We consider that in modern conditions updating of the content of education assumes theoretically and practically justified transition to a humanitarian paradigm of education development, a measure and the center of which is the person. The humanitarian paradigm of development of education assumes its humanitarization and humanization.

From the point of view of the content of arts education it is necessary to speak about the following directions which have to be presented in it: philosophical, historical, culturological, economic, socio-political, ecological, physical.

To humanize and humanitarize education means to make the main task of education free development of abilities of the person in all spheres of his activity through approach to achievements of world and domestic culture.

Improvement of quality of higher and vocational education, preparation of graduates at the level of leading educational institutions of industrially developed countries is impossible without strengthening of spiritual component of educational and educational process.

The basis of integrity of this process is the spiritual component of education assuming philosophical apprehension of life of the person and the problem of education of spirituality as the highest extent of development of the human beginning. Thus, it is necessary to estimate quality of education and educational programs, first of all, on depth of disclosure of abilities of a person as creative person.

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