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BOLOGNA PROCESS AND THE PERSPECTIVES OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN UZBEKISTAN

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Аннотация: Мақолада Ўзбекистонда олий таълим тизими ва Болония стандартларидаги умумийлик ва фарқлари, Ўзбекистон шароитида Болония тизимини жорий этиш истиқболлари ва бу жараённинг ижобий ва салбий жиҳатлари қиёсий таҳлил қилинган.

Калит сўзлар: Болония тизими, таълим стандартизацияси, олий таълим интеграциялашуви, халқаро академик мобиллик.

Аннотация: В статье представлен сравнительный анализ общих и различий в системе высшего образования в Узбекистане и Болонских стандартов, перспективы внедрения Болонской системы в Узбекистане и ее плюсы и минусы.

Ключевые слова: Болонская система, образовательная стандартизация, интеграция высшего образования, международная академическая мобильность.

Abstract: The article presents a comparative analysis of the general and differences in the higher education system in Uzbekistan and the Bologna standards, the prospects for introducing the Bologna system in Uzbekistan and its pros and cons.

Keywords: Bologna system, educational standardization, higher education integration, international academic mobility.

Introduction: It is not a secret that, in the modern conditions, one of the main measures of determining the competitiveness of any country is how the capacity and level of human capital is developed there. The proper use of human potential and the right direction of it are inseparably linked with the education system. Because, the education is considered as the main source of sustainable development of the country in the medium and long term period. Therefore, today, in the early part of the 21st century, during the course of the analysis of the road passed and reforms that meet the

conditions of global development, education reform has become an issue in almost all countries, including developing countries, like Uzbekistan.

Since the first years of independence, the Republic of Uzbekistan has taken a number of major steps to renovate the entire education system from old and ineffective standards. In particular, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Education and the National Program for Personnel Training, adopted in 1997, became the basis of these reforms [12],[13]. However, in modern conditions, the quality of higher education is determined not only by its internal capacity and by power, but also by the degree, how much it meets international standards and whether it integrates with other educational systems.

This article analyzes the realities of the Bologna process – a system that has now become a full set of international educational standards, in the example of Uzbekistan. The main purpose of this work is to reveal the essence of the Bologna system and to study the problems and perspectives of its implementation in our country.

Statement of the Problem: On June 19, 1999, the Ministers of Education of 29 European countries signed a Declaration in Bologna (Italy) to introduce common European standards of higher education, to recognize common diplomas of universities and to facilitate and equalize educational opportunities in all European countries [11], [9:265]. This document is called the Bologna Declaration and it is the main standard for higher education in European countries. The basic idea of the Bologna Declaration is reflected in its strategy. The grand strategy of the Bologna Declaration has two main objectives [14]:

- Integration of education in Europe
- Integrating national human resources training markets in the EU

The whole mechanism associated with the implementation of the principles of the Bologna Declaration is called the Bologna process.

To date, the Bologna process has been accepted not only by EU countries but also by countries in other regions. The process has a total of 48 members and is open to membership worldwide [3:124]. For example, in the Commonwealth of Independent

States, Russia-2003 (Berlin), Ukraine-2005 (Bergen), Kazakhstan-2010 (Budapest), Belarus - May-2015 (Yerevan) were included in the Bologna process [11].

One of the main objectives of the Bologna process is to “ensure the mobility of the education system” [5:81]. For this purpose, all higher education systems in the countries of the process should be as close as possible and the specifications and academic degrees offered at the end of education should be general or easy to compare. This is primarily due to the introduction of credits, higher education module systems and special application to diplomas in universities. Another important aspect of the Bologna system is the reform of the curriculum.

The main objectives of the Bologna process are [15]: increasing access to higher education, continually improving the quality and competitiveness of the European higher education system, increasing and expanding mobility of students and teachers, as well as improving the employment rate of graduates, for all academic and other levels, introduction of specialties based on labor market demand.

Countries voluntarily become members of the Bologna process by signing and ratifying the Bologna Declaration. At the same time, they are also required to fulfill several conditions. These terms are subdivided into terms that must be met within 1-3-5 years [11:103]. For example: within one year, the introduction of European annexes of bachelor's and master's degrees in higher education. Between three and five years, it is required to reform the national higher education system in accordance with the Bologna standards.

Developing countries need to implement more and more significant reforms in their higher education system in order to integrate the Bologna process and implement its standards into practice. This is because the basic conditions and prerequisites of the Bologna system are quite different from those in many countries, especially in the former communist countries. The main purpose of the Bologna system is to create a common zone of higher education in Europe. Therefore, the declaration sets out the conditions that must apply to the common area. They are [15]:

- Transition from subject (disciplinary) to module system (individual approach);
- Clear distinction between higher and postgraduate education;

- Accreditation of educational programs;
- Two level education: Bachelor-Master's degrees. Transferring of academic settings and teaching loads to credit system;
- 1 level scientific degree: PhD (PhD);
- Ensuring the academic mobility of students and teachers;
- Implementation of the European application for diploma;
- Establishing quality control of higher education.

Also, should be noted that, the specialties in both levels are determined according to the labor market demand, and the students may change their specialty in the Master's degree.

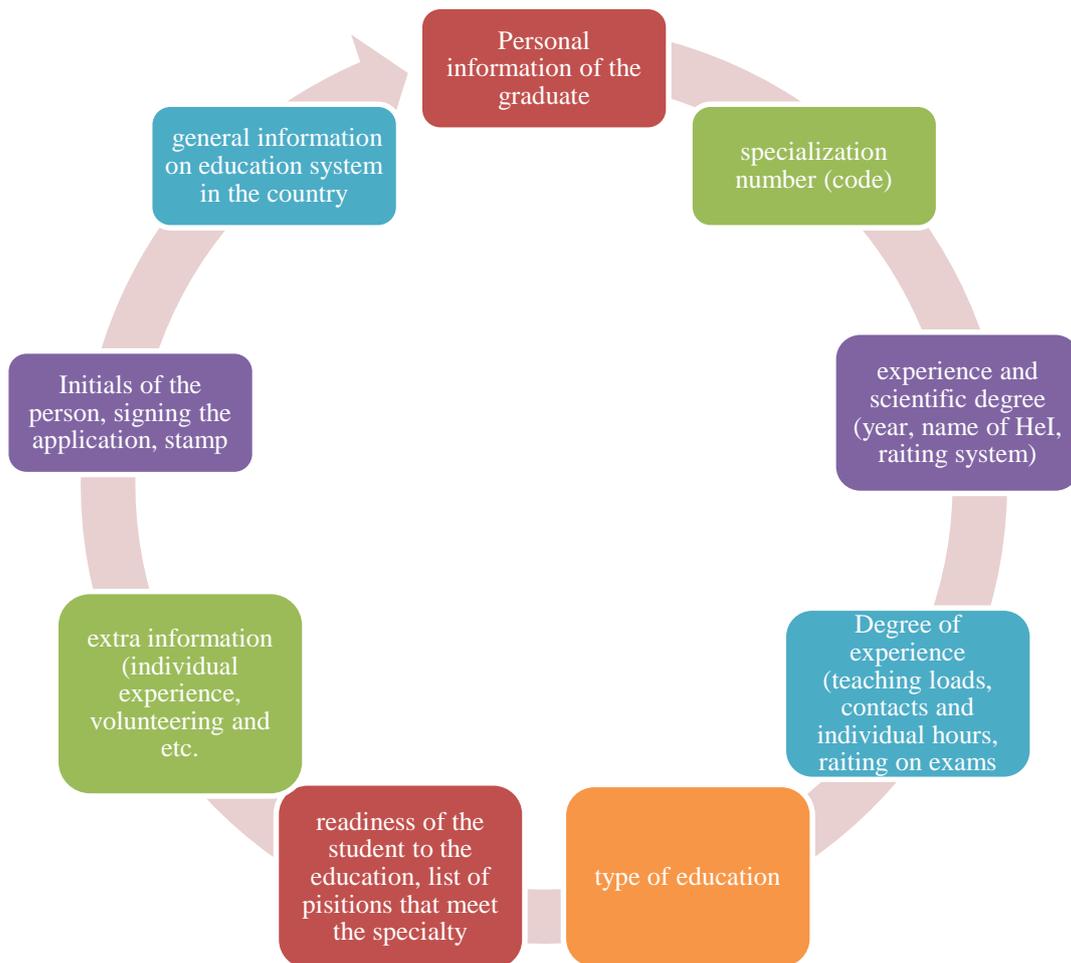
The difference between the Bologna system and the traditional one is that the loads are determined by the credit system, not by the hours that we are used to. This means that every country that joins the Bologna process and signs the Bologna Declaration will have to change the hour-based system to the credit system. Approximately one credit is 36 hours (18 hours in the classroom, 18 hours are independent). Annual student load should not exceed 60 credits in the individual rating program and half of these sixty credits are given for obligatory lecture-auditorium work and the other half for independent work [4:53].

As the Bologna process introduces many innovations to higher education, it has also developed specific requirements for the curriculum. According to it, the curriculum should consist of three groups of subjects. This group of subjects is as follows [7:34]:

- a) Compulsory and fixed time subjects
- b) Subjects that are compulsory but do not have a fixed time
- c) Elective subjects

There is no mandatory binding ratio among these a, b, and c disciplines. The Higher Education Institution, joined the Bologna process, determines this ratio according to National Higher Education Standards [10:87]. The Bologna Higher Education institution has to develop a mechanism and internal control system of the

educational process. This control institution should be supervised by students, faculty, and external experts.



Picture 1. Scheme of the common European application for diplomas

In addition, in order to ensure high quality of education, a Member State must establish a national system of educational programs and education quality control and accreditation that meet European common system. Moreover, higher education institution, joined Bologna process, must also submit a compulsory European application for diplomas. This application should contain the information given in the above-mentioned scheme.

Higher Education System and Bologna Standards in Uzbekistan: Similarities and Differences. The Bologna system has now become a recognized international standard of higher education. For Uzbekistan, membership in the Bologna system gives the country a new impetus for reforming and upgrading higher education system, giving it additional opportunities to participate in major EU-funded projects.

However, it should be noted that, although Uzbekistan is not officially a member of the Bologna system, many of its terms and standards are introduced into the higher education system of the country. Thus, before analyzing the perspectives and challenges of Uzbekistan’s accession to the Bologna system, we will consider and compare two common systems of education: the national higher education system of Uzbekistan and the Bologna process. Thus, the standards of the higher education system of Uzbekistan and Bologna have the following generalities:

Table 1. Similarities of Higher education system in Uzbekistan and the Bologna system

Uzbekistan	Bologna system
2 level high education	2 level high education
2 levelscientificdegree (PhD, DSc)	1levelsscientificdegree (PhD)
Control and attestation of education	Accreditation and control of education

As can be seen from the table, some of the most important standards of the Bologna system have already been introduced in Uzbekistan. We have a three-level system of higher education called "Bologna skill structure". These cycles are definitely bachelor, master's, and post-doctoral degrees. To date, Uzbekistan has introduced a two-level system of higher education: 4 years of bachelor (except for some specialties), 2 years Master’s and post higher education.

Now let us analyze the differences between the higher education system of Uzbekistan and the standards of the Bologna process:

Uzbekistan	Bologna system
Subject (disciplinary) system	modulesystem (individualapproach)
Loads–hour-based system	Loads–credit system
Differences between education and the labor market	Fully job market orientation of the bachelor degree
Poor academic mobility	Academic mobility

1st and 2 nd levels in higher education are strictly interrelated	Undergraduate and graduate specialties do not have to be the same
Existence of students' elimination status	No students' elimination
The distinction between science and compulsory science is not applied in practice	The classification of subjects and the presence of proportion in practice

In spite of many similarities, Uzbekistan still has some old standards, such as hour-based loading and subject (disciplinary) systems. It is a different matter, whether the situation is positive or negative. However, if Uzbekistan wants to join the Bologna process and bring its higher education system to a new level, become one of the leading international higher education centers, train experienced national staff, attract more foreign students, then the hour-based and disciplinary system must be abandoned and a modular system based on credit loads and individual approach should be implemented.

In the Uzbek universities, the subjects are officially divided into compulsory, specialized and elective disciplines, as well as in the Bologna system. However, in practice, for some reason, all elective subjects are compulsory, meaning that a student has no right to choose freely any subject among the elective subjects. It follows that Uzbekistan must pay particular attention to the practical aspects and mechanisms of reforming the higher education.

Perspectives of the implementation of the Bologna system in Uzbekistan. To date, The Erasmus+ program along with the Embassies of Member States and the EU Delegation carries out the Bologna process in Uzbekistan [2:12]. The Central Asian Regional Information Bureau of the Bologna Process, located in Almaty, Kazakhstan, regularly cooperates with the Government of Uzbekistan [6:135]. The Republic of Uzbekistan is not a member of the Bologna system. However, let us imagine that Uzbekistan is on the threshold of joining the Bologna system. So what will Uzbekistan gain from this process?

Summarizing the positive aspects of Uzbekistan's accession to the Bologna process we can state:

1. Education system:

- Internationalization
- Integration
- Standardization

2. Specialization:

- Depth (Stage 2)
- Ability to change

3. Mobility

- The students
- Teachers
- Exchange of experience, skills and knowledge

4. The labor market

- Competitiveness
- profiling

5. Educational Services

- Inexpensive exports
- Improvement of quality

However, while the implementation of Bologna system there appears some issues that need to be taken into account. Firstly, as with any universal or international educational standard, it does not take into account national specifics. Secondly, students and staff mobility may lead to brain drain and the developing countries may lose young and professional staff. Moreover, there may appear some problems with diplomas recognition and as the system bases on absolute individuality, there may be a loss of collective spirit.

Therefore, it could be said that if Uzbekistan wants to become a member of the Bologna system or implement its standards, it should choose gradual implementation and adapt the system to the conditions in Uzbekistan, prepare the whole education and higher education system to the new system.

Conclusion: The 21st century is a period of intellectual property, information technologies, and innovations in general. The system of higher education cannot stay abreast of these developments and innovations: it should serve the society at a new level by providing professional and highly qualified personnel, formulating more mature civil society members, and educating key leaders who will guide the new millennium.

Reforming the system of higher education, and directing it to the economy and social life of the society is very important. In this regard, the mechanisms of international educational standards, based on many years of best practices, and have been successful in the practice of many countries are crucial. One such mechanism is the Bologna process, known as the European Higher Education System, which has been explored in this analytical work.

The Bologna process has now become a universally recognized international standard, leaving the regional borders of the European system of higher education. The Bologna system, as a process of the generalization and internationalization of higher education systems is essential to the modern realities, and the main challenge to developing countries like Uzbekistan is to properly organize and implement the system at national level. For Uzbekistan and other developing countries, joining the Bologna system will, first and foremost, enable to modernize the economy, develop interrelations among HEIs and industries, move from the raw economy to the full knowledge-intellectual economy.

In Uzbekistan, the following aspects should be taken into account when implementing the Bologna process: gradual updating of the education structure; involving highly qualified specialists into the education system; developing the mechanism for the proper identification of innovative potential of the country, develop constructive human capital. If all these conditions are met, Uzbekistan may become one of the largest higher education centers in the region.

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