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THE MAIN ISSUES OF IQA IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN UZBEKISTAN AND ITS POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Zafar Juraev

PhD in Technical Sciences

Professor of the Department of Metrology, standardization, and quality control

Andijan Machine-Building Institute

E-mail: zbjuraev@gmail.com

Muzaffar Kurbonov

PhD Researcher

Andijan Machine-Building Institute

E-mail: offinterrel@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In the dynamic landscape of education, quality assurance stands as the bedrock upon which a nation's future is built. In Uzbekistan, a country with a rich history and a vision for progress, the concept of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) has gained increasing significance in recent years. As the nation strives to provide its citizens with a world-class education, it is crucial to address the main issues that currently plague IQA within its educational institutions.

Keywords: Higher Education, Internal Quality Assurance, Modernization, Innovation, Standardization, Mission, Vision.

ОСНОВНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ ВНУТРЕННЕГО ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЯ КАЧЕСТВА В СИСТЕМЕ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В УЗБЕКИСТАНЕ И ВОЗМОЖНЫЕ ИХ РЕШЕНИЯ

Ключевые слова: Высшее образование, внутреннее обеспечение качества, модернизация, инновации, стандартизация, миссия, видение.

O'ZBEKISTONDA OLIY TA'LIM TIZIMINDA ICHKI SIFATNI TA'MINLASHNING ASOSIY MUAMMOLARI VA UNI BARTARAF ETISH UCHUN TAKLIFLAR

Kalit so'zlar: Oliy ta'lim, ichki sifat kafolati, modernizatsiya, innovatsiya, standartlashtirish, missiya, uzoq muddatli reja.

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of education, quality assurance stands as the bedrock upon which a nation's future is built. In Uzbekistan, a country with a rich history and

a vision for progress, the concept of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) has gained increasing significance in recent years. As the nation strives to provide its citizens with a world-class education, it is crucial to address the main issues that currently plague IQA within its educational institutions.

Uzbekistan's educational system has evolved significantly, with a focus on expanding access to education at all levels. However, ensuring that this education is of the highest quality is a multifaceted challenge. This article delves into the critical issues that hinder the effective implementation of IQA in Uzbekistan's educational institutions, ranging from a lack of standardization to resource constraints, and from teacher training deficiencies to assessment and evaluation struggles.

Moreover, this article does not merely aim to highlight these issues but also to propose possible solutions. Uzbekistan's journey towards educational excellence requires a concerted effort from various stakeholders, including the government, educational institutions, and the international community. By identifying and addressing the challenges faced in implementing IQA, Uzbekistan can lay the foundation for a brighter future, one in which its educational system is a shining example of quality, innovation, and opportunity.

The Republic of Uzbekistan is currently carrying out major reforms at the state level in order to improve the quality of education and meet the need for personnel based on the requirements of the world labor market. In particular, Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-2909 dated 20.04.2017 "ON MEASURES FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM", Decree No. PQ-3775 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 05.06.2018 "ON HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM ON ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ENSURE THEIR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE COMPREHENSIVE REFORMS THAT ARE IMPLEMENTED IN THE COUNTRY", PF-5763 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 11.07.2019 - No. "CONCERNING MEASURES TO REFORM ADMINISTRATION IN THE FIELD OF HIGHER AND SECONDARY SPECIAL EDUCATION", President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-5847 dated 08.10.2019 "THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN Decisions and decrees of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 163 dated 29.03.2021 "ON MEASURES FOR ORGANIZING DUAL EDUCATION IN THE SYSTEM OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION" is a clear example.

Join us on this exploration of the main issues of IQA in Uzbekistan and the promising pathways toward overcoming them. In doing so, we contribute to a larger

conversation about the pivotal role of education in shaping the destiny of nations and individuals alike.

MAIN ISSUES OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (IQA) IN UZBEKISTAN:

1. Lack of Standardization:

One of the foremost challenges facing IQA in Uzbekistan is the absence of standardized practices across educational institutions. Each institution often adopts its own set of quality assurance measures, leading to inconsistency in education quality. This lack of uniformity makes it difficult to assess and compare the quality of education provided by different institutions. It also hinders the mobility of students and faculty between institutions, as they may encounter varying standards.

The outer paradigm shift of Uzbek HE is one side of the medal. It is closely linked to a necessary paradigm shift within the HEIs themselves, their visions, (strategic) policies, processes, outcomes, and organizational (quality) culture. While the outer paradigm shift is essentially a move from top-down state control to more autonomous responsibility of HEIs, the inner paradigm shift in QA is a transition from merely delivering the necessary data to the ministry and inspectorate towards an effective IQA for which the HEI takes the responsibility and which is focused on continuous improvement and monitoring. It starts from HEI's vision, mission, and (strategic) policies and makes its own choices for effective implementation. At the same time, the international trends and national EQA standards and requirements are to be fully considered. [1]

2. Limited Resources:

Many educational institutions in Uzbekistan face financial constraints and inadequate infrastructure, which adversely affect their ability to implement effective IQA measures. These limitations can compromise the overall quality of education. Inadequate funding for research and development further impedes innovation and curriculum improvement, hindering institutions from keeping pace with global educational standards.

3. Teacher Training and Development:

The quality of education heavily relies on the competence of teachers. However, there are challenges in providing comprehensive teacher training and professional development programs in Uzbekistan. Teachers may lack exposure to modern teaching methodologies and may struggle to adapt to evolving educational paradigms. This can result in outdated teaching practices and hinder students' preparedness for the demands of the modern world.

4. Assessment and Evaluation:

The assessment and evaluation processes in Uzbekistan's educational institutions often suffer from inconsistencies and a lack of transparency. Some institutions may rely heavily on rote memorization and high-stakes exams, which may not accurately gauge students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills. There is a need for clear and standardized assessment criteria and evaluation methods that promote a more holistic understanding of students' abilities. These challenges collectively impact the quality of education in Uzbekistan and can hinder the nation's progress in various fields. Addressing these issues is crucial to ensure that the country's educational system prepares its citizens to thrive in the global knowledge economy. In the following sections of this article, we will explore possible solutions to these challenges and discuss how stakeholders can work together to strengthen IQA in Uzbekistan's education sector.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

1. Standardization of IQA Practices:

Establish National IQA Guidelines: The government can play a pivotal role in creating and implementing national IQA guidelines that set clear standards for educational institutions. These guidelines should encompass curriculum development, assessment methods, and teacher qualifications. **Encourage Collaboration:** Educational institutions should be encouraged to collaborate and share best practices for IQA. This can be facilitated through regional IQA networks or associations that promote knowledge sharing and mutual support.

2. Increased Investment in Education:

Allocate Adequate Funding: The government should prioritize education in its budget allocation, ensuring that institutions receive sufficient funds to maintain infrastructure, update resources, and support research and development. **Public-Private Partnerships:** Encourage partnerships with the private sector to supplement government funding. Private investment in education can help bridge financial gaps and promote innovation in teaching and infrastructure development.

The creation of quality is influenced by a number of tangible and intangible factors, such as visionary and inspiring leadership, strategic policy and human resources management, internal communication, leanness of organization, and culture, all of which are related to autonomy. Briefly, it can be said that a vision states the reason for the organization's existence in a desired future (10 years or more) and thus makes clear its unique aims. A mission on the other hand formulates the organization's present objectives that it wants to realize in a shorter term (5 years) taking into consideration the existing contexts and abilities or resources, making clear its own profile. [2]

3. Teacher Training Programs:

Comprehensive Teacher Training: Develop comprehensive and ongoing teacher training programs that focus on modern pedagogical methods, technology integration, and continuous professional development. These programs should be accessible to all educators. **International Collaboration:** Collaborate with international educational institutions and organizations to bring in expertise and resources for teacher training. Exchange programs and partnerships can expose Uzbekistan's educators to global best practices.

In fact, the same practical tips of objectives, steps, training, pilots, and communication that are necessary for the outer paradigm shift of each important HE reform, apply equally to the inner paradigm shift. Also, inside a HEI each change in vision, mission, and (strategic) policies, as well as each restructuring, will only be effective and successful when they are understood and shared by all stakeholders concerned. While (re)formulating the HEI's vision, mission, and strategy, it is already helpful to think about how the realization will be measured by IQA, including identifying the signaling indicators. Linked to these changes it is also necessary to develop an effective IQA Department and to write out its competencies. [1]

4. Revamping Assessment Procedures:

Transparent Assessment Criteria: Establish transparent and standardized assessment criteria that emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical skills. This will promote fair evaluation and better prepare students for real-world challenges. **Regular Audits and Reviews:** Implement a system of regular audits and reviews by independent bodies to ensure adherence to assessment standards. These audits should focus on both processes and outcomes.

5. Promote Research and Innovation:

Encourage Research Culture: Foster a culture of research and innovation within educational institutions. Provide incentives and grants for faculty to engage in research projects that can improve teaching methods and curriculum. **Technology Integration:** Embrace technology in education to enhance the learning experience. This includes providing access to online resources, virtual labs, and e-learning platforms.

As the counterpart of more institutional and financial autonomy, a number of states have developed public accountability and QA control to be sure that higher education and research also meet the national and international thresholds. They were inscribed into the national financial models of lump sum and tender models of educational and research projects. Universities have entered open (inter)national competitions to get additional money. These new public management principles were established in decrees and by-laws aimed to implement the Bologna process and its

main objectives: a 3-level structure, ECTS-like credit system, learning outcomes and Qualifications Frameworks, and indeed the QA. [2]

6. Public Awareness and Involvement:

Engage the Community: Involve parents, students, and the wider community in discussions about educational quality. Public feedback and involvement can help hold institutions accountable for maintaining high standards.

Information Dissemination: Ensure that information about IQA measures, accreditation status, and educational outcomes is easily accessible to the public. Transparency can lead to informed decisions by students and parents. These solutions should be implemented in a coordinated manner, with active participation from government bodies, educational institutions, civil society, and international partners. By addressing these challenges and implementing these solutions, Uzbekistan can take significant steps to strengthen its Internal Quality Assurance system and ensure a brighter future for its education sector.

CONCLUSION

In the pursuit of educational excellence, Uzbekistan stands at a pivotal juncture. The challenges surrounding Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) within the nation's educational institutions are formidable, but they are by no means insurmountable. As we conclude our exploration of these issues, we find that the path to a brighter educational future in Uzbekistan is illuminated by innovative solutions and collective determination.

The lack of standardization in IQA practices has left a marked impact on the quality of education across Uzbekistan. However, by establishing national IQA guidelines and collaborative networks, there is an opportunity to unify and elevate standards, thus creating a more equitable educational landscape.

Resource limitations have hindered progress in Uzbekistan's educational institutions, but increased investment, both from the government and the private sector, can provide the financial impetus needed to bolster infrastructure, resources, and research and development.

Addressing the critical need for teacher training and development is fundamental. By implementing comprehensive training programs and engaging in international partnerships, Uzbekistan can empower its educators with the skills and knowledge necessary to inspire the next generation.

Revamping assessment procedures to focus on transparency and holistic evaluation will not only ensure fair student evaluation but also produce graduates better equipped to tackle real-world challenges.

Promoting research and innovation, along with the integration of technology, can infuse vitality into Uzbekistan's educational system, aligning it with the demands of the modern world.

Public awareness and involvement should not be underestimated. Engaging the community and providing transparent information can foster trust and accountability within the educational sector.

In conclusion, Uzbekistan's journey toward educational excellence is a shared responsibility. Government bodies, educational institutions, civil society, and international partners must come together with a common purpose: to address the main issues of IQA and implement the proposed solutions. By doing so, Uzbekistan can ensure that its education system becomes a beacon of quality, equipping its citizens with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in an ever-evolving global landscape.

As we bid farewell to this exploration, let us look forward to a future where Uzbekistan's educational system stands as a testament to the nation's commitment to progress, innovation, and the empowerment of its people through quality education. The path may be challenging, but with determination, collaboration, and unwavering dedication, the goal of a brighter educational future for Uzbekistan is within reach.

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