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## Changes in The Higher Education System of Kazakhstan

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### Abstract

Education is the main priority direction and main development indicator in all civilized countries of the world. After all in fact, the countries complete systems of public values and an education system. Kazakhstan has made a significant progress in reforming its higher education system and moving towards a market-driven system. Since independence education reforms and changes have had a huge impact on Kazakhstan's education system. National policy of Kazakhstan is aimed at reforming the higher education system to meet the needs of a modern competitive economy based on international experience. Reforms in the higher education system are urged to bring Kazakhstan to the advanced positions in the world, provide the Kazakhstan nation future, and develop the country's human capital. This paper gives higher education system reforms overview in the Republic of Kazakhstan. It concludes with a brief description of the higher education system strong points and outlines areas which have been identified as offering scope for improvement. (Dunning, 1999)

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### 1. Introduction

Higher education reforming in our republic has been carried out most intensively since 1995, but at the same time its rates and depth remain insufficient, and economic difficulties continue to create the main obstacles in necessary transformations realization. The stages of the higher education reforming system for years of independence of Kazakhstan can be subdivided as: The first stage (1991-1994). Higher education legislative and regulatory legal base formation. Higher educational institutions network and higher education specialties updating was the main objectives of this stage. The second stage (1995 - 1998). The beginning of modernization of higher education

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system. The third stage (1999 – 2000). Decentralization of management and financing of education, expansion of academic freedom in higher education. The fourth stage (2001 – present time): Strategic development of higher professional education system. Basic directions of higher professional education have been identified. (Oskarsson, 1990; Bozkurt, 2014)

The aim of this study was to investigate the changes of higher education system in Kazakhstan comparing education system from other countries and to understand the differences and possible causes of the differences.

The following questions were asked to examine this aim;

1. How does education need to change to accommodate everyone?
2. Are there any differences between old and new type of educational system?
3. Which changes were takes place in educational system?

## 2. Discussion

Higher education reforming in our republic has been carried out most intensively since 1995, but at the same time its rates and depth remain insufficient, and economic difficulties continue to create the main obstacles in necessary transformations realization. (Dunning, 1997)The stages of the higher education reforming system for years of independence of Kazakhstan can be subdivided as:

The first stage (1991-1994). Higher education legislative and regulatory legal base formation. Higher educational institutions network and higher education specialties updating was the main objectives of this stage. Carried-out measures of that period had found their legislative fixing in the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan «About the higher education» (1993). In 1994 the State standard of the higher education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (basic provisions) which defined for the first time the introduction of multilevel structure of the higher education in the country, the academic degrees of bachelors and masters is approved.

The second stage (1995 - 1998). The beginning of modernization of higher education system. This stage is characterized by conceptual definition of higher education system development that found its reflection in the Concept of state policy in education field approved by National President's council of state policy on August 4, 1995, accepting new legal provisions regulating higher education institutions activities. From 1995 to 1997 the first Kazakhstan educational standards on 310 specialties of higher education are accepted. In 1996 new edition of the Qualifier (list) of higher education specialties of the Republic of Kazakhstan providing 342 specialties is approved. Actively the non-state sector of education is developed.

The third stage (1999 – 2000). Decentralization of management and financing of education, expansion of academic freedom in higher education. During the third stage a decentralization of the education institutions management system was implemented. Till 1999 legal bases of education system development were regulated by two laws: «On Education» and the «Higher education», accepted in 1992 and 1993.

The fourth stage (2001 – present time): Strategic development of higher professional education system. Basic directions of higher professional education have been identified. From 1991 to 2002 there were accepted more than 70 important normative documents regulating higher educational institutions activity. (Freeman, 1998)

The State Education Development Program for 2005-2010, adopted in 2004, laid the basis for introducing from 2005 the three-cycle system of higher and post-higher education («Bachelor-Master-PhD») system. To increase the international relevance and competitiveness of its higher education system, Kazakhstan has decided to adopt a major structural reform known as «the Bologna Process». (Abulkhanova-Slavsky, 1991)The government of Kazakhstan has adopted a number of documents such as the new Law on Education (2007), the Law on Science (2011), the State Education Development Program in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2005-2010, the Strategy for Industrial-Innovative Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2003-2015, and a number of normative documents takings into consideration international standards in the field of education. As stated in the Law on Education, the main state educational policy is directed towards the promotion of humanistic nature and common human values in education; free and well-rounded development of the individual; education in citizenship and patriotism; ensuring accessibility of education and its secular character; provision of diversified educational forms and management of a democratic educational system; compatibility of education in Kazakhstan with those in European and other foreign countries. (Rubenstein, 1999)

Experts continue to debate the merits and outcomes of the reforms. On the one hand, these changes helped to create a merit-based participation in higher education. And as a result of implementation of the State Education Development Program for 2005 - 2010 years, the education structure was aligned with the International Standard Classification of Education. There were created the conditions for the 12-year-old model of learning. Technical and professional education was restructured. Also the Classifier of undergraduate and postgraduate education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, containing aggregated groups of professions was approved. (Fullan, 1990)

Numbers of universities have grown since the government legislated in 1993 to allow the setting up of private universities. Currently, according to the Agency of the Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2012), there are operating 139 high schools, which educate more than 571 thousand people (excluding master and doctoral students). The number of higher educational institutions of all types of ownership and departmental affiliation had increased from 61 in 1991/92 to 139 in 2012/13. The private institutions have equal rights with public ones.

The Kazakhstan citizens have the opportunity to get a first higher education for free, on a competitive basis by government order. In 2011 130.7 thousand people (21%) were studying by the state grant and also in part-time - 285.3 thousand (46%). Thus, the vast majority of students in Kazakhstan were making their studies for a fee. The language in which higher education is conducted has substantially changed. Almost half of all students study in Kazakh (during the Soviet period this number did not reach 20%). The proportion studying in English stands currently at only 1.6%. The proportion studying in Russian stands at 48.7% and is tending to a decline.

The classification of institutions was also introduced in Kazakhstan: academies, institutes, universities, research universities, national research universities, national universities. New principles of university management based on the principles of strategic planning, quality management and the autonomy of Higher Educational institutions are being shaped. An international model of accreditation of universities, which includes institutional and specialized (professional) accreditation, is implemented. (Dunning, 1997)

The distance learning is implemented through Internet technologies: web hosted lecture complexes, tasks for independent work, which will be checked by teacher, online consultation, lectures and learning material inspection, which are also carried out in the form of online testing.

New methodologies and applying international standards in both learning and teaching are being introduced. A new institutional structure for the entire education system, supported by a single, centralized, quality control system for all levels of education is being created.

Critics, however, highlight some negative impacts and shortcomings. Kazakh universities' management system does not allow them to realize their potential in ensuring accelerated economy development. State orders volume supports the needs of industries only on 50%. Only 10% of all graduates are eligible for education by state order, thus reducing the availability of obtaining a higher education. Low quality of educational services provided by universities promotes Kazakh youth to choose studying abroad. In foreign universities are currently enrolled 20 thousand of people. (Oskarsson, 1990)

One of the integral indicators in higher education, adopted by the international community, is the number of students per 10 thousand of population. Since 1995 according to this index, there has been an increase in the total number of students, but at the same time a decrease in the proportion of students from the budget. There are 372 students per 10 thousand of population.

Another Kazakhstan's higher education major problem is the high cost of education, which sometimes goes beyond the ability to pay for a citizen with average incomes. At the same time Kazakhstan government's expenditures on education are mainly confined within the state universities. Continuity of knowledge and free access to education are necessary conditions of development of any civilization.

In Kazakhstan there is a sharp decline in the educational level of the population. This is due to two factors. The first is the marginalization of post-Soviet society, which certainly had affected the schools. This process increases the number of universities with a low level of the main contingent of teachers and graduates, not all of them are able even to read and write correctly. The second harmful factor is the material disadvantage of the population, which brings a new round of semi-literate and ignorance into society. (Abulkhanova-Slavsky, 1991; Dordinejad & Rashvand, 2014)

The system of higher education is enlarging the gap in cooperation with the university sector, science, production and experimental bases, which leads to low quality of teaching and training future professionals and specialists, the lack of demand and detachment from reality (Jedlikowska,2014; Ribakova,2014).

The social partnership is developed too poorly, and the relationship with science and industry are also weak. There are no mechanisms for graduate employment, and no involvement of employers in the process of creating standards for higher education, training and certification of personnel.

The system of teaching staff training is underdeveloped. As a result there is a low level of teachers' professional skills, aggravated by a weak material and technical high schools base and lack of modern equipped laboratories. (Rubenstein, 1999; Alkhalaf,2014; Yeşilorman,2014).

### 3. Conclusion

Current situation in the field of education testifies the need of system for overcoming the negative phenomena, cardinal organizational, structural transformations, updating of the education content and specialists training quality improvement according to modern social, economic and political conditions of republic development and progressive experience of the advanced countries. Globalization of world economy became objective reality. Creation of a common all European labor market causes acceptance of adequate changes in the educational sphere. Therefore the national education system can't develop without integration into world educational space. In assessing the research, design activity is the opportunity to assess the level of formation. Present practices are inadequate to meet changes in work, knowledge, and citizenship while serving a greater number of students with diverse backgrounds and educational objectives. A paradigm shift from instruction to learning is required to adequately serve the clients of educational institutions, which in turn requires an alteration in procedures for improved outcomes. (Fullan, 1990; Kashkooli,2014).

Educational practices, and the structures that support them, must change in order to ensure that the citizens of the future - our school children of the present - can exist and grow in a world characterized by change, unpredictability and enterprise.

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