

Oleg Zubchuk,
PhD in Philosophical Sciences,
Associate Professor,
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

**QUALIFIED HIGHER EDUCATION:
THE FORMATION OF HUMAN CAPITAL, THE INCREASE
OF COMPETITIVENESS OF STATE AND POLITICAL RISKS**

Today it is clear that some factors and conditions affect the competitiveness of the state. However, the guarantee of high competitiveness and sustainable development of economics, states and even societies is in human capital rather than in natural resources or production. The basis of all these components is the system of higher education in the country. Therefore, the higher education gives three main opportunities to an individual – to be a personality, to be successful in life, to be competitive on the labor market and to be able to make a conscious civil choice. How is this goal achieved by the Ukrainian institutions of higher education? The image of Ukraine comparing to Europe is very controversial. Ukraine loses the competition in the global market of higher education. What is the reason? Can a low quality of knowledge be considered as a reason? Can the low social mobility and weak integration be considered as a reason? Can the uneffective policy in education be considered as a reason?

Keywords: quality of higher education, university, human capital, competitiveness of state, political risks.

Zubchuk O.A. Jakość szkolnictwa wyższego: tworzenie kapitału ludzkiego, poprawy konkurencyjności ryzyków państwowych i politycznych

Artykuł pokazuje, że gwarancja wysokiej konkurencyjności i zrównoważonego rozwoju (gospodarki, państwa, a nawet oddziałów i przedsiębiorstw) jest kapitał ludzki, a nie zasobów naturalnych lub produkcję. Podstawą wszystkich tych składników jest system szkolnictwa wyższego. Ukraina w porównaniu z Europą traci konkurencyjny na globalnym rynku szkolnictwa wyższego. Autor dowiedział się przyczyny tego: słabą jakością wiedzy, słabej integracji, nieskuteczność polityki w edukacji. Nowa ustawa o szkolnictwie wyższym ma na celu rozwiązanie tych problemów. Ale istnieje ryzyko polityczne w drodze reformy edukacji.

Słowa kluczowe: jakość szkolnictwa wyższego, uniwersytet, kapitał ludzki, konkurencyjność

experience, economic potential, level of governmental economic regulation, GDP per capita, infrastructure, the amount of state external and domestic debt, level of economic crime). The political situation is another significant factor - political stability and perfection of legislation, external strategy, and ability to protect interests of citizens.

However, the guarantee of high competitiveness and sustainable development of economics, states and even societies is in human capital rather than in natural resources or production. The population, its age structure, the dynamics of migration, educational and professional skills, intellectual and innovative measures, employment in education and science spheres, health, the capacity of human's development, proportion of innovatively active enterprises, quality of institutions, the development of scientific and technical sphere, balance of technical and economic sides of innovations, the development of innovative infrastructure are also among the most important factors.

The basis of all these components is the system of higher education in the country. What is the role of higher education as the basis for the formation of human capital and competitiveness of Ukrainian state?

Analysis of recent research

The development of the concept of the higher education reform is the scientific interest Ukrainian experts such as V. Andruschenko, L. Hrynevych, V. Lugoviy, K. Korsak, V. Kremen, V. Ognevyuk, S. Nikolaienko, V. Sadkoviy, M. Stepko and others.

Statement of research objectives

Unfortunately, there is a lack of comprehensive work in Ukraine, the subject of which would be the analysis of the educational component in ensuring the competitiveness in modern Ukraine. Consequently, the aim of our research is to elucidate the role of higher education as the basis for the formation of human capital and competitiveness of the state. The object of our research is human capital. The subject is higher education as the basis of human capital. The main research methods are systemic, structural and functional, synergetic, comparative, prognostic and factorial.

Results

In international rankings of competitiveness, Ukraine is considered to be among developing countries, which is characterized by increased political and economic instability, poor investment climate and extremely risky business. According to the report of the annual World Economic Forum, Ukraine worsens results. It loses positions in such indicators as "Institutions", "Macroeconomic stability", "Developing of Financial Market", "The effectiveness of commodity markets" to the developed markets (the worst results in three of four basic pillars

of competitiveness, most of them are observed in the components of “quality of public and private institutions” and “macroeconomic stability”).

According to the Human Development Index, estimated by the NAS of Ukraine, every year our country takes the 85-90th place, and according to the UN – it takes place further than the 100th. In the developed countries, the professional competence is valued more than in Ukraine. That means that there is an underestimation of the main characteristics of a competitiveness of the employees. Among the factors that hinder the competitiveness is a lack of demand for creative individuals, passivity and indifference of people. In addition, there are ‘basic factors of competitiveness’, which are defined through indicators such as education, training, physical condition, motivation to work etc. These factors are considered to be as functions of investment (costs) in social infrastructure: education, health, professional education, social security, the sphere of culture, and recreation.

Therefore, the competitiveness of the state is a system category due to economic, social and political factors that ensures a stable position of the country or its products in domestic and foreign markets. With the development of the manufacturing and under the influence of technical progress the competitiveness is determined by factors of higher level - the country’s infrastructure, its scientific potential, level of education and human capital.

The human capital can be described at least from two perspectives – from the individual citizen and the state. For the citizen, for example, human capital is the current value of all future wages. For the individual investor human capital, as a knowledge, is the best protection against inflation.

An individual with qualified contemporary knowledge and professional education will always have a chance for getting a job and fair wage. In terms of the state - highly qualified human capital creates competitive advantages for the national economy. These advantages are: know-how innovations, specific knowledge as well as special professional competence of the labor force. Two-thirds of the national wealth of the modern economy accounts for human capital, which is formed in higher education. 56% of GDP is produced by specialists with higher education.

The human capital in the developing countries is most undervalued asset. Consequently, from the both perspectives - the level of education as a qualified specific knowledge and the level of professionalism, which are the core of human capital – it is one of the key factors not only for improving the financial situation, but for improving the state’s economy and ensuring public good as well.

When it comes to the role of higher education, we talk about understanding the meaning and purpose of higher educational institutions (universities and acad-

emies) from the perspective of the government and in the context of public administration over competitiveness of human capital. Among the indicators of higher education in the context described above, it is necessary to choose one, which emphasizes that higher education brings people into the individual life trajectory.

Therefore, the higher education gives three main opportunities to an individual – to be a personality, to be successful in life, to be competitive on the labor market and to be able to make a conscious civil choice. If these three opportunities are provided, then a higher education can be called qualitative.

Who provides these opportunities? In this case, it is better to reformulate the question to how institutions of higher education provide these three opportunities. The answer can follow up from the explanation of purpose of institutions of higher education, which consists of education, research, and interaction between education, science, business, local communities and other parts of society. When the purpose is comprehensive, the higher education achieves the main goal pursued by modern societies - the goal of formation of an innovative economy, and universities and academies are transformed into platforms that generate new knowledge, ideas and technology of development strategy.

How is this goal achieved by the Ukrainian institutions of higher education? Since independence, none of the Ukrainian universities have entered in the top 500 of the best universities in the world. Only 30% of graduates from Ukrainian universities, who studied by state order, find a job within a year after graduation. Near 7% apply to the employment service with a request to put them on the waiting list of the labor market right after their graduation.

Billions are spent every year for reeducating specialists and bringing them to the requirements needed for production and Ukrainian employers because of the mismatch of specialists trained and needs of the labor market.

What does it mean? This indicates that the quality of higher education does not satisfy neither graduates, nor the labor market. Higher education does not correspond to the demands of citizens, nor to the needs of the state, especially economic or labor market needs.

What is even more important, it does not provide the competitiveness of our country in Europe. The annual index of human capital results within the context of 122 countries shows that Ukraine by total index takes the 63rd place, by education – the 45th; health and wellness – the 55th; population and employment – the 67th; favorable environment - the 96th.

According to the report about global competitiveness of 2015 Ukraine, among other 140 countries, improved its performance and increased to the 34rd place by the criteria “higher education and practice” (comparing to the 43rd place in 2013, 37th in 2012).

The report of the European Commission proved Ukraine to be an outsider, taking the 47th place from 47 and receiving 2.2 points out of 5 possible ones for the implementation of the Bologna process. And the last is considered to be an effective instrument for Ukraine and its higher education. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System means the mobility of students and professors, a common system of degrees, social dimension (access to education), life-long process of education, unified credit transfer system, an independent evaluation of quality, Europe of knowledge.

The image of Ukraine comparing to Europe is very controversial. On the one hand, by the indicator of scope of high schools in Ukraine it is among the top ten countries in the world. We have more universities per capita than, for example, Great Britain or France. 325 universities have 3-4 levels of accreditation among them. Together with schools of 1-2 level of accreditation there are over 800 of them.

When we talk about the budget, Ukraine spends a greater share of the total budget for education on high educational institutions - 31% compared with the average 25% in the EU. But, unfortunately, the number of universities is not converted into the quality of education. And the higher education itself doesn't correlate with the competitiveness of human capital. Although we are on the tenth position in the world by scope of university level education, but de-facto we are on the 47th position by its condition. Ratio of graduates with higher education and graduates with vocational and technical education in Ukraine is 70 to 30. A market requires inverse proportion. This is confirmed by the European experience. For example, in the Nordic countries, this proportion is 60 to 40 in favor of specialists in vocational education.

What is the reason of such situation? Almost half of money spent on higher education comes from non-governmental sources. Non-budgetary sources account for only 3% in the EU. The Ukrainian government outs funds for higher education on parents. Thereby, very high levels of funding in absolute terms are converted into scarce.

On average, the EU countries allocate around 1.3% of GDP on higher education from the state budget. In Ukraine in 2013 this indicator was about 2.3% of GDP. However, in absolute terms the state tuition per one student in Ukraine allocates incommensurable funds compared with the European student.

Can a low quality of knowledge be considered as a reason? Despite the existence of some progressive schools and university labs, Ukrainian universities do not produce as much as needed now of the new knowledge, because of lack of funding. 80% of PhDs and 90% of doctors of sciences available in the country work in high educational establishments. Instead of financing the scientific and technical activities, funds are mainly directed into other institutions. As a result,

the volume of financing of this activity (6.3%) of the higher education sector inferior to others - the academic and the business.

Can the low social mobility and weak integration be considered as a reason? Ukrainian higher educational institutions don't complete the function of the integration with the community. Sad illustration of this is that only 30% of the graduates of Ukrainian universities find a job within a year after graduation. It is in a contrast to developed countries where the rate is 60-90%. In some cases, foreigners with Ukrainian diplomas cannot confirm the qualifications received at home, and therefore cannot find a job. We have comparatively little number of foreign students. And among those students only 3% are from Western developed countries.

Can the ineffective policy in education be considered as a reason? Ukraine loses the competition in the global market of higher education. The reasons for the low quality of higher education is the archaic system of its management. Changes in the system of education management have not lead to the increase of management efficiency, the increase of availability and the improvement of quality.

A significant share of these costs are on the state in most of the developed countries, particularly in the Western Europe. Hence, this approach to funding of social services as unproductive is wrong because its decline immediately reflects in the quality of labor force and productivity, resulting with a decrease of economic efficiency. The modern competitive economy is not possible without such a factor as highly skilled, flexible and mobile labor force that is able to perform any productive and creative assignments.

The destruction of the social infrastructure leads to the decline in the competitiveness of individuals of the country, the outflow of young specialists, and ultimately to the decrease of competitiveness at all levels of the economy. The transformation of socio-economic relations that takes place in Ukraine, has led to the need to reconsideration and justification of priorities for regional development and formation of the management mechanisms, which are adequate to complex socio-economic and political processes.

Despite of significant loss of resources, scientific and technological personnel potential and time, Ukraine still has prospects of achieving international competitiveness of the national economy if its own national strategy is implemented. The state policy in creating competitive advantages still has to focus efforts primarily on those areas where the state's role is indispensable: on the development of education, science, general infrastructure, on the creation of the legal framework of competition. Through active social and economic policy, we can achieve the desired coordination of the interests of the state and entities.

Ukraine chooses innovative way of development. New requirements are set for the Ukrainian education system. Noncompliance with these requirements may be one of the major factors braking socio-economic development. Obviously, the Ukrainian education today is in the field of significant political risks. This is confirmed by conclusions made by experts on the enlarged meeting of the Committee on Science and Education of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine “On the status of implementation of the Law of Ukraine “On Higher Education”, which took place on July 1, 2015. The Committee Chairman Lilia Hrynevych emphasized that “reform moves slowly because it is necessary to create rules and structures that have not existed until now in Ukrainian education” [12]. So the questions are what are the risks, how to manage them and if they can be avoided or minimized.

The concept of “risk” has been known for a long time and is associated with the formation of a rational attitude to the world. Phenomena that can have negative consequences in political, economic and other spheres of society are considered risks.

Let us consider main risks that affect or may affect the higher educational system in the reform process.

The first risk is the change of political vector. As known, the transformation of political regimes can occur from totalitarianism, authoritarianism to democracy, and in the opposite direction. Even countries with the developed democratic mechanisms of implementation of state power and the high level of political culture of the population are not immune from manifestations of authoritarianism. The authoritarianism is immanently inherent to any political power, which always tends to expand its powers and to establish total control over society.

Therefore, it is futile to hope for honesty, transparency and accountability of actions of state institutions and officials at all levels, even if they are organized on the best standards, without effective civil society. The foreign aggression is the contributing factor.

The president, like many experts, warns that with the termination of hostilities, hybrid war against Ukraine is not terminated. Instead the strong information campaign to destabilize the country even until the change of government has started: “the enemy does not end the war. Moreover, the hybrid warfare, which is something the world faced a year ago, is in full scale. This is because it incorporates not only military aggression and economic loop, which the aggressor thought it threw on the neck Ukraine to destroy it economically. The hybrid warfare involves a large and powerful disinformation component” [10].

Therefore, all mechanisms to strengthen it can be applied. So, not enough reformed education system could again become an instrument of manipulative

influence on society, could serve political ideology and not the idea of social development.

The second risk is yet other risk associated with the failure of education to reduce the level of conflict in society. Currently the Ukrainian society experiences a process of increasing internal complexity. Due to external factors, political, religious and cultural confrontation grows today in Ukraine as well as political conflicts and war.

Today we witness a very big level of different conditions of access to higher education. In addition, we see the outflow of personnel from the higher education system. During the regular report the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine informed that one of the main achievements of the Ministry for the 100 days of the new government was the completion of the evacuation of 26 educational institutions from the occupied areas and combat zones, 16 of which were universities and 10 were scientific and research institutes [11].

The experience of other countries shows that educational mobility promotes dialogue and tolerance in education; contributes to civil peace in the country. The system of higher education in Ukraine is closed to the world. There was no report on the status of integration to the Bologna system. According to the definition, education is closely linked to the openness of society. Education is the most global of all industries, and any its self-isolation harms all good intentions and initiatives.

The third risk is in the reduction of funding of the educational sphere, both from the state and the private sector. The OECD has stressed and warned that cuts in public spending on social policy could lead to a deterioration of the recent economic downturn.

The report on social indicators “Society at a Glance 2014” states “a heavy burden during the economic downturn is put on the shoulders of those, who got the least during the period of economic growth before the crisis”. [15] The organization warns governments not to cut spending on education. This endangers the restriction of access to educational opportunities for some families. As stated in the report, it puts long-term damage to the economy. The reduction of investment in higher education (in traditional institutions) occurs not only from the government (in relative terms), but also from employers. Ukraine spends on education more than 7% of GDP.

However, we must admit that there will be less money in the future. This happens not only because the state reduces the number of “state order”. The mechanism of “state order”, as shown by the analysis of formation and placement of public order for training specialists with higher education, carried out by the Accounting Chamber of Ukraine, is ineffective. [13]

In addition, each year educational services are more imported from Ukraine (for example, education abroad). That means that money of customers of that service remain outside of Ukraine. The foreign education system receives additional incomes at the expense of Ukrainian consumers. The domestic one loses resources for development.

In addition, the decrease in efficiency of investment in education is a world-wide negative trend. The extensive development of education results in “mass” higher education “from above” and the expansion of pre-school education “from bottom”. We also need to consider that fact that the cost of higher education grows faster than inflation.

In Ukraine, the legislative provision, which included diversified forms of financing of higher education (education budget, grants and private funds), was intended for the partial insurance of this risk. If new formula of financing of higher education does not work, then combined with the budget deficit it will lead to an acute financial crisis of higher education in the coming years.

The fourth risk is in outdated knowledge, skills, abilities, and teaching technologies. Perhaps the greatest risk is that we will invest money and effort in creating a modern educational system, while the US and Europe will move to a different quality. So far, we do not know how quickly and in what form this will happen. Nevertheless, at least, we should see a trend of «spilling education» beyond institutions in space and time. New educational ecosystems occur, which include old institutions and add new players, primarily related with information technologies (new educational platform, specialization, distance learning). The risk increases if we fall behind in the development of new educational technologies.

In addition, there is a significant probability of failure to reach a positive synergistic effect of combining universities with different profiles according to culture, traditions, organization of educational and scientific process, not to mention the differences in areas of training, profiles, and educational programs. Moreover, the risk lies in the reduction of professors and the decrease of educational quality of graduates with BA degree, respectively – the decrease of demand for such graduates by employers. Failure to prepare specialists for high-tech industries is a major problem in Ukrainian realities.

The Minister always emphasizes that we have a large number of very weak institutions of higher education that give almost no increase of knowledge and skills, just «eat» huge funds. Even the best of them are also behind the leading Western universities: «despite the fact that Ukrainian pupils win international educational competitions, our universities are proud of educational traditions, but none of them is included in the first or second hundred of prestigious rank-

ings» [14]. This risk is obvious and is not associated with technological lag in the narrow sense of this word. It is associated with the destruction of infrastructure of technical education, personnel shortage in vocational training (caution among the invited to us foreign experts), and a lack of investment in this area.

At the same time, it should be noted that from the perspective of such criteria of higher education as the quality of education, the most negative effects could result in the realization of such risks as social, organizational and managerial. In our view, the review and the analysis of precisely those risks has the greatest interest. Those risks that are not formalized in different regulations occur during every day work of educational institutions.

Conclusions

Thus, from the standpoint of the state it should be clear that competitive higher education leads to a competitive society. The competitive society is not a “social evil” as was believed in socialistic doctrine, including R. Owen. He believed that the competition can be overcome and everyone in the society would be happy with proper social structure of society. The freedom of competition is not “an empty word,” as J.S. Mill thought. Even K. Marx, criticizing competition, admitted that competition forces to replace old means of work before their “natural death” by the new ones. Today, criteria and priorities of the country’s competitiveness are the most important landmarks of development.

Quite a significant criterion is the quality and efficiency of higher education. Therefore, it is necessary to develop independent external evaluation of students and graduates, to invest in students and professors, to decentralize management system and to implement a real academic and financial autonomy, to develop science in higher education. This is especially important because in the conditions of integration of Ukraine into the European and world economic and political space, its economy and society become more open. This significantly increases the risks and dangers in the context of socio-economic and socio-political development. The competition in this area increases. When we consider macroeconomic indicators, the state of market and structural reforms, the political stability and other risks, we conclude that currently Ukraine is unattractive to strategic investors.

Under these conditions, the educational and research component of the competitiveness of Ukraine becomes more and more important. Nevertheless, higher education in Ukraine has always been in the sphere of political interests.

Nowadays despite the efforts of all participants of the reform of higher education, in our view, such risks as purely political ones are essential for higher education: change in the political course and “freezing” education reforms as a consequence; normative legal risks – not adoption or delayed adoption of the

necessary legislation, making significant changes in laws or bills that affect reform efforts. Financial and economic risks are the underfunding of education reform, including from the state, educational organizations. Organizational and managerial risks are the insufficient study of the issues that are resolved in the framework of reform; the inadequate training of management; the inadequacy of monitoring of system reforms; the lag behind the timing of events.

Eliminating or minimizing purely political risks is possible only through the development of an effective civil society, increasing the level of political consciousness of society. This is the way to avoid social risks associated with the resistance of a particular segment of the population, political parties and movements to objectives and the implementation of the reform. It is also possible to do through control of policy decisions by the public, because it is useless to hope for honesty, transparency and accountability of actions of state institutions and officials at all levels, even organized on the best standards, without it. It is possible to reduce normative risks by improving the quality of planning of implementation of educational reform, by providing monitoring of its implementation and promptly making necessary changes. The minimization of financial and economic risks is possible by the conclusion of agreements on the implementation of measures aimed at achieving the objectives of the reform, and by institutionalizing mechanisms for co-financing. The government has already adopted the resolution on the opening of deposit accounts at banks by universities and vocational training institutions. The decree on the maintenance of special funds of universities and research institutions in state banks will be considered soon. As for the appropriate level of knowledge, we should conclude that a good attitude and communication of business and academia are now crucial. Business wants that professionals-graduates of university be "armed" with modern knowledge and be highly competent. Universities need to know the expectations of business in order to provide adequate training. Mentoring programs is one of the tools of business collaboration (employers) with universities. The mentorship is used by leading universities as a tool for personal development and better employment opportunities for graduates. This individual technique for communication and development with further proposals can be implemented in university programs to prepare students for their successful career. Mistaken organizational scheme and weak management capacity (including an insufficient level of qualification to work with new instruments) can lead to inefficient management of the process of implementation of education reform measures, to uncoordinated actions of the main performer and participants, to poor quality of program activities at territorial level and university level. The elimination of risk is possible at the expense of the organization of a single co-

ordinating body for implementing education reform and ensuring constant and operational monitoring (including sociological one).

Therefore, it is particularly important to analyze the educational component of the educational policy in order to make conclusions about the effectiveness and efficiency of the higher education.

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