

## ISSUES OF FORMATION OF THE CENTER FOR MASTERING FOREIGN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT FORM CIVIL EDUCATION IN STUDENTS IN THE SYSTEM OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN

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**Annotation.** In response to the demands of globalization, many countries have focused their efforts on the policy of creating international and regional educational centers, the processes of transformation of their higher education systems, the activation of their international activities, the expansion of joint university programs as instruments to increase their competitiveness.

The purpose of this study is to study the factors of competitiveness in the formation of an educational hub, to identify priority measures to stimulate the integration of international educational programs and expand the international activities of universities in Uzbekistan.

As an empirical base, we used the results of studies of foreign countries that have successfully achieved their goals for the formation of a regional educational hub, as well as open data on leading universities in Central Asia and Uzbekistan's positions in international rankings on certain factors of attractiveness for foreign students.

The methodological basis of the research is comparative and system analysis, case method, content analysis of the websites of leading universities in Central Asia, expert assessment. The theoretical and methodological foundations and factors influencing the competitiveness of the educational activity of the university in the context of globalization and modernization of higher education are considered.

Based on a comparative analysis of a substantial array of academic and analytical materials on the definition of supply and demand factors (push-pull factors), implemented strategies for the transformation of universities in a group of dynamically developing countries, the authors assess the factors of competitiveness of the creation of international and regional educational centers of higher education in the conditions of Uzbekistan- as well as recommendations on organizational, economic, institutional mechanisms for the transformation of the republic's higher education system into a hub for the implementation of international educational programs in Central Asia.

**Keywords:** educational hub, transformation of universities, factors of competitiveness, international educational programs, the concept of higher education development Introduction

### Introduction

World experience shows that the final result of the process of formation and creation of educational hubs is to increase competitiveness and strengthen the regional integration of universities as a factor of economic and social development. Thus, since the 1990s, the authorities of Singapore, Taiwan and other Southeast Asian countries have been pursuing a policy of transformation of public and private educational institutions of the higher education system by expanding international activities and initiating joint international educational programs of universities [1; 2].

In the global space, the expansion of international university programs is not only a recognized tool for improving the competitiveness of higher education institutions and, as a consequence, the quality of education of national/regional education systems, but also plays a fundamental role in the restructuring of the economy based on the creation of a favorable environment: attracting the "best universities" and the world recognized talented scientists and teachers, the formation of beneficial regional ties and integration into the international economy.

An international educational hub can be created at the level of a city, country or region in which there are a large number of educational institutions involved in cross-border education on the basis of cooperation programs between international and local universities and providing high-quality and widely recognized education for both foreign and local students. various directions.

In a broader sense, an educational hub is understood as a certain country that seeks to position itself as a center for the creation of a whole complex of educational institutions and ensuring their cooperation with research institutes, technology companies for the implementation of strategic goals - the creation of cross-border education and the introduction of innovations to build an economy based on- knowledge-based economy [3]. There are only a few countries around the world that are seriously trying to develop as centers of education. These include Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Botswana. The main characteristics of the six current educational centers show that different goals encourage countries to develop and position themselves as an educational

center, including generating income, creating a soft power tool, modernizing the domestic higher education sector, increasing economic competitiveness, the influx of qualified labor and, most importantly, the transition to a knowledge-based economy.

Uzbekistan also has the potential and can count on attracting students to its universities primarily from Central and South-East Asian countries and neighboring countries. The Concept of Development of the higher Education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 provides for the transformation of the higher education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan into a hub for the implementation of international educational programs in Central Asia.

The purpose of this study is to study the factors of competitiveness in the formation of an educational hub, based on the world experience of creating educational hubs in the context of globalization of higher education institutions, and to identify priority measures to stimulate the processes of integration of international educational programs and the expansion of international activities of universities in Uzbekistan.

The planned reforms of local universities and the introduction of a set of international university programs in the republic, the expansion of international activity are also aimed at achieving long-term development goals, such as:

- creating opportunities for competition and interaction between foreign educational service providers and local higher education institutions;
- Transformation of Uzbekistan into a "global knowledge center" on production, innovation and the relationship between universities and industry;
- diversification of the labor market, creation of a favorable environment for professionals and attendance of post-university education programs, master classes, short-term advanced training courses, etc.;
- improving the positions of universities in Central Asia and Uzbekistan in the global ranking of Quacquarelli Symonds universities and entering the Financial Times, Times Higher Education rankings in certain disciplines, primarily STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics).

To achieve this goal, strategies for the formation of international educational centers within the framework of the development of cross-border education have been studied, the main conditions and factors for the development of universities in educational centers have been identified, first of all, the conditions for increasing economic competitiveness and modernization of the domestic higher education sector, which will serve to accelerate the processes of the formation of a skilled workforce and the transition to an innovative economy.

Based on the results and approaches used in previous studies (section 2), as well as trends in the development of higher education (section 3), the authors conducted a comparative analysis of competitiveness factors in the creation of a hub of higher education in Central Asia and Uzbekistan (section 4), recommendations on mechanisms to stimulate the creation of an educational hub in the republic (section 5).

### **Literature review**

In the field of international higher education, the development of educational centers in Asia demonstrates a clear departure from the traditional world exporters of educational services. While the United Kingdom and Australia mainly develop cross-border higher education for profit, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong set more comprehensive goals, such as the development of innovations and professionals, building educational potential and soft geopolitical influence [1; 4-6]. These additional goals do not exclude the commercialization of the higher education industry, but they signal a broader agenda for the use of higher education both to realize the goals of increasing the competitiveness of educational services [7] and to establish innovative cooperation. At the same time, the authors distinguish both international and regional educational centers, noting that they can be both international and regional centers and, despite these differences, use education, training, research and dissemination of educational standards and norms to exercise geopolitical influence in target areas.

In order to increase the competitiveness and efficiency of its university systems, the Chinese Government has focused on university restructuring strategies in the context of the global market [8; 9]. Also, the concept of a third-generation university (3GUs) was revealed in the publications of Vissem [10], which interprets University 3.0 not as a tool for servicing social requests, but as a way to solve internal problems of the university itself in new conditions: The transformation of universities is based not only on external factors (the requirements of an innovative economy), but also on internal factors (competitive struggle for funding sources, qualified teachers, talented students). In matters of the export of higher education, Hong Kong, despite its huge advantages, also faces a number of internal obstacles and disadvantages, such as inadequate infrastructure [11].

A comparative study of Malaysia, Singapore, China and South Korea [12] shows that the desire to become an education center was the strongest incentive for Asian governments to create international branches of universities (international branch campuses, IBCs). Based on the study of the national policy and regulatory framework of these countries (quality assurance mechanisms and approaches to external verification in international filial, accreditation procedures in the country of origin and the norms of international accreditation), it is concluded that an inclusive model of assurance is used in all four countries internal quality, however, approaches to external quality assurance of international branches are very diverse. At the same time, in South Korea and Singapore, the regulation of international branches of universities was more liberal and aimed at providing minimal quality assurance (mainly from foreign universities), whereas in Malaysia and China it was also liberal, but had a more restrictive nature of regulation (through the use of stronger national quality control mechanisms of international branches).

A comparison of higher education reform in South Korea and Germany [13] based on the results of the last two university reform projects - the Korean project (Brain Korea 21) and the German Universities Excellence Initiative - showed significant differences in terms of tuition fees, the share of private universities and national special features of the rating. While the Korean project is characterized by a relatively high level of control (annually) and can be considered mainly as a human resource development program with clearly defined strategic goals, for the German project, the goal of the project is defined more vaguely and over a longer time horizon and lies mainly in the field of increasing research potential.

The study of Singapore's experience [4] in opening its territory to programs and new forms of educational practices of foreign universities showed that in the late 1990s - early 2000s it managed to realize the policy goals of deepening official institutional ties with many foreign (mainly Western) universities. The vast majority of links between Singapore and foreign universities have focused on very narrow disciplinary areas of bachelor's and master's degrees, especially in relation to many joint and double degree programs that combine local and foreign universities.

As practice shows, it is necessary to build educational processes in disciplinary areas that facilitate the employment of graduates in high-tech jobs that meet the following criteria: the presence of high-quality education and highly qualified personnel, the use of advanced technologies, high economic efficiency of production (productivity of labor), high salaries of employees, significant the cost of creating a new workplace [14]. According to the OECD methodology, the aerospace, electronic and pharmaceutical industries are singled out as highly technological industries characterized by the highest level of knowledge intensity.<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that in the structure of the manufacturing industry of Uzbekistan, the share of high-tech industries is 2.7%, medium-high-tech - 19.5%<sup>4</sup>.

The tools and conditions for increasing competitiveness have been studied by many authors. In particular, according to the results of one of the studies [15], it is shown that educational competitiveness is determined by such factors as careful formation of the portfolio of training courses, implementation of the monitoring system of educational activities, integration of universities, improvement of strategic financial management, marketing of educational services, etc. The development of education is influenced by economic, social and political factors, such as access, equality, financing, governance, privatization, quality assurance, relevance and shifting the burden of funding for individual students [16]. Previous studies on the example of nine international schools in the United Arab Emirates [17] have shown that the choice of universities is influenced by recommendations and feedback from students at the level of personal relationships that form the image and image of international branches around the world. The results of numerous studies of strategic communication in three South-Dutch (Flemish) universities based on the case study approach [18] mainly indicate the similarity of marketing communication channels for a wide audience and a high level of differentiation for marketing communication channels focused on specific stakeholders.

The model of students' choice of educational institutions, based primarily on demand factors ("push"), which are applicable to international branches in Malaysia [19], showed that the success of a university largely depends on the cost of living in the country, the nature of the overall country attractiveness, the comfort of the environment and the convenience of the location for students, and the combined factors of supply and demand include: academic reputation, the prestige of the diploma, low tuition compared to a domestic educational institution, low- the cost of living, the country's security for studying, the similarity of education systems, as well as cultural proximity. Based on the model of supply and demand factors ("push-pull" model) influencing the choice of universities by foreign students in the newly emerging educational centers of Malaysia, another study [20], among the important motivating factors for students to choose a destination, in addition to the quality and value of individual academic assignments, calls "attractive" features of Malaysia's image, such as the relatively low cost of education, living, the country's danger to life, stable government, proximity to culture and religion, freedom from discrimination. Taking into account these factors makes it possible to develop effective advertising and marketing strategies in order to attract more international students.

The results of the study of the state governing bodies of higher education in the USA [21] contributed to the development of the conceptual framework of the state policy for the development of higher education in the United States, based on theoretical approaches of interaction (principle - agent).

Applying the analysis of stakeholders to the study of internationalization processes in Lithuania [22], the authors found that the advantages of internationalization far outweigh the threats and disadvantages. In particular, it promotes cultural integration and harmony, improves the quality of education and research, and improves the reputation of the country and institutions at the international level.

Within the framework of the concept of an entrepreneurial university, the effectiveness of complex measures to transform a traditional university into an entrepreneurial university largely depends on many factors: the level of socio-economic development of the country, the level of financing of the higher education system, the mentality of the scientific and pedagogical community, the nature of the market transformations and their social orientation, the development of social partnership of higher education and the labor market, international cooperation, etc. [23].

Thus, the following are identified as key factors of competitiveness in relation to international educational centers: improvement of the country's position in international rankings of higher education and the development of its infrastructure, liberalization of regulation of private universities, transition to international standards and international certification, financing and attracting talented teachers and students through improved marketing activities in the field

of providing education- improving the quality of higher education services on the basis of strategic management mechanisms, the availability of tuition fees and the overall attractiveness of the country.

#### **Current trends in the development of higher education in Uzbekistan**

The economic importance of the higher education sector of the Republic of Uzbekistan is determined by the high share of higher education (54%) in the total volume of educational services.

It is worth noting that education services have a high potential for creating added value (for example, the added value of education services in the service sector reaches 15%, while the share of education in the total volume of services is only 5%).

In addition, "a large number of foreign students is very beneficial for the country, since after studying with us, these students will return to their homeland and will be guides of Uzbekistan in their country. These will be economic and political ties, which is very beneficial for the image and development potential of the country"<sup>5</sup>.

The social significance of the higher education sector is determined by its role in the formation of human capital, the training of highly qualified personnel for the labor market and improving the standard of living of the population.

The creation of an educational hub in the Republic of Uzbekistan for the implementation of international educational programs will contribute to solving the tasks of developing an innovative and highly technological economy and improving the welfare of the population.

The analysis of trends in the development of higher education in the Republic of Uzbekistan showed that the coverage of youth with higher education was much lower (9%) than in countries with a similar level of development (Fig. 3). If in 2016 the number of universities was 70, and the number of students was 268.3 thousand people, then by 2020 the coverage was 22% (i.e., the increase in the share of higher education in the total volume of educational services is 7 pp., or an additional 303.2 thousand students).

The desire to make high-quality education accessible to Uzbek students is caused by the latest initiatives of the government aimed at attracting foreign universities to Uzbekistan. Today, 22 branches of foreign universities function in 131 universities in the Republic of Uzbekistan (Fig. 4), in which 571.5 thousand students study.

At the same time, in 2017, 33,159 students<sup>6</sup> from Uzbekistan studied abroad with a mobility coefficient of 11.8% (the ratio of the number of outgoing students to the total number of internal students). The low coverage of higher education in the country forced the younger generation to look for opportunities to study abroad, i.e. the deficit economy worked. In addition, the decline in the quality of education has made obtaining a diploma the most important priority of education.

To ensure the legal basis for the involvement of the private sector in the sphere of higher education, a Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan was adopted

"On improving the licensing procedure for activities in the provision of non-state educational services." The Resolution approved the procedure for providing non-state educational services, the main requirement of which is the organization of the educational process in accordance with state educational standards (state requirements), curricula and curricula.

In order to further improve the quality of higher education in Uzbekistan and increase its competitiveness, the following measures have also been taken:

– Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On approval of the regulations on the organization of educational activities on the basis of joint educational programs of higher educational institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan and foreign partners"<sup>9</sup>;

- The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On licensing, licensing and licensing procedures"<sup>10</sup>, where the authorized body, The State Inspectorate for the Supervision of the Quality of Education has been identified as issuing a license in the provision of non-governmental higher education services.

As a result of the large-scale reforms carried out in the higher education system over the past five years, the number of students has increased from 85 people per 10 thousand population in 2016 to 169 people in 2020. (Fig. 5). The purpose of these reforms is to create a holistic and continuous system that provides all-round support and assistance to a young person from the moment of birth until they reach the age of 30, so that he can take a worthy place in life.

To achieve by 2030 the coverage of graduates of secondary education with higher education up to 50% (or an increase in the number of students by 2030 more than twofold relative to the current figure - 571 thousand students), additional measures will serve to attract foreign students to the country, provided for by the Concept of the development of the higher Education system until 2030:

– an increase in the proportion of areas and specialties of education, faculties where training is conducted entirely in foreign languages;

– creation of favorable conditions for the residence of foreign students based on the involvement of the private sector in the management of student communities and campuses.<sup>12</sup>;

– ensuring the improvement of the indicators of higher education institutions and their inclusion in the world ranking through a national rating system adapted to international rating indicators.

Factors of competitiveness in the formation of an educational hub in the republic

To create an educational hub for the implementation of international educational programs in the republic, let's consider the factors of competitiveness (Table 1) that can be strengthened, and the constraints that need to be eliminated.

To select the factors of competitiveness, we conducted a comparative analysis of a sample of countries, primarily Asian, that set comprehensive goals when creating international and regional educational centers (in addition to commercial profits from the provision of education services), which allowed us to increase not only educational, but innovative and human resources potential. The criteria for selecting cases for comparison were a sample of countries that have experienced the transformation of their higher education system and have successfully achieved their goals for the formation of a regional (international) hub for the implementation of international educational programs.

To substantiate Uzbekistan's competitive positions in international rankings on certain factors of attractiveness for foreign students (including price competitiveness) of universities of the Republic of Uzbekistan in comparison with universities of Central Asia, the method of content analysis of the content of websites and online documents (blogs, publications of online media, periodic reports of web analysts, electronic mailings) was used etc.).

In order to obtain reliable information about the cost of training foreign citizens in the leading universities of the Central Asian countries, a targeted sample of universities of the Central Asian region was used in three areas of education (information and communication technologies; medicine; economics and business), which is justified by the fact that the Concept of Development The system of higher education of Uzbekistan until 2030 provides for the transformation of the system of higher education of the republic into a hub for the implementation of international educational programs in Central Asia.<sup>13</sup>

In Uzbekistan, the factors of competitiveness in creating an educational hub for the implementation of international educational programs in Central Asia are security, favorable climate, price competitiveness in a number of areas, including medicine, relatively cheap cost of living and the absence of the need for a visa.

A comparative analysis of the price competitiveness of leading universities in Central Asia in terms of tuition fees for foreign citizens in the above three areas of education has shown the relative competitive advantage of universities in Uzbekistan compared with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Thus, according to the factor of price competitiveness in the direction of "economics and business", the cost of studying at universities in Uzbekistan is at least 20-30% lower than in other Central Asian countries. In addition, Uzbekistan occupies a leading position in the cost of living index and the price of mobile Internet (\$ 1.34 per 1 GB).

The risks and challenges of creating a hub for the implementation of international educational programs (factors that reduce attractiveness), which already today need to be addressed not only to attract foreign students, but also to achieve the training of highly qualified high-quality personnel, include: a low proportion of specialties with training in English, the underdevelopment of the infrastructure of distance education and the organization of education, a relatively low proportion of teaching staff with an academic degree, poor quality of education, a weak level of integration of universities and business. In particular, according to the "ICT Infrastructure Development" sub-index of the Innovation Development Index (GII), Uzbekistan ranks 83rd. In the Speedtest fixed broadband Internet Speed index, Uzbekistan's position in the ranking is 90th among 180 countries and 113th among 137 countries in terms of mobile Internet speed.

The improvement of some of the factors of competitiveness of the higher education system discussed above is provided for by the Concept of development of the higher education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030. In particular, it is assumed:

– implementation of programs of foreign higher educational institutions (with the exception of joint educational programs), an increase in their share from 26% in 2020 to 45% by 2030;

- an increase in the share of foreign professors involved in higher educational institutions of the republic (with the exception of foreign higher educational institutions), from 2% in 2020 to 12% by 2030.;

– introduction of an information system for managing educational processes in universities, as well as monitoring the processes of ensuring the quality of education through the e-education management system from 20-30% in 2020 to 100% by 2025;

- increasing the scientific potential of higher educational institutions by increasing the proportion of professors-teachers who have academic degree, from 38% in 2020 to 70% by 2030.

#### **Measures to increase the competitiveness of higher education and mechanisms for the formation of an educational hub in the republic**

Based on the assessment of the factors of competitiveness and risks of the implementation of international educational programs in Uzbekistan, the recommended mechanisms for the transformation of the higher education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan into a hub for the implementation of international educational programs in Central Asia, the development and stimulation of the existing potential of higher education of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the growth of exports of educational services can be include the following.

1. Organizational mechanisms for liberalizing the educational services market, improving the quality of educational services:

– transition to the system of accreditation of educational programs of universities according to international standards and international certification;

– increase in the number of universities implementing dual degree programs;

– increasing the share of educational content in the areas of personnel training in universities in English with the orientation of educational programs on the competencies required by various industry associations;

- active development of pre-university training, post-university training programs and short-term professional development programs (in universities and organizations of technical and professional education).
- 2. Economic mechanisms for the growth of higher education and the creation of infrastructure:
  - increased investment in the development of distance education infrastructure;
  - introduction of a scholarship program for foreign citizens;
  - attracting foreign specialists to universities by providing housing, reducing income tax, etc.;
  - development of related infrastructure - tours of student campuses (dormitories) for international students;
  - introduction of a system of additional state funding for the motivation of educational institutions whose graduates within two years are employed in high-tech jobs in the country or abroad.
- 3. Institutional mechanisms and reduction of barriers for private organizations:
  - creation by business of joint corporate competence centers with universities (universities and enterprises of Central Asia);
  - expanding the rights of universities to implement additional vocational education programs in the context of the transition to international requirements of WorldSkills, robotics, IT and multi-specialty standards, as well as the development of educational services of technical and vocational education.
- 4. Organization of marketing activities in the system of higher education:
  - improvement of the regulatory framework for the provision of consulting services by domestic and foreign agencies to attract foreign citizens to study in the Republic of Uzbekistan;
  - conducting a marketing campaign to attract international students;
  - increase in the number of representatives of universities of the Republic of Uzbekistan abroad;
  - stimulating the orientation of higher education towards commercial profit.

These measures to stimulate the creation of an educational hub will contribute to an increase in the concentration of highly qualified specialists in the regional center, a significant increase in the volume of educational services provided by educational institutions. In turn, an increase in the competitiveness of trained personnel in demand on the world labor market, an increase in the coverage of higher education, an increase in the integration of science and industry in Central Asian countries will expand the possibilities of higher education's contribution to economic development.

#### **Conclusion**

As part of the analysis of the strategies and results of the transformation of universities into educational hubs in various countries, the key factors of the competitiveness of universities are considered, taking into account their influence primarily in Asian countries, the characteristic features of the processes of modernization and integration of international educational programs that have served as an instrument for the development of higher education. The assessment showed that the most favorable factors of competitiveness in relation to international educational centers are the following: improvement of the country's position in international higher education rankings and the development of the country's infrastructure, liberalization of regulation of universities, improvement of mechanisms to ensure the quality of education, attracting talented teachers and students through improved mechanisms strategic management and marketing activities in the field of providing educational services, increasing the overall attractiveness of- the state of the country.

The authors also identified trends in the development of higher education and the competitiveness of universities in Uzbekistan, presented recommendations for improving organizational, economic, institutional mechanisms for transforming the higher education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan into a hub for the implementation of international educational programs in Central Asia, which will serve to develop and stimulate the existing the potential of the higher education of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the growth of the export of educational services.

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