

# Teachers' professional growth as a condition for improving the quality of higher education in the context of global and Bologna dimensions

*Tatiana Zabelina, Ekaterina Spiryagina*

Institute of Pedagogy, Psychology and Social Problems, 420039, Isaeva Str., 12, Kazan, Russia

**Abstract.** The main factor of competitiveness and attractiveness of Russian higher education is its quality. Currently, the most relevant trend in the development of education is globalization. One of the central figures of this process is the teacher. It should be noted that the system of professional growth of the teacher is focused on the main goal—improving the quality of education. The global trends of globalization impose new requirements on the personality of the teacher, who must be a creative individual, have original, problem-pedagogical and critical thinking, be able to create multi-variant programs, relying on the best world experience and new teaching technologies, applying them in practice. In this article, a study will be conducted to identify the attitude of teachers of one of the educational organizations to the above-mentioned changes; conclusions are drawn about the impact of innovations on the professional growth of teachers; the main directions of development in the future are outlined.

## 1 Introduction

The present time is characterized by the acceleration of the pace of life, the updating of information and increasing digitalization. As a result, the requirements for a modern teacher are also changing. It becomes necessary not only to meet professional requirements, but also to increase the flexibility of one's thinking, the level of one's own development, to be able to quickly navigate in the social space and quickly respond to any innovations [1]. In the process of studying the scientific literature, the personal qualities of a modern high school teacher in the conditions of digitalization were determined, including: creativity, sociability, adaptability, stress resistance, mobility, and flexibility of character.

The transition to market relations and integration of the Russian education system into the European Higher Educational Area objectively requires improving the quality of vocational education, a higher skill level and competitiveness of a specialist early in his life, which in itself becomes a factor of social protection in the new economic conditions [2]. There are objective difficulties in implementing the key conditions of the Bologna process, which include: the introduction of a three-level structure of higher education, issues of academic and professional recognition of qualifications, internal and external quality assurance. All this is also superimposed on the process of digitalization of education.

Teachers are required to purposefully improve their professional level and skills in accordance with modern requirements, to use in teaching not only traditional, but also innovative methods and forms of organizing training, educational technologies and means of evaluating results. The solution of such common tasks as improving the quality of higher education, ensuring the possibility of obtaining additional education and continuous professional development throughout life, as well as the implementation of the variability of educational programs that would ensure the individuality of the trajectory of personal development, is relevant not only for foreign education, but also for our country due to its internal needs. The Russian higher school started to solve these problems in stages before joining the Bologna process and will continue to work on them during this process. [3]

The Open European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has serious prospects that certainly take into account our diversity, but it requires constant efforts to remove existing barriers, as well as a framework for teaching and learning that would promote mobility and even closer cooperation [5].

Once again, we emphasize that changes will occur in the context of digitalization of higher education. At the same time:

- digitalization has a transformative power in a global sense, but it must be considered together with the institutional mission and goals of research, education, and services for society. ;

- issues of digitalization should be considered in the broader context of the educational goals of universities;

- they should be mastered by teachers;

- digitalization can seriously change the traditional educational mission of universities, so we need to pay special attention to the optimization of the educational process [6]

The Progress Report on the implementation of the Bologna Process (2018) pays special attention to the effective use of national advantages of digital technologies: "This task meets the challenges faced by higher education systems and means new opportunities offered by modern technologies. Digital technologies are developing very quickly, so the inability to "pick up the idea" can result in the emergence of graduates whose skills do not quite meet the needs of the labor market" [7].

In order to use new technologies effectively and efficiently, certain conditions must be met: the availability of material resources, personnel and infrastructure; digitalization of curricula; trust in the quality of education obtained with the help of new tools. These measures require strategic planning, changes in the legal environment, and funding [7].

## **2 Methods of research methodology**

Among teachers, students, managers, and in broad circles of society, the Bologna process has caused ambiguous and heated discussions. The main topics raised were the decline in the quality of education, violations of academic ethics, manifestations of inattention to the facts of fraud, corruption and plagiarism, violations of the norms of university autonomy and academic freedoms.

In this regard, the author of the article conducted a pilot study on the topic "Self-assessment of the level of professional development of university teachers". The general population was made up of teachers of the Kazan State Power Engineering University. Sample population (volume-35 respondents, including 3 vice-rectors). A semi-formal interview was chosen as the research method.

One of the semantic blocks of this survey included questions concerning the attitude of representatives of the teaching staff to the reforms of higher education in the framework of the Bologna process, as well as the readiness to implement in practice the main goals and objectives of this process. The main objectives of the discussion were:

- to identify the assessments of university managers and teachers on the acceptability of the main provisions (principles) of the Bologna Declaration for Russian higher education institutions;
- analysis of the views of rectors and teachers on the conditions (options) for the modernization of higher education in the light of the Bologna process;
- obtaining prognostic assessments of university managers and teachers on the positive and negative consequences of Russia's accession to the Bologna Process;
- identification of common and special positions in the positions of university leaders and teaching staff on topical issues of higher education in the light of the requirements of the Bologna Process;
- attitude to the elimination of departmental disunity of educational institutions and the merger of universities with academic research institutes;
- assessment of the impact of the Bologna Process on the export potential of Russian universities.

### **3 Discussion and analysis of the results**

The results obtained allowed us to identify three main groups of teachers who demonstrate a different attitude to the ongoing transformations:

1. A significant part of the respondents (60.2%) have a negative attitude to the reforms in the field of higher education. They express concerns about the loss of the quality of Russian education and the fundamental nature of higher education in connection with the implementation of the foundations of the Bologna process.

It is known that one of the main requirements of foreign partners to the Russian system of higher education — issue domestic universities diplomas, which could be the most comparable generally accepted documentation of completion of appropriate schools or courses listened. This will allow mutual recognition in the participating countries of the university educational and scientific qualifications obtained in Russia. We are talking about the recognition of entries in Russian university diplomas and their appendices abroad.

If the diploma of a Russian university indicates a specialty that has no analogues in Europe or America, then the international prestige of the Russian higher school will fall, making it difficult for the holder of such a diploma (for example, a foreigner who studied in Russia) to enter the foreign labor market. The same applies to the unification in the names of the disciplines studied in universities (training courses), which are indicated in the appendices to the diploma.

The respondents also noted the problem that concerns them, which is that the income level of highly qualified specialists in Russia and in Europe is very different, so we can assume a possible "brain drain" from Russia. It is logical that graduates will strive for the best working conditions that can be provided by economically developed countries, most often Western Europe or North America. The reasons are obvious: low wages, lack of opportunities to engage in scientific activities. This problem is urgent and requires close attention.

We think that such a negative attitude to the unified ("Europeanized") applications to the diploma of Russian higher education can be explained by the following: the problem of forgery of diplomas of Russian universities, as well as other educational organizations, is widespread, which leads to the discrediting of Russian documents on the received education. If employers (both Russian and foreign) have no complaints about diplomas issued during the Soviet period (their reliability, as a rule, is not in doubt), then modern Russian diplomas are treated with caution, and this is quite understandable.

In the Internet, you can easily find offers for the sale of diplomas from various universities on state numbered forms with the corresponding appendices to the diploma,

academic certificates, etc. Documents (certificates) about the completion of educational organizations of secondary vocational education are also sold.

Representatives of the first group believe that domestic higher education remains the best in the world and should not be guided by foreign models, since they pursue different educational goals. This question concerns the three-level education system, and in particular, the situation of graduates with bachelor's degrees. Many experts believed that the transition to such education in Russian universities is possible only in the distant future, and even assessed this principle as completely inappropriate and destructive for Russian higher education.

The arguments of the opponents of the three-level education system boil down to the fact that the Russian labor market is not ready for the use of bachelor students who have studied for four years. This issue is still controversial. The problem is in the stereotype of minds of Russians that a bachelor's degree is an under-trained specialist who will find it difficult to find employment in the labor market. Basic knowledge that would allow performing professional functions is obtained during 4 courses. As a rule, the master's degree gives a deeper specialization, focuses on research or teaching work. It is important to note that a bachelor's degree is a completed higher education, and a graduate with such a diploma has every right to apply for a good position.

The main drawback of the bachelor's degree is revealed in the employment of graduates. Many employers are wary of the bachelor's degree qualification, as there is an association with secondary vocational education in connection with the practical orientation of their activities. That is, some employers consider such qualifications as incomplete higher education and are reluctant to give jobs to such personnel. Of course, this opinion is erroneous, since the main question is the purpose of training: does the student want to devote himself to the scientific field, or does he want to master the chosen profession by obtaining a bachelor's degree. But as practice shows, not all employers are ready to adapt to a new way of thinking. In addition, there is a sharp competition between graduates with a bachelor's degree and those who have completed a master's degree and a specialty. Often, the employer prefers the latter two, since secretly specialist and master's degrees win in comparison with the diploma of bachelor's graduates.

In the West, where enterprises are willing to accept graduates with bachelor's degrees, as there is a developed system of additional training. Many Western employers prefer to raise personnel specifically for their company, teaching the latest production technologies and professional secrets at the workplace and eventually getting the right ones [8].

In Russia, such a system was not formed historically and was introduced without taking into account the existing traditional system of education; It was assumed that a student studying in a bachelor's degree is preparing for executive functions in the industrial or socio-economic sphere, but, according to the first group, Russia needs higher-level specialists in order to maintain its scientific potential. Some teachers believe that as a result of the merger of the European and domestic education systems, a "hybrid" is obtained, which will only hinder the development of the higher education system.

Another issue of concern to the teaching staff: a single doctoral degree after graduate school — Doctor of Science or "Doctor of Philosophy", as is customary in the West (Ph. D., the symbol of a doctoral degree, regardless of the branch of science-natural, humanitarian, social, economic, etc. The Berlin Summit of the countries participating in the Bologna Process (at which Russia joined the Bologna Declaration) decided to extend European requirements and standards to doctoral degrees. Thus, we are talking about the possible rejection in the future of the two-tier system of candidate/doctor of sciences (as has already happened in a number of former Soviet republics), as well as from the Higher Attestation Commission as a state body of centralized control of the Russian standard of academic degrees and scientific titles. The first group was strongly opposed, in addition,

there is a problem that is widely known, but not officially advertised-the trade in candidate and doctoral theses, which are semi-legal goods of Russian universities. Moreover, doctoral dissertations are the most expensive commodity. This can deprive universities of significant income, and cannot be accepted by the majority of managers and members of specialized academic councils of Russian universities.

It can be concluded that such a negative attitude and conviction is due to the lack of awareness of a significant part of teachers about the development of higher professional education in the world and Russia, rejection and prejudice against the processes of Russia's entry into the world educational space.

2. The second group of respondents (28.7%) is in favor of this process, considering it an objective necessity associated with the integration of Russia into the world market. Representatives of this group note the high importance of academic mobility, which opens up real training opportunities in foreign universities for both students and teachers [9].

With respect to the requirement on the harmonization of records (names of fields) in the diplomas, the respondents consider it quite fair. This may serve as an additional argument in favor of the recognition of Russian qualifications in European countries [10].

The respondents also note that in the future, the European diploma supplement will make the educational degrees of future specialists more recognizable and recognized in Europe. Representatives of the second group are positive and are confident that a bachelor's degree from a Russian university will be recognized in the domestic or European labor market as a certificate of a sufficient level of professional qualification. They believe that our education can become more competitive, and graduates who have completed a bachelor's degree will have the opportunity to continue their studies in foreign universities and apply for a good position abroad.

Another significant advantage is that bachelors can already start a career in 4 years, solving the problem of lack of qualified personnel. In this regard, we note that a large percentage of graduates are employed after completing their bachelor's degree, while the rest continue their studies in the master's program [11].

The results obtained indicate a high degree of awareness of this group of teachers, their acceptance of the need for Russia to enter the world educational space, and a clear understanding of the future opportunities and prospects of participants in the educational process.

3. The third group of teachers (9.1%) is indifferent to the ongoing changes in the higher education system. Respondents express the opinion that these are processes that do not depend on them, and therefore they are so indifferent. This position, in our opinion, is also due to the poor awareness of teachers about the goals and objectives of the ongoing changes, a vague idea of the final results of these processes, as well as probably personal reasons (for example, professional fatigue). It is possible that such assessments are based on the lack of motivation for professional work at the university, which is associated with a low level of remuneration and ignorance of the prospects for career and personal growth of a certain part of the employees.

Several respondents avoided answering this question without explaining the reasons for refusing to express their own professional position.

So, we can sum up the following result:

1. The negative or indifferent attitude of the representatives of the teaching staff to the implementation of the basic principles of the Bologna process, in our opinion, is due to: a) the fear of negative consequences of changes for some teachers, including for themselves; b) a lack of awareness or a superficial understanding of the essence of this process.

These factors have a negative impact on the quality of education, as it is the teachers who ensure the development of new curricula and the preparation of teaching aids, organize the independent work of students, and so on.

2. A positive attitude to the reforms in the higher education system, on the contrary, has a positive effect on the learning process, enhances learning and strengthens the status of the University. Teachers who objectively assess the situation of higher education in the country are ready for innovations and contribute to their active implementation. As can be seen from the results of the survey, they have clearer prospects for professional growth and motivation than the representatives of the first group.

## 4 Conclusions

1. University teachers show an ambiguous attitude to the putting into practice of the main provisions of the Bologna process: The majority of higher education workers don't have an unambiguous perception of Russia's participation in the Bologna process.

2. A significant part of higher education workers have a negative attitude to the modernization of Russian education.

3. The level of readiness of teachers to implement the basics of the Bologna Process in practice remains quite low.

Thus, the professional and personal readiness of the teaching staff for real participation in the process of reforming higher education needs significant correction.

Despite a certain conservatism of the majority of the teaching staff regarding the preservation of the traditions of Russian education, almost a third of the surveyed heads of universities and half of the teachers are aware of the importance of changes for Russian universities

The European University Association sees the future transformation of the Bologna process as follows:

- more systematic and consistent reform through a new "peer support approach" that will focus on implementing quality assurance recognition and compliance with the qualifications framework;

- strengthening and updating the solution to the problems of social integration and equity, particularly based on the development, introduction and monitoring of a agreed set of policy measures within the framework of the European Higher Education Area strategy on the social dimension;

- respect for the university's fundamental values: academic freedom, autonomy, encouraging of civic values;

- increased focus on the transformation of the educational process, including its digitalization at an accelerated pace;

- expanding the range of topical issues and issues of common interest for European higher education institutions and countries that have adopted the Bologna Declaration;

- improving the "style" of reform implementation, which consists in more active participation of interested countries and specific universities. A style that uses the innovative potentials of higher education institutions, their ability to adequately set long-term goals in the face of dynamic complexity of problems and increasing levels of their consistency.

- compliance with the current accelerated changes that affect higher education [12].

The Bologna Process, in its essential design, represents a global transformation of national higher education systems in the direction of increasing their pan-European comparability, compatibility and comparability. It brings new philosophical and educational meanings to the rich academic culture of each country and aims at the qualitative improvement of higher education, making it adequate to the trends and rhythms of the rapidly developing knowledge economy, social and political challenges. It is important to emphasize that the constant goals of the Bologna Process are:

- psychological, pedagogical and didactic "re-equipment" of academic staff of universities;
- intensive updating of higher school didactics in the aspect of changing the pedagogical paradigm;
- a sharp increase in the social role of higher education and its diverse diversification;
- a fundamental extension functions of higher education institutions, which helps to implement the concept of "lifelong learning»;
- ensuring demographic and gerontological flexibility of educational programs, curricula and modules.

In our opinion, these measures are particularly relevant for overcoming the existing objective difficulties in Russian education, some of which were identified as a result of the survey.

The results of the research in this article are the basis for further work on the problem of the readiness of representatives of the faculty of higher education to integrate Russia into a single educational space. They can be used in the quality management system of the educational process, as well as to determine the content of additional professional education of the university faculty.

## References

1. T.G. Zabelina. Collection of scientific papers «Human development in the era of digitalization", **1**. 118 (2020)
2. E.S. Koroleva. Collection of scientific papers «Human development in the era of digitalization", **1**. 207 (2020)
3. P.J. Mitchell, L.A. Mitchell. Social and Behavioral Sciences, **154**. 170 (2014)
4. Z.K. Kulsharipova, G.E. Nurymbetova. Materials of the international scientific-practical conference, **1**. 253 (2014)
5. P. Gaston.. Liberal Education, **94(4)**. 14 (2008). EUA's Initiatives to establish European Dimension on Learning and Teaching. Available at: <http://www.eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/background-paper-to-the-eua-bologna-statement-2018>
6. G. Neave. Managerialism and Evaluation in Higher Education, **7**. 11 (2016)
7. T.E. Lebedeva, E.E. Egorov, R.YA. Vakulenko. Life Science Journal, **11**, **10**. 533 (2014)
8. N. Maadad, M. Tigh. International Perspectives on Higher Education Research, Volume, **11**. **3** (2014)
9. J.M. Piro. Revolutionizing global higher education policy, innovation and the Bologna process, 254 (2016)
10. H. Join-Lambert, T. Kremneva. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. 203 (2014)
11. R. Keeling. European Journal of Education, **41**, **2**. 203 (2006)
12. T.M. Tregubova, A.S. Kats, L.A. Shibankova. Materials of VI International Forum on pedagogical education "Perspectives and priorities of pedagogical education in the era of transformations, choice and challenges". 309 (2020)
13. R. Kh. Gilmeeva, A. R. Kamaleeva, A. S. Katz, E. Y. Levina, and all. Cognitive pedagogy: teaching ai. 228 (2020)
14. Z. A. Bakar, A. Rafaquat. Materials of 2-nd International Seminar on Quality and Affordable Education. *ISQAE*. 536 (2013)
15. T. Karran. Education Policy, **22**. 163 (2009)
16. K. Ren. Higher Education Policy, **25**, **1**. 19 (2015)
17. L. Haukland. Journal of Further and Higher Education, **41**, **3**. 261 (2017)