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**THEORY AND PRACTICE OF RUSSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION
WITHIN THE BOLOGNA PROCESS**

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Abstract

The article presents a comparative analysis of the theory and practice of higher education in the framework of the Bologna Process (BP). The signing of the Bologna Declaration by Russia contributed to the unification of educational standards, coordination of university activities, strengthening cooperation in the field of academic mobility of teachers and students, etc. However, the reform of higher vocational education takes place within the framework of its own territorial borders of individual states, including Russia. At the same time, state policy in the field of education is under pressure because of the preservation of national specificity in the educational sphere and the use of foreign experience. The study of the transformation of higher education allows concluding that theoretical provisions of the reform of Russian higher education are not fully consistent with real steps in the modernization of education levels. The key problems in the modernization of Russian higher education are a small number of students and teachers participating in academic exchange programs; underfunding of international academic exchange projects; difficulties in the implementation of the system of transfer and accumulation of credits; the isolation of regional universities of the Russian Federation from the processes of academic mobility; ignorance and/or insufficient knowledge of the English language; etc. In the context of the intensification of cross-border relations in the field of education, the following conditions must be met: proficiency in a foreign language, broad information about academic mobility programs, a more flexible training system, the implementation of principles of lifelong learning.

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Keywords: Bologna process, participation of the Russian Federation in the Bologna process.



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1. Introduction

The functional tasks of modern states in the field of higher professional education in the context of the unification of the international community include the training of highly qualified personnel, the growth of competitiveness of their own universities, and their integration into the world educational space. That is why many countries are included in the system of the Bologna process (BP). Russia's involvement in the globalization of education has become noticeable since 2003, when the Declaration on the creation of a common European higher education area was signed.

2. Problem Statement

Given the complexity of the modernization of the educational system of the Russian Federation within the framework of the BP, the following research problem was identified: “What is the discrepancy between the theory and practice of implementing the provisions of the Bologna Declaration in the Russian Federation?”.

3. Research Questions

Comparative analysis of theoretical measures (government decisions, legislative framework) and practice (real steps in the reform of higher professional education according to European canons) will allow making conclusion about the incomplete consistency of the Russian policy in the Bologna process.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the work is to analyze the theory and practice of Russian higher education in the framework of the Bologna process. To do this, it is necessary to investigate the following issues:

1. The legislative framework of the inclusion of the Russian Federation in the BP.
2. Real steps in reforming the highest level of education of the Russian Federation.
3. Contradictions between the theoretical base of BP and its implementation in practice.

5. Research Methods

For writing the article, the method of comparative analysis was used, which made it possible to relate the theoretical basis in the modernization of Russian higher education within the framework of the BP and the practical implementation of this solution. The authors provide statistical data, federal laws, orders of the Government. Thus, the research methodology is a synthesis of methods that enable comparative analysis of the theory and practice of the Bologna process in the Russian Federation.

6. Findings

Russia's involvement in the Bologna process system involved two phases. At the first stage, by 2010, the following steps were supposed to be entered:

- 1) the introduction of a two-level higher education system - bachelor and master;

- 2) the creation of a system of credit units;
- 3) provision of quality education;
- 4) development of academic mobility processes for teachers and students;
- 5) support for the employment of students and ensuring the competitiveness of European education;
- 6) implementation of the idea of developing European higher education. A short time later, a third level of higher education was added to the undergraduate and graduate programs - doctoral studies (PhD).

The second stage from 2010 to 2020 includes the consolidation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) aimed at effective interaction in the field of education. That is, the necessary regulatory base of BP is created.

As part of the confirmation of the theoretical pursuit of the Russian Federation, an extensive legislative framework was prepared for the EURO. In particular, in 2004 in the Russian Federation “Priority directions for the development of the education system of the Russian Federation” were introduced, where, among other things, emphasis was placed on introducing undergraduate and graduate programs, on expanding academic mobility and building a credit-modular system.

In 2005, the Ministry of Education approves an Action Plan for the implementation of the provisions of the Bologna Declaration in the system of higher professional education of the Russian Federation for 2005-2010. In the same 2005, the order of the Ministry of Education of Russia No. 40 “On the implementation of the provisions of the Bologna Declaration in the system of higher professional education of the Russian Federation” was issued. Changes are made to the Law "On Education".

In the Russian Federation, a system for assessing the quality of education has emerged, aimed at harmonizing the Russian and European systems. In particular, the “Provision on State Accreditation of Educational Institutions and Scientific Organizations” was adopted.

A whole series of events was carried out providing the technology of state accreditation of individual educational programs of higher professional education in order to comply with the educational policy of the Russian Federation and the EU.

The Russian Federation has been included in a number of organizations that ensure the inclusion of the Bologna process by the Russian Federation. This shows the desire to move further in the reform of higher professional education. For example, the Russian Federation became a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

In the Federal Targeted Program for the Development of Education for 2006–2010 sections appeared to expand the processes of academic mobility of teachers and students with funding of more than 550 million rubles, as well as increase the opportunities for the participation of Russian masters and bachelors in continuing education with funding of more than 450 million rubles.

In the Russian Federation, international academic exchange programs (ERASMUS +, AIESEC, Global UGRAD) have emerged with the aim of implementing the idea of accessibility of education abroad. Other tools were also created for the inclusion of the Russian Federation in the BP – the ESTC educational credit system, a modular training system, a special diploma supplement for fixing a student in the field of international mobility.

However, it is still possible to note the presence of a large number of barriers to the cooperation of interaction between universities of the Russian Federation and universities of partner countries.

Among the key problems, the implementation of the provisions of the Bologna Declaration in the Russian Federation is:

- a small number of students and teachers participating in academic exchange programs. The reasons for this situation are concentrated in the length of the borders of the Russian Federation. Therefore, as a rule, universities located in the European part of our country take part in this program.

- underfunding of international academic exchange projects. Funds provide material assistance to students who decide to study in other countries. However, these funds are not enough to live abroad. Russian universities are often deprived of the possibility of financial assistance to their students.

- difficulties in implementing in the system of transfer and accumulation of credits, which are generally accepted units of measurement of the learning process in the PD. It is this practice that allows students to individually approach the study of individual disciplines (Sursock, 2002). However, in the Russian Federation there are other realities in the face of strictly established mandatory disciplines and the total amount of credits. That is, the system of higher education of the Russian Federation is distinguished by a detailed fixity, and the European system is more variable;

- isolation of regional universities of the Russian Federation from the processes of academic mobility (Maleshin, 2015);

- absence of representative offices that are engaged in international educational cooperation;

- bureaucratization of the procedure for exchanging an exchange document itself;

- not informing students about the programs of mutual cooperation;

- ignorance and / or insufficient knowledge of the English language;

- the lack of special departments in the universities themselves, which are engaged in the implementation of joint programs on academic exchange;

Also, since 2011, the state standards of higher education of the third generation have been introduced with a focus on the competence approach and credit system.

However, the practice of using credit units (ECTS) in the Russian Federation has shown inconsistency. The fact is that over the three years from 2002 to 2005, the experiment with the participation of more than seventy universities on the application of the credit system in organizing the educational process in conditions gave practically no results.

By 2008, the system in which the application to the diploma of higher professional education became compatible with the application of the European sample to the diploma of higher education did not work in the Russian Federation.

In the Russian Federation there are difficulties with the transfer of disciplines, which were studied including in foreign universities.

At the federal level, the executive branch approved an Action Plan in 2006 to support the development of the export of educational services. Despite the fact that 17 Russian universities received funding of about 10 billion rubles for academic mobility, nevertheless, this measure did not greatly affect the mobility of teachers and students in the total volume of the country.

In 2012, in the framework of the Bucharest communique, the Ministers of Education of the EHEA member states developed a “Mobility Strategy for the European Higher Education Area” to improve the quality of exchanges and remove obstacles to academic mobility in Europe. By 2020, the level of student

mobility should be reached 20% of the student population. However, at present it does not reach even 5% of students participating in academic mobility.

In the Federal Targeted Program for the Development of Education for 2011 – 2015 the idea is being taken to bring the share of students studying at foreign universities in 30%, for teachers in 52%. Unfortunately, these measures have not been implemented.

In 2013, the proportion of students enrolled in a two-level system of higher education (bachelor and master) amounted to about 90% of all enrolled in higher education programs. At the same time, the share of graduates of undergraduate programs in 2012 and 2013 rather small compared to the share of graduates of specialty programs.

In 2012, Russia adopted the Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation”, which intensifies the inclusion of our country in the European educational space. The fact is that under the new law normative terms of mastering educational programs are not established. This decision was necessary from the point of view of the unification of Russian and European practice of higher education. Since in European universities, the terms of undergraduate programs can range from 3 to 4 years, and graduate from 1 to 2 years. Before the adoption of the Federal Law “On Education”, Russian realities provided for a rigid system, under which the bachelor’s degree was 4 years, and the master’s degree was 2 years.

Difficulties in the harmonization of higher education levels can be seen in the third stage – the postgraduate program and/or the award of the degree of PhD. It is necessary to achieve a correspondence between the graduate school diploma with the assignment of the qualification “Researcher. Lecturer-researcher” and an academic degree of the candidate of sciences. It is also important to harmonize postgraduate education programs with PhD programs.

An obstacle to the inclusion of the Russian Federation in the BP is the problem of the formal use of credit units. That is, an automatic transfer from the laboriousness of the elements of the educational program to laboriousness took place without any connection with the planned learning outcomes.

In 2012, the Bucharest communique of the Ministers of Education of the EHEA countries focused on the employment of highly qualified graduates (Froumin & Lisytukin, 2015). However, in the Russian Federation there is no uniform nationwide monitoring of graduate careers. What shows the gaps in the control over the effectiveness of higher education, the demand for those or other competencies in the labor market, etc.

Within the European educational space, the concept of lifelong learning, in which universities play the main role, is significant (Rowlands, 2012). They influence the different groups of people, providing a strategy for human development throughout their lives (Amaral & Magalhães, 2004; Amaral, 2001). However, in the Russian Federation, the role of universities is highly specialized, encompassing only young people. In this sense, older citizens are left out of continuous education (Witte, 2002). The main “enemies” of lifelong learning are bureaucratic delays in obtaining licenses for this type of activity and lack of flexibility in the mechanism of educational activities.

Control over the process of inclusion of the Russian Federation in the BP is carried out including through the National Report of the Russian Federation, which is being prepared for the Conference of Ministers of Education.

A retrospective analysis of data from reports submitted by our country demonstrates the following trends:

1) in 2004-2005 among the main difficulties of the Russian Federation in the implementation of the BP are limitations for participation in academic mobility programs, the scale of the Russian system itself, which needs to be reformed, the presence of a clear watershed of academic and university science.

2) From 2005 to 2007, among the main problems were noted: the inertia of perception of the bachelor's degree; difficulties in the implementation of academic mobility programs due to the underfunding of Russian higher education, poor knowledge of foreign languages, rigidity of educational programs, the unreadiness of universities to form new competencies of bachelors and masters aimed at mobility in the labor market.

3) from 2007-2009 the difficulties in the implementation of BP in Russia remained at the same level. Among the new ones, there was an excessive state regulation, a lack of balance between the graduation of bachelors and masters and the real needs for their necessity.

To fully implement the provisions of the Bologna Declaration, it is important to comply with the conditions and requirements of this agreement: proficiency in a foreign language; availability of information on academic mobility programs.

The Bologna system has a fair amount of advantages (Wende, 2001). On the one hand, the presence of a multitude of state actors (countries) introducing a two-level education system demonstrates Russia's involvement in the processes of globalization and the world educational process (Kamynina & Grudzinski, 2017).

On the other hand, such a system allows the graduates to adapt themselves better. For bachelors, this is an additional opportunity to gain wider knowledge with the further prospect of "finding oneself" in a professional niche. For masters - this is a real chance to get the highly specialized knowledge necessary for certain areas of the economy. In any case, a two-tier system allows you to better prepare for the requirements of the labor market, which is flexible and mobile. Unfortunately, this scheme of multi-level education "bachelor-master" in the Russian Federation often does not work. The mechanism will work only when the attitude of employers to the two-level education system itself changes (Novakovskaya, 2013). In which bachelors are under-educated students, and masters do not cause much confidence due to a misunderstanding of the meaning of this concept. For the bachelors themselves it is also not entirely clear why they cannot take full advantage of the knowledge that they gained in practice.

The practice of introducing the principles of the Bologna process in the Russian Federation in fact occurred only since 2011, when a transition to a two-level system (bachelor-master) took place in our country (Lebedeva, 2017). Recently, skepticism regarding the modernization of higher education is being heard more and more often. For example, in due time, before the division of the Ministry of Education into two departments (the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education), Vasilieva (2017) stated that "an applied bachelor degree is also a controversial issue ... today there is no consensus about the need to introduce it everywhere" (par. 12). For example, for teachers. Such an assessment can be associated not only with the lack of an objective need for such modernization, but partly with the subjective desire of these steps. The fact is that after the "Crimean" events of 2014, in the actions of the Russian Federation one can find a departure from Europeanization in reforming certain spheres of life, including

higher education. In part, this can be confirmed by the fact that Russia has begun to resume the practice of a specialist. The return of the specialty level indicates a return to the Soviet education system.

7. Conclusion

1. The theoretical provisions of the Bologna Declaration include: input of a two-level higher education (bachelor and master); creating a credit system; provision of quality education; an increase in the academic mobility of students and teachers; support for employment of students; development of European higher education. Also, the emergence of the third level of higher education - doctoral studies (PhD).

2. The legal framework for the modernization of higher education in the Russian Federation is broad and extensive, ranging from the creation of a two-level higher professional education, the creation of conditions for academic mobility of students and the building of a credit-modular system within the framework of professional educational programs.

3. The key problems in implementing the provisions of the Bologna Declaration in the Russian Federation are: a small number of students and teachers participating in academic exchange programs; underfunding of international academic exchange projects; difficulties in implementing in the system of transfer and accumulation of credits, which are generally accepted units of measurement of the learning process in the PD; isolation of regional higher education institutions of the Russian Federation from academic mobility processes; the absence of offices that are engaged in international educational cooperation; bureaucratization of the procedure of exchanging a document; students are not informed about the programs of mutual cooperation; ignorance and / or insufficient knowledge of the English language; the lack of special departments in the universities themselves, which are engaged in the implementation of joint programs on academic exchange.

4. For the full implementation of the provisions of the Bologna Declaration, it is important to comply with the conditions and requirements of this agreement: proficiency in a foreign language; availability of information on academic mobility programs.

5. The further prospects for the implementation of the provisions of the Bologna Declaration in the Russian Federation are not in doubt. Russian universities are on the path of smooth integration with European universities. However, there is a need for a clearer and more competent policy that combines the latest trends in European education and Russia's own traditions.

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