

Educational Internationalisation as a Major Strategy of the Kazakhstani System of Education

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Abstract

In this article, the principle of educational internationalization is described as a major strategy of the Education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The ways in which national education systems can meet the challenges of our time are analyzed. The current level of development of the Kazakhstani educational system as well as concepts such as 'transnational education', 'educational globalization', 'international education' are considered. The distinctive features of the educational reforms of Asian-Pacific countries and the factors affecting educational internationalization are summarized. The Bologna Process and the approaches to regional integration are also discussed.

Keywords: Internationalization, international education, educational globalization, transnational education, higher education.

INTRODUCTION

The current requirements of national education in Kazakhstan are to ensure intensive socio-economic development and to train professional personnel with the necessary managerial competence, adaptivity and creativity to work effectively in an environment of hi-tech production and the innovative development of markets.

Economic globalization makes qualitatively new demands on education, which leads inevitably to a considerable increase in competitiveness between national systems as they enter the international education market on equal terms.

National educational systems can meet this challenge of our time in the following ways: 1) by increasing educational integration; 2) by making the transition to a qualitatively new level of educational internationalization; 3) by the introduction of international quality standards into national educational systems; 4) by ensuring competitive education. The dynamically developing process of educational internationalization is a qualitatively new stage of integration aiming at the convergence of national educational systems which aspire to openness and normal regulation by international law. Educational reform in Kazakhstan is focused on creating new legal, scientific and methodological, financial and economic principles and the development of a national educational strategy which ensures the achievement of international standards whilst retaining the uniqueness of our national educational system and taking into account the national interests of Kazakhstani society and the future development of the state. In view of these priorities our national educational system inevitably has to enter the world educational arena. This requires to select clear guidelines for and approaches to

the processes of educational internationalization. To be well informed about current trends in the educational systems of different countries, to define our own position on education in an era of globalization and to develop a selective and balanced attitude towards all innovative educational models.

Such concepts as 'transnational education', 'educational globalization', 'educational internationalisation' and 'international education' are considered to be manifestations of globalization processes and they are often treated as equivalents. These types of education have acquired educational and organizational shape in two ways: 1) 'transnational education' has come to mean the export by developed countries of their own educational programs; 2) 'international education' is a process of integration of converging national educational systems designed to ensure world-wide standards of educational quality. The implementation of 'transnational education' requires regulation to ensure its focus on preserving a proper balance between national and supra-national elements while gradually enhancing the international element. 'International education' lays greater stress on an international integration of educational systems which ensures the priority of humanistic and general human values in the ideology and content of education.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

The current level of development of the Kazakhstani educational system, resulting from the state policy of entering the international educational arena, and the emergence of international schools as a new type of educational organization create a need for an educational science analysis of the processes of school management. The management of the educational system in an era of educational internationalization has not so far been the subject of special research. Consequently, the scientific elaboration of methodological principles for a conceptual model of the management of a system of international schools is topical and necessary.

This should be aimed at ensuring an innovative-adaptive, competence-based and professionally oriented type of education which meets contemporary requirements concerning the quality and content of educational programs. Accordingly, the conceptual basis of international education management aimed at creating this model requires intensive study, methodological grounding and further elaboration.

The objective of enhancing the international competitiveness of Kazakhstan logically entails ensuring the competitiveness of education and educational results which comply with international quality standards. This new level of educational quality may be achieved through strengthening the processes of

educational integration and making the transition to a new qualitative level of internationalization and cooperation in education.

The experience of the Asian-Pacific countries, whose economic breakthrough has been recognized world-wide as a major phenomenon, has proved yet again that a regional concept of the educational system and investment in education and human resource development comprise an effective economic development strategy. The distinctive features of the educational reforms of these countries are as follows: 1) the coordination of educational development and reform with an overall strategy of regional development; 2) the creation of an integrated educational space in the region, necessitating the diffusion of the processes of educational internationalization; 3) the ensuring of a quality of human resources commensurate with the economic development of the region; 4) the transition to a broad program of management personnel training within the national educational systems; 5) the use of the overall investment potential of the region and its achievements in information and communication technology in the general reform of the regional educational system.

Thus, the distinctive feature of the Asian-Pacific international model of a single educational space is the general adoption of a comprehensive approach to educational reform and the exploitation of all the potential of the region in order to improve human resource quality. Although European educational integration (the Bologna Process) far surpasses the Asian-Pacific integration process in terms of its reforms and the formation of an integrated educational space, in the European model the integration processes mainly consist of harmonizing the regulatory frameworks and standardizing the qualification criteria of the educational systems of the countries included in the European Cultural Framework Convention, while far less attempt is made to ensure a balance between economic, social and political approaches to educational internationalization and the use of aggregate investments in human resource development from the region as a whole and not just from an individual country [1].

It was the need to unify the various types of technologies and production processes as well as the socio-political transformation of European countries on the road to economic and political unification based on shared socio-cultural values which dictated the creation of a broad inter-state educational space. The term 'internationalization' appeared as a constituent part of globalization. Educational internationalization is characterized by the mobility of students and teachers and the extensive use of information technologies in the process of education which have radically improved access to distantly located, including foreign, educational and research resources.

THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

It is not only in the mobility of students and staff that the most important impact of internationalization on the relationship between state and educational institutions can be seen.

Internationalization, like all phenomena related to globalization, sets definite standards by which educational institutions in the current competitive environment have to be guided and which the state one way or another has to take into account.

The Bologna Process, which set out to achieve comparability in higher educational systems in member countries, was a

consequence of and at the same time an incentive for the further development of internationalization in the politics of the European states.

At the same time the link between internationalization processes and the unification of educational standards is variable and complex. The involvement of higher educational institutions of different countries in global interaction does indeed turn them into an international communication network. But this should not mean the substitution of global and general tasks for goals specific to national educational systems. This can be proved by considering internationalization processes in Germany and the Netherlands, where higher educational systems are quite far from the Bologna model and embody the 'continental model' of educational system, which is rigidly stratified, complex and split into multiple subordinate segments.

Thus, in particular, re-orientation to the priorities of the Bologna process did not eclipse the central objective of the Dutch educational system - to maintain continuity between secondary and higher education. Vocational schools did not obtain the status of universities, and the 'specialist' degree did not oust the 'bachelor's' degree. The forms of higher education which are traditional for this country remain unchanged, while internationalization is expressed in the vigorous development of the alternative sectors of the educational services market designed 'for export'.

Consequently, according to experts, the main potential risk of the Bologna process which is the European Union's desire for educational unification might lead to a possible reduction in the diversity of the European educational system and destruction of the national uniqueness of the educational systems of the countries following the Bologna reforms.

REGIONAL INTEGRATION PROCESSES

In relation to regional integration processes in education which presuppose the formation of integrated educational spaces, there exist two contrary opinions: on the one hand, complete denial of their necessity and the conviction that such processes as the Bologna Process would lead to a total breakdown of national educational systems which had been soundly based and of good quality; on the other hand, a very optimistic perception of the Bologna system as an efficient stimulus for a very radical transformation of national systems of education which had become a brake on the innovative development of education, necessitating an attempt to bring them into line with the rates of world socio-economic development.

There are obvious advantages to the second view provided that a flexible approach is adopted taking maximum account of the national distinctiveness of the countries concerned and ensuring their ability and freedom to determine the degree, limits and speed of their integration into the new educational space.

Although the approaches to these regional integration processes are different, the basis which unites these trends is the attempt to create integrated educational spaces, which despite certain potential risks for national interests (weakening the sovereignty of national states, threat to national identity, the socio-cultural expansion of one particular ideology, labour and intellectual migration, the cultivation of common economic and social standards, the creation of a unified model globally

managed on principles of power, etc.), has the following advantages:

1. They will enable the region's human resources to be qualitatively aligned with the intellectual potential level of the world's leading countries;
2. They will create opportunities for the countries in the region to enter the global human resources market;
3. They will enhance the role of education, making it a major driver of economic growth and national competitiveness;
4. They will provide the basis for the creation of national innovation systems, which comprehensively implement a country's strategies for general development and the fulfillment of its scientific and technological potential and combine them with its economic development objectives to enable it to join the hi-tech economies [2, 3, 4].

Thus, a highly efficient educational system is one of the factors which ensure the sustainable growth of a country's economy and society. The goal of the reforms being implemented in the educational system of the Republic of Kazakhstan is to achieve its qualitative transformation in the market economy environment while taking into consideration the processes of globalization with all their advantages and threats.

As noted above, the predominant idea in the various interpretations of the concept of 'educational globalization' is that of a qualitatively new stage of international relations in the sphere of education which offers modern career opportunities for the young people who have to live and work in the 'New World Order', where the boundaries of national economies and cultures are becoming more and more arbitrary as countries increasingly open up to the outside world.

Global economic and information integration has created an opportunity for the spread of the neo-liberal economic model, implemented through trans-continental and trans-regional flows and networks of activities, exchanges and power relations, which give rise to new patterns of hierarchy and inequality between countries and threaten national independence, as we noted above [5, 6]. Clearly this is reflected in education too. In globalised educational integration the positive process of ensuring a new quality of world-class education through international interaction can itself be viewed as a covert tendency to build a 'unified world order in education, by which power is wielded and global education managed through international governmental institutions which often serve particular interests. These interests promulgate their own ideology by offering an 'educational model' which is in fact based on free trade rules underpinned by the ideology and strategy of the transnational corporations [3].

This ideology of transnationalism with its commitment to educational expansion is increasingly referred to as 'transnational education'. What is meant by 'transnational' or 'cross-border' education is the export of educational programs used by the educational systems of the developed countries. These programs can be promoted abroad both in traditional ways (setting up representative offices, branches and provider centers) and in new distance forms where students live outside the country where the university awarding the diploma or other

qualification is located (a type of franchising of educational programs). As noted by analysts of educational internationalization, a number of fundamentally positive root causes have brought about this phenomenon in education:

- 1) The world-wide trend towards the globalization of educational markets and the development of competition between them;
- 2) The growth of international academic mobility which has made higher education an important sector of international trade;
- 3) Informational and technological progress which creates opportunities for distance learning and individual education in an interactive mode;
- 4) Internationally accepted standards of educational quality, guaranteed by the educational systems of the highly developed countries, the high rating of their degrees and diplomas and the great competitiveness of their universities;
- 5) Today's need for on-going, life-long professional development through various forms of education and the growing demand for supplementary education caused by competition in the labour market;
- 6) The global proliferation of key professions involving business education, new technologies, etc.;
- 7) The career advantages provided by degrees from leading foreign universities in these areas.

With regard to globalization processes and their potential threat in any area we may cite the interpretation given by the President of Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbayev [7], who reflects Kazakhstan's position with regard to integration processes:

Globalization as a phenomenon has many strengths and many weaknesses. When people choose a way of integrating into the world community, they are not bowing down before a perfect and ideal model of development, because such a model does not exist. We, the citizens of Kazakhstan, are also choosing our own path towards integration into the world community, building upon the globalization process which is already occurring, not because it is absolutely perfect, but because it has more positive sides and advantages than negative sides and disadvantages for us and for Kazakhstan...Our major priority is unshakeable and indisputable: the nation's security and the preservation of our state sovereignty.

Therefore, bearing in mind the positive basis of the idea of 'transnational education' and at the same time the real needs of national educational systems for accelerated provision of educational quality which meets international standards, some countries with a transitional economy open the doors to this type of education, even though providers of 'transnational education' do not always have the proper accreditation status or a licensed international legal standard. The development of 'transnational education' should proceed only after proper state and legal recognition of its qualitative and educational status by the importing country. Regulation of the activity of 'transnational education' providers should meet

the following requirements: 1) availability of documents proving the accreditation recognition and status of the 'transnational education' providers; 2) availability of an internationally certified data-base on the 'transnational education' exporters; 3) accessibility and reliability of information about the educational services exporters and of data on the rating of the universities providing 'transnational education'; 4) legal recognition of the correlation of foreign degrees and diplomas with national ones by the country importing education, and national legislative recognition of the qualifications provided by the degrees and diplomas of the country exporting education; 5) the development of a system of inter-state accountability monitoring the activity and educational quality of 'transnational education' providers; 6) the need for the elaboration of international regulative norms for 'transnational education'.

Researchers believe that for developed countries the export of education is both a considerable economic benefit and an opportunity for ideological dissemination, while for developing countries and countries with a transitional economy, uncontrolled 'transnational education' constitutes a threat to their state sovereignty and national identity, which highlights the need for them to take a considered decision on the dissemination of this type of education [4, 8].

The contemporary need to train specialists for working in an environment of the integrated labour market and world-wide processes of socio-economic integration has brought about the trend towards the development of a single world educational market.

It is assumed that 'transnational education' is a manifestation of this educational globalization, which because of its contradictory character requires the adoption by national educational systems of certain regulations.

The educational internationalization process does not presuppose the dissemination of the educational ideologies of the leading countries of the world. Rather it aims to promote international cooperation in education with a proper balance between the national and supra-national elements of its organization and content. Gradually the international component of educational programs will be enhanced, which will facilitate the solution of the vital problem of diploma convertibility and mutual recognition of scientific and professional qualifications.

The differences between the processes of the globalization and internationalization of education, according to British researcher P. Scott [9], lie in the fact that internationalization relates to a world order where the dominating role is played by national states, whereas globalization is quite a different phenomenon presupposing radical revision of the world order itself where national boundaries start to look archaic'.

Therefore, educational internationalization is the formation and planning of an international strategy for educational development and its main trends are as follows: 1) international coordination and unification of pedagogical efforts and resources; 2) international organizational structures for teacher training; 3) promotion of the deals of mutual respect; 4) advances in education resulting from international experience; 5) cooperation in the elaboration of a program of educational modernization; 6) ensuring the employment of specialists in the international labour market; 7) ensuring international

educational standards and international cooperation in the development of teaching material and techniques which contribute to the creation of this new qualitative level of education; 8) international coordination of efforts for the convergence of educational programs and for the mutual recognition and equivalence of degrees and diplomas; 9) extension of the scope for studying foreign languages and cultures; 10) ensuring international academic mobility; 11) expansion of the integrated educational space and coordination of the exchange of staff and students; 12) encouraging the development of contacts between national ministries and services, etc. [10, 11].

THE INSTITUTIONAL AND ASSOCIATIVE INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURES

The institutional and associative international structures most widely recognized for their contribution to the development of educational internationalization are the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning, the European Union's Association for Academic Cooperation, the American Council for Collaboration in Education and Language Study (ACTR/ACCELS), the United Nations Development Project (UNDP), the US Embassy Information Service, the American Council for International Research (IREX), the British Council, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the French National Centre for School and University Programs (CNOUS), etc. The initiatives and international programs of the European Union are especially effective. These are differentiated and named by their target objectives and functions and involve an increasing number of participating countries in internationalization through their SOCRATES (ERASMUS, LINGUA), LEONARDO and TEMPUS/TASIS programs.

The conceptual principles and trends of educational internationalization are laid down in a series of internationally accepted documents (The World Declaration on Higher Education - UNESCO, Paris, 1998; Convention on Technical and Professional Education - UNO (UNDP), etc.). Their principal recommendations include:

- Facilitation of the collection and dissemination of information pertaining to innovations, ideas and experience in technical and professional education and active participation in international exchange of information about educational programs and teacher
- Training programs, methods, equipment standards and school textbooks on technical and professional education;
- the use of international technological norms in technical and professional education which are used in industry, trade and other sectors of the economy;
- The elaboration of approaches aimed at ensuring recognition of the equivalence of a qualification acquired as part of technical and professional education; facilitation of the international exchange of teachers, administrators and other specialists in technical and professional education;
- Offering students from other countries, primarily from developing countries, the opportunity to acquire technical and professional education in their own

educational institutions, with the particular purpose of simplifying the process of studying, acquiring, transferring and applying the relevant techniques;

- The development of cooperation in the field of technical and professional education between all countries, but especially between industrially developed and developing countries in order to encourage technological development in these countries;
- Resource mobilization, in order to strengthen international cooperation in the field of technical and professional education.

Thus, the problems of the internationalization and integration of world education have become the subject matter for active academic discussion both at home and abroad for a number of years. Influenced by the great political and economic changes taking place in the world and also by changes in the value-systems of many countries, and faced with the global challenges to mankind, contemporary education is increasingly global and world-wide in scope. The deepening and diversification of international educational links add a global dimension to the inter-dependence of national educational systems. The prerequisites for creating European and Asian-Pacific educational spaces have been achieved while retaining the specific features and achievements of national educational systems.

Educational internationalization is the dynamically developing process of a qualitatively new stage of integration aimed at the convergence of national educational systems on the basis of openness and normal regulation. As such it makes a number of demands on educational systems:

- The creation of links between educational institutions and foreign partners;
- incorporation of international principles into the various national and regional systems developing under the aegis of UNESCO or the UN;
- The creation and development of educational centers facilitating the unification of these systems.
- These factors are leading to a transformation of national educational structures and the raising of new questions about educational quality at all levels.
- Educational internationalization, as an integration process involving the convergence of national educational systems, is dictated by objective socio-economic integration processes and has brought about the phenomenon of 'international education' as a manifestation of internationalization in the field of educational organization. A considerable degree of 'conceptual stretching' can be observed in the usage of this expression, ranging from its purely organization a land educational interpretation as a form of the institutionalization of international education in some structures and systems (projects, programs and systems of education) to its definition as an ideological conception of internationalizing education which studies international and inter-cultural educational problems in an inter-disciplinary manner. In some theories which view 'international education' as a social category ensuring international cooperation and interaction, Russian educationalists

combine three main basic ideas in the concept of international education': 1) the idea of educational internationalization; 2) the conception of it as a socio-adaptive phenomenon; 3) the concept of multi-cultural interaction. Accordingly, they define 'international education' as 'a complex of measures in the area of education and general upbringing enabling young people to gain an awareness of the global inter-dependence of all processes and phenomena, the necessity of mutual support between different ethnic, racial and cultural groups, and the recognition of cultural pluralism, all of which ensure academic and labor mobility, the equality of educational opportunities and the formation of knowledge and the skills required for life and activity in the international community' [12].

The conceptual and value-oriented basis of 'international education' has the following characteristics: 1) humanistic principles of education reflected in a 'person-centered approach' in defining the content and techniques of instruction; 2) the target objective is defined as the formation of a creatively active personality, which in turn determines the selection of techniques to ensure the integrated and comprehensive character of the knowledge imparted, inter-disciplinary coordination of material and a problem-focused and constructively creative educational orientation; 3) fostering the feeling of involvement with and belonging to the world community an awareness of and respect for the goals and values of other cultures and a readiness to actively advocate universal values. Thus the concept of 'international education' is based on the ideas of learner-centered developmental teaching, a teaching focus on inter-cultural communication, an integrated and inter-disciplinary organization of the structure and content of the educational process and a humanistic and civic value orientation. This type of education is also meant to ensure high academic standards and the all-round development of the intellectual potential of students [13].

CONCLUSION

Although these educational processes have not yet been systematically and officially approved, they nevertheless are being disseminated in Kazakhstan as a reflection of the global processes characteristic of our times. With regard to 'international education' in the form of international cooperation, state educational policy has been clearly directed towards its development and dissemination, as dictated by the country's interest in speeding up the modernization of all spheres of the nation's vital activity. In contrast to this, 'transnational education' is only now beginning to attract the interest of education departments. The idea is gaining ground that in view of their national and legal importance it is necessary to elaborate, differentiate and select the principles governing the country's position on globalization processes in education. It is also becoming obvious that not all existing programs and projects are in line with state educational priorities (namely, with the proper positioning of

national education in the world and the organization of the targeted export as well as the properly regulated import of foreign education), which is the reason why they are not very effective. In the area of the development of international cooperation the main task of state educational policy is to implement a complex of measures to create an integrated system of international linkages in the educational field which would embrace both international and national markets for educational services. In this connection one of the priorities is to help Kazakhstan's educational institutions to expand the export of their own educational services.

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