Content Analysis of the Category “Academic Mobility of Students”

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Abstract: The article describes and provides a content analysis of the category "academic mobility". Owing to Bologna Declaration signed by the post-Soviet countries, this subject has become topical. Because a person is active and constantly developing, its activities should be directed to creation, search of new non-standard solutions to arising problems, including the professional ones. Thus, human development in the education system requires, above all, the movement and hence, the mobility. Academic mobility as a complex integral education is the ability to quickly change the profile and types of training activities and occupation. Academic mobility, first of all, contributes to formation of basic competencies. Second, a transition to creative, practical and innovative activities occurs. Academic mobility is the basis for formation, development and improvement of professional mobility.

Key words: Academic mobility • Innovative activities • Content analysis

INTRODUCTION

The development of academic mobility of students is now particularly relevant due to implementation of the principles and provisions of the Bologna Declaration in the field of higher education in Europe, including the Republic of Kazakhstan. Yet, despite the development of academic mobility in the framework of the Bologna process, the very category of "academic mobility of students" still requires a careful analysis.

Having reviewed the current legal documents, regulations in the field of higher education, the official documents of the Bologna process, the international legal documents on education and foreign, Russian and domestic psychological and pedagogical publications, we will try to give the definition of this category.

Now analyze the term "academic mobility" through the analysis of the term "mobility" and the types of mobility, presented in various dictionaries and reference books. As you can see, modern dictionaries and encyclopedias do not contain the term "academic mobility". So, analyze this term using the term "mobility".

The Main Part: In the explanatory dictionary by S.I. Ozhegov, mobile: 1. mobile, capable of rapid movement; 2. able to act quickly and make decisions [1]. In the Explanatory Dictionary of Modern Russian Language by V.V. Lopatin, mobility is agility, ability of rapid movement, reorganization [2]. And only in the Glossary of the European Integration the term mobility is defined as the mobility of students and teachers. [3]

Mobility (from the Latin mobilis-mobile) is mobility, ability to fast moving, action [4]. And, above all, we provide the definition of this category taken from legal acts adopted both in the Bologna Declaration and in a number of other documents, signed in different years the by participating countries of the Bologna Process. It should be immediately noted that the concept of "students’ mobility" is interpreted in different ways.

"The Great Charter of Universities" states: "As in the far first years of their history, the universities encourage student mobility" [5]. Finally, the Bologna Declaration formulates the problem in the area as follows. "To promote mobility by overcoming obstacles, the effective exercise of the freedom of movement, focusing: for students-on their access to educational facilities and related services" [6].

The Bologna Declaration was the demand of the time, the answer to the ongoing European integration process, dictated by the need to resolve the current economic and political problems and to enter into the European Higher Education Space [7]. In 2001, UNESCO gave a definition
of this category: "Academic mobility of students can be realized within the program, or individually, besides, it includes a virtual mobility" [8]. In this aspect, except for the physical presence of students studying outside of their country, virtual movement within the frameworks of distance education is possible as well. For the last 10-15 years, the international academic and scientific mobility has become an integral part of the global landscape of higher education. Thus, the total number of mobile students, according to UNESCO, in 2005 exceeded 2.5 million, i.e. increased by 61% compared to 1999. This significant growth for such a short time can be partly explained by the changes in the infrastructure and capacity of higher education systems. Moreover, the forecasts of global student mobility are even more impressive: in 2025 the number of students, studying abroad, will increase to 7.2 million [9].

In the Berlin Communiqué "Formation of All-European Higher Education Space" the term "European space" was used first time. The European quality was declared as a core of the European space of higher education. To provide a closer link between teaching and research and the recognition of the research work, it was decided to include the third level, a higher doctorate, in the system as a necessary condition of higher education in Europe. As a result, it has become traditional to refer to a multi-level system of the European educational space and focus on the issue of academic mobility of students. Berlin Communiqué mentions that "the mobility of students is the basis for the development of the European space of higher education." The main purpose of academic mobility is to give students a versatile "European" education in the chosen field of study, to provide students with access to the recognized centers of knowledge, which have traditionally formed the leading scientific schools, to expand the knowledge of students in all spheres of European culture and to instill a sense of European citizens in them [10].

The proof, that the mobility remains a focus for the participating countries of the Bologna process, may be found in the conclusions and recommendations of the conference "Promoting Student Mobility: The Next Steps" (Brussels, May 2008). Below are the main conclusions of the report and recommendations of the seminar:

Conclusion 1: mobility of students is one of the key aspects of the Bologna process. Mobility in a broad sense is of great value for the European Knowledge Society. Conclusion 2: the mobility of students is a complex mechanism and the Bologna Process has provided new ways and opportunities for mobility (vertical, horizontal), that however, further complicate our understanding of mobility. The mobility has evolved from simple ideas, when students simply go abroad, in a complex mechanism, where one must take into account social, economic and financial aspects. Conclusion 3: The need to collect data and statistics on the mobility of students in order to present a realistic picture, compare, evaluate and develop an effective policy at national level. The fourth conclusion is related to the transfer of grants and loans.

The researcher D. Babadodzhan agrees with these conclusions, stating in his article that the Bologna process involves students in the European space of higher education, but at the same time certain difficulties in the implementation of some provisions appear [11].

"The term “academic mobility of students” includes the period of study in a country other than the country of student’s residence. This period is limited in time and involves a return home. Academic mobility of students may be realized within certain programs or independently”, as this category is interpreted by UNESCO in the work “The 2009 World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE): the new dynamics of higher education and research for societal change and development: conference papers / UNESCO” [12].

On April 28-29, 2009 in Leven / Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium) the communique "Bologna Process-2020-European Space of Higher Education in the new decade" was signed, where it was noted that "the mobility of students enhances the quality of research programs and promotes academic and cultural internationalization of European higher education. Mobility is important for personal development and employability; it fosters respect for diversity of other cultures. It encourages linguistic pluralism, thus enhancing multilingual tradition of the European space of higher education and increasing cooperation and competition between the institutions of higher education. Thus, mobility should become the criterion for the European space of higher education. In 2020, at least 20% of the graduates of the European space of higher education will be trained abroad" [13].

"Academic mobility of students is crossing national borders for the purpose of study and implementation of the related activities during the period of the training program or other specified period of time and then return to your country of residence," writes Foreign scholars U. Tayhler [14]. It is worth noting that in addition to the act of moving from country to country, the academic mobility of students also requires a multi-faceted process of personal development, self-realization and acquisition of professional and key competencies.
The European scientist A. Barblan says that "the academic mobility of students is an equal access to multiple service providers in the field of higher education" [15]. The main purpose of academic mobility is to give the learner the opportunity to get a broad education in the chosen field of study, to provide access to the recognized centers of knowledge, which have traditionally formed the leading scientific schools, to expand the knowledge of students in all fields of culture and to instill a sense of world citizenship in them".

According to the scientist Angela Hill and other authors “academic mobility of students is a form of secondary socialization of the individual. Being mobile means changing the environment, a sense of belonging and multiple opportunities to benefit from this diversity. Mobility includes opposition and confrontation with the differences, requiring a wide range of individual, adaptive abilities and perception of new competencies. Participation in academic mobility is one way of learning that expands the horizons of the individual and stimulates intellectual maneuverability. It is not only the period of stay abroad, but also a tool of personal development. Such trips contribute to the emergence of young people with a broad outlook and a high intellectual level, who are ready for international communication "[16]. In our opinion, the views of researchers A. Barblan and Angela Hill are topical today, because academic mobility stimulates the intellectual potential of students and at the same time, the overall level of human development characterized by a wide range of interests and perceptions. Mobility allows various actors to achieve a variety of objectives and meet a range of needs. These goals and needs can be extremely diverse and can be both purely rational (development of new competences) and emotional.

The researcher L. Harvey writes that "the academic mobility of students is an instrument of education internationalization for acquiring intercultural skills and training students for an international professional environment" [17].

The scientists F. Dervin and I. Danilyuk support the opinion of L. Harvey and define academic mobility of students as an opportunity to share experience between the universities and overcome national self-sufficiency. Students, as he notes, can gain knowledge that are unavailable in their school, meet new cultures and make foreign friends [18, 19]. Academic mobility is manifested as a personal transformation being a result of student’s activities, i.e. as a personal characteristic.

According to Murphy-Lejeune "academic mobility of students is a stay abroad, lasting from several months to one academic year and contributing to the direct contact with a different language and culture" [20]. In our view, this definition accurately reflects the fact that the learner, studying abroad, experiences adaptation to a foreign country, culture and other social dimensions and possibly a revision of values.

Foreign researchers J. Vraa-Jenson and S. Aveduto define the term "academic mobility of students as not only the movement of physical persons, but also mobility of thoughts, ideas and methods. Academic mobility includes virtual mobility" [21, 22]. In our view, the content of academic mobility in the works of foreign researchers is represented as a set of functions of the individual, a tool for cultural and intellectual exchange, a set of tools for development of personal qualities and as academic mobility within the frameworks of distance education opportunities.

The term "academic mobility" is also considered in the works of Russian researchers. In "Realizing the Bologna Agreement" academic mobility means spending some time in an institution of another country for study or training practice through educational programs in English or the language of the host country [23]. It is worth noting that the term "academic mobility of students," is a multivector factor, promoting the exchange of scientific and cultural potential, technology and training methods between the representatives of different countries that furthers socio-economic development, the development of civil society and democratic traditions and values. Increased availability of information, knowledge, new technologies, means of communication and telecommunication dictate requirements to the education of a new human: capable to independently acquire knowledge, mobile, creative workers with a high level of responsibility, both professional and universal, with the high personal culture, balanced professional, moral, ethical, aesthetic components, with new scientific knowledge, who have mastered a new modern science and new scientific world view.

Russian scientist Klementovichus in the "Modernization of training in StPSUEF" writes: "the mobility of students in higher education system is the exchange of students; sending the students for a full course of study to the universities of the partner countries; the exchange of trainees for preparing diploma projects and taking evaluation, production and pre-diploma practice; enrollment of graduates for training for master's degree or doctorate" [24]. This author has
expanded the definition of academic mobility having included such forms of study as evaluation, industrial and pre-diploma practices. And in our view, there is a deviation from the standard definition of "academic mobility of students," and besides its significant expansion, refinement and a different interpretation of this concept.

Russian scientist G.A. Lukichev notes that the academic mobility of students "...is a core value of the European space of higher education and the development of a mechanism for international academic recognition is the most important element (aspect) of mobility" [25]. In our view, the mobility of students is a part of a common educational space and at some stages both one or several types of mobile behavior of the learner are implemented.

The scientists V.M. Filippov and V.N. Chistokhvalov comment that "academic mobility of students promotes cultural and academic exchange, collaboration, growth of personal capital and acquisition of new skills for successful participation in society after graduation" [26]. These scientists believe that the mobility contributes to the appearance of broad-minded individuals with high moral culture and high intellectual potential, ready to communicate at the international level, capable of self-education, committed to lifelong learning, acquisition of new knowledge and skills useful for successful participation in social life after graduation.

The study by A. Sheremet states that "academic mobility is an integrative personal characteristic, expressed in the ability to overcome the international language and cross-country barriers and immediately respond to changing environmental conditions in order to achieve the educational goals" [27]. Thus, academic mobility is seen as an essential attribute of socioeconomic environment, which is a space of social, economic, cultural and political relationships and interactions, based on the internal needs of the intellectual potential in the move. In this case, the academic mobility is an integral form of existence of intellectual potential.

Russian researcher A. Slepukhin declares that "academic mobility is a form of internationalization of education through international student exchange" [28]. Academic mobility is characterized by the change of the student’s position due to external conditions, such as participation in international student exchanges and programs. And that often leads to the fact that there is student’s adaptation to the changing environment of education and accommodation and building new relationships in the communication process.

T.M. Tregubova in the definition of "academic mobility" emphasizes the European dimension: she considers the main aim of the process "to provide an opportunity of diverse European education" and "to instill a sense of the citizen of Europe in the student" [29]. In accordance with the Bologna Declaration and the subsequently adopted declarations the inclusion in the European zone of higher education is a key direction of the development of students' mobility.

For Kazakhstan the problem of academic mobility is urgent due to accession of our country to the Bologna process and signing of the Bologna Charter.

Joining the Bologna process is dictated by the need to integrate into the world educational space and to form competitive education system with respect to the external environment. The main argument in favor of the Bologna process is that it is better adapted to the realities of the modern world with its high risks.

The concept of academic mobility of students of higher educational institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan defines an "academic mobility as the movement of students or teachers and researchers for a specific academic period (including education or production practice), usually a semester or academic year, to another higher educational institution (domestically or abroad) for studying, teaching or research, with mandatory due transferring of the taken educational programs in the form of credits in their home universities" [30]. In our view, the main objective of domestic education is to enable students to demonstrate their abilities to the maximum and to acquire the knowledge that will allow getting an interesting job. "The reform of higher education in Kazakhstan and the Bologna process" emphasizes that "academic mobility is an opportunity for students to move from one institution to another in order to exchange experiences, to overcome national seclusion and to gain European perspective" [31]. The goal of Kazakhstan's participation in the Bologna process is to increase access to European education, further enhance the quality of higher education in Kazakhstan and academic mobility of students and teachers.

CONCLUSION

Analyzing all the above, we can conclude that, first, the academic mobility has a plenty of definitions (the ability to move from one institution to another, the capacity for lifelong learning, a form of internationalization of education, the possibility to transfer the experience
from one institution to another, etc.) and secondly, it is a social phenomenon in the context of the Bologna process similar to a process of academic exchanges.

REFERENCES