



Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research



Journal homepage: <http://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/IJOMR/>

Amendment of Higher Education Institution Quality Assurance System Activities

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ABSTRACTS

The work aims to improve the system for assessing the quality of activities of higher education institutions in terms of quality management. Problems that hinder the improvement of the quality of universities' activities are identified and systematized. An analysis of the existing criteria-evaluation complexes used to determine the effectiveness of the activities of higher education institutions was carried out. The content of the components of the quality of the activities of higher education institutions has been clarified. A structural model for assessing the internal quality of higher education institutions is proposed. The analysis of the macro-environment of the activity of the university was carried out using the methodology of strategic management, including political, economic, social, and technological (PEST) analysis. The result of the study is a macro-criteria model of the quality management system of higher education institutions, which characterizes quality management, a new approach to assessing the effectiveness of a university and the degree of its competitiveness, as well as the activities of higher education institutions in terms of quality management.

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted/Received 05 Nov 2023

First revised 17 Dec 2023

Accepted 18 Feb 2023

First available online 20 Feb 2023

Publication date 01 Mar 2023

Keyword:

All-general quality management,
Educational institution,
Quality management system,
Quality of educational services,
University management.

1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of educational services is a cornerstone problem of the entire education system, in particular higher education. Attention to this issue is shown by representatives of government authorities, the public, and various subjects of the educational process (i.e. students, their parents, employers, and employees of educational institutions). All this determines the relevance of issues related to the development of effective mechanisms for quality management of higher education, taking into account the requirements of the international standards of the ISO series and the system of total quality management (TQM).

The main problems in the field of higher education that impede the improvement of its quality are:

- (i) Systemic underfunding of domestic higher education.
- (ii) Increasing the level of uncertainty of the state and dynamics of development of the social and economic environment of society, economic and market crises.
- (iii) Lagging behind the domestic system of higher education from global and European trends in the development and improvement of the quality of higher education.
- (iv) Non-compliance with the existing mechanisms for the development and renewal of higher education with the requirements of new socio-economic conditions.
- (v) Insufficient level of renewal and aging of the teaching staff of domestic universities.
- (vi) Reduction in the volume of research and development and the potential of scientific teams of universities.

It is impossible to solve all these problems only by introducing a quality management system. There is a need for a holistic rethinking of the entire management system of an educational institution from the point of view of quality management, which should be based on a single system of criteria that allows this system to form and ensure its effective functioning, aimed at achieving the mission of an educational institution.

In domestic and foreign literature, quite a lot of different approaches to the definition of criteria complexes for assessing the quality of education and its monitoring stand out. According to the previously existing state educational standards, the quality of education was determined by assessing the degree of formation of the so-called knowledge and skills (K&Ss) among students. Subsequently, in the Concept for the Modernization of Uzbekistan's Education for the Period up to 2030, K&Ss were supplemented with criteria evaluating the experience of independent work, the level of legal self-awareness, and personal qualities. Federal educational standards of the new generation proclaimed the transition to a new category called "competence", defined as the ability to apply knowledge, and skills, to act successfully based on practical experience in solving problems of a general kind, also in a certain wide area. However, these qualitative characteristics are still not sufficient and exhaustive. We can observe a similar picture when evaluating the activities of the university. Existing assessment methods, in particular, monitoring of the activities of universities, cover indicators that characterize the educational, research, international, financial, and economic activities of the university, as well as the state of its infrastructure and issues of employment of graduates (Arya, 2021).

These indicators characterize the effectiveness of the activities of an educational institution but do not make it possible to assess the quality of the services provided by an educational institution (Longaray & Castelli, 2020). All this necessitates the search for a different approach to assessing the quality of the functioning of the university. One of the most effective options is the formation of a system for assessing the activities of the university from the standpoint of quality management (Chornopyska & Bolibrukh, 2020). Such an

approach considers quality not only as a set of certain competencies but should also include directly the characteristics of the activities of an educational institution, which can be conditionally divided into internal and external (KhalafArat *et al.*, 2018). The structural model for assessing the internal quality of higher education institutions includes 2 subsystems: the quality of educational processes at the university and the quality (efficiency) of university management within each of these subsystems, specific indicators can be identified (Figure 1). The external component of the quality of the university's activities can be characterized using the political, economic, social, and technological (PEST) analysis technique, which makes it possible to assess the degree of influence of various macro-environment factors on the educational institution.

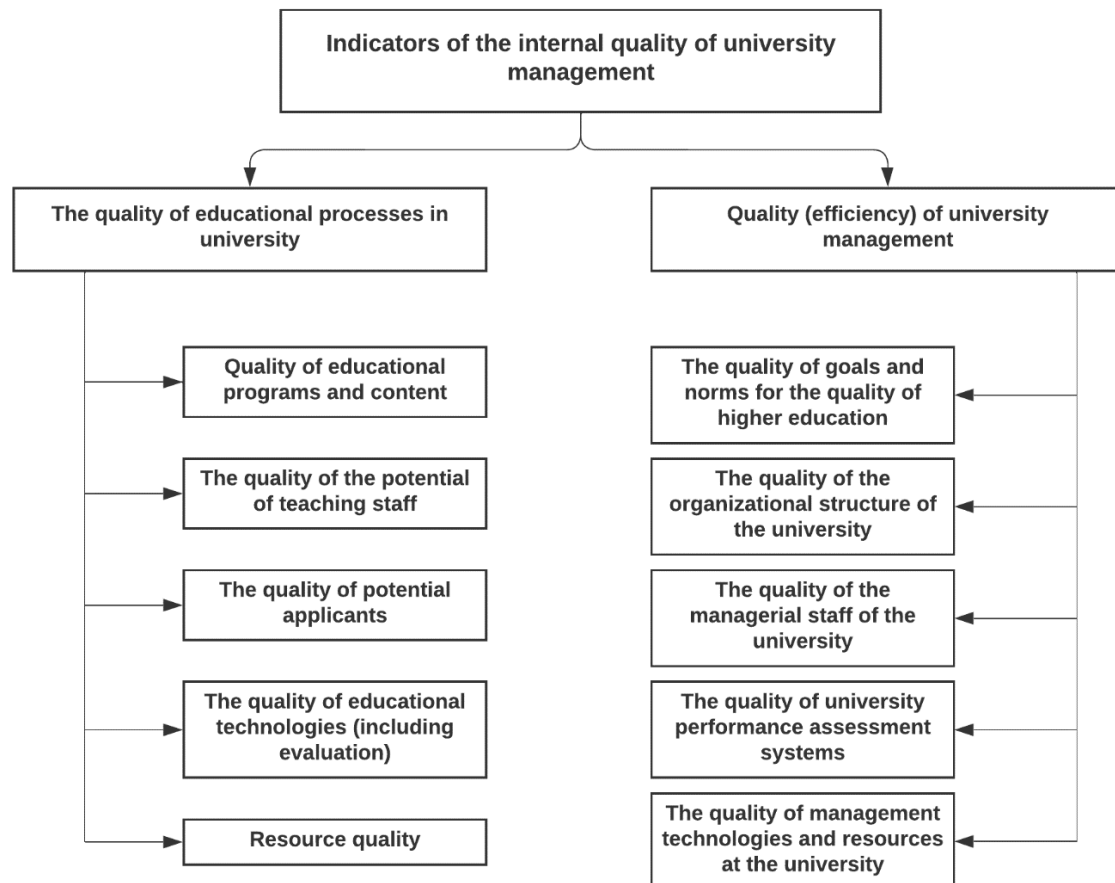


Figure 1. Structural model for assessing internal quality institutions of higher education.

Based on the basic requirements of this methodology, 4 groups of factors influencing the functioning of the university were identified: political (P), economic (E), social (S), and technological (T) (Figure 2). This technique makes it possible to conduct a qualitative diagnosis of the state of the macro-environment of the university and assess the degree of influence of the identified factors on the functioning of the university.

At the same time, the proposed set of indicators does not reflect the requirements for the educational process, as well as the subjects of activity of higher education institutions. All this creates the basis for continuing the search for optimal ways to improve the quality of the university.

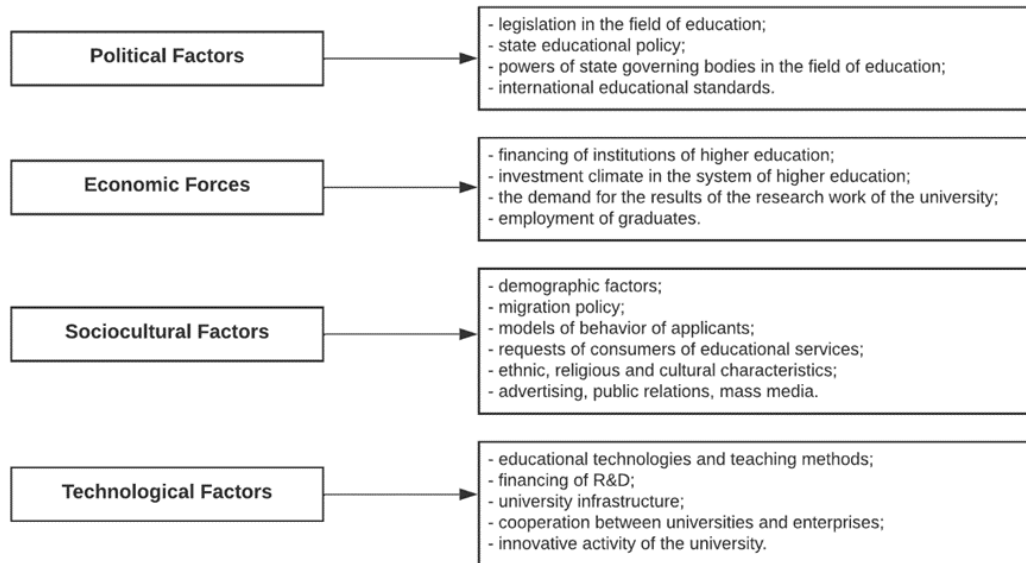


Figure 2. PEST-analysis of the activities of the university.

2. METHODS

This research article used a qualitative method of research on clarifying the higher education quality assurance system. Thus, data for the scientific paper was collected by analyzing available data sources and individual research at local higher education institutions (HEIs). The approach is a fundamental component at the core of the HEI activities towards enhancing quality assurance, embodied as the general methodological basis of sharing knowledge management and quality assurance of pedagogical staff of HEIs and the possibility of their implementation in the educational process, characterized by points of view. This study determines the direction of the researcher's activity in the study of one or another phenomenon (Orosz, 1997). The collected data was analyzed, as shown in Figure 3, according to the theory of Miles and Huberman.

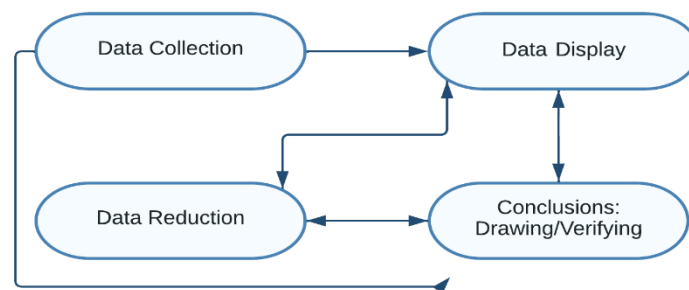


Figure 3. Components of data analysis: Interactive model from: Miles and Huberman (1994).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most researchers agree that the solution to the problem of assessing the quality of education lies in the construction of a macro-criteria model that covers all aspects of the activities of an educational institution and makes it possible to assess its competitiveness. Today, many universities have their quality management systems, but there are no unified

requirements for their development and implementation. In our opinion, the reason for this is the lack of a unified approach to the development of criteria that should form the basis of such systems. The macro-criteria model of the quality management system of higher education institutions is based on the key principles of TQM and integrated management of the organization's activities (Jackson, 2011). The model includes 3 groups of indicators that characterize the general conditions for the functioning of the TQM, the system for ensuring the quality of higher education, and the system for managing the development of the quality of education. The first group of indicators covers general issues (regulatory, organizational, personnel, technological) that characterize the conditions for the creation, functioning, and development of the university's TQM (Fayzievna, 2012). The main task of this assessment block is to form primary information on the organization of the work of the university and the formation of a basis for its management in terms of quality management showed by **Figure 4**.

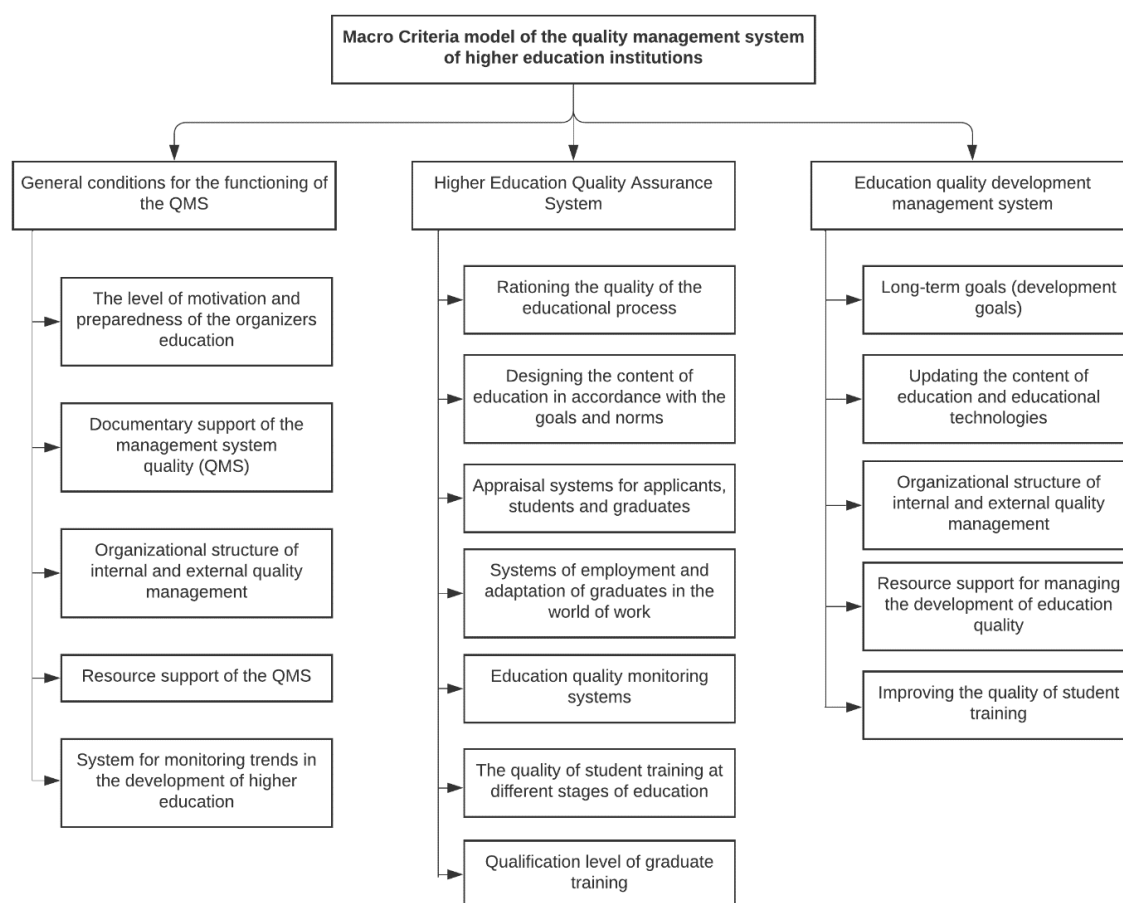


Figure 4. Macro criteria model of the quality management system of higher education institutions.

The second group of indicators consists of criteria that characterize the quality management of the functioning of the quality assurance system of higher education. Also, this group will include indicators that characterize the results of managing the activities of the university, which will include the level of quality of graduate training, as well as the level of qualifications and the degree of satisfaction of employers with their knowledge and skills (Shaturaev, 2023). The third group of indicators is determined by the criteria characterizing

the development of the TQM of the university, as well as the components of improving the quality of higher education, including in such areas as improving the system of internal and external management, resource provision and updating the sustained educational process.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of numerous studies continue to note the presence of significant problems in the field of education, among which problems related to the quality of educational services provided are always decisive.

The developed models of the criteria-evaluating system for the functioning of institutions of higher education have a direct relationship with the definition of its effectiveness. The proposed macro criteria model meets the requirements of total quality management, as well as the principles of dual management. The main advantage of introducing such a macro-criteria model of a higher education quality management system is to provide a holistic approach to the assessment and analysis of quality management systems of higher education institutions.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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