MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS OF UZBEKISTAN IN THE CONDITIONS OF THE "COVID-19" CRISIS: EXISTING PROBLEMS AND POSITIVE TRENDS

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Abstract: *This article discusses the situation in higher education during the Covid-19 pandemic, its reforms and changes, and the need for distance learning. The foreign experience in the context of the knowledge economy in the higher education system was studied and analyzed, and the educational system of developed and developing countries was studied.*

Keywords: *Higher education, foreign experience, economy, educational system, developing countries.*

According to the experts of international organizations, including the World Bank, UNESCO, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the "Covid-19" pandemic made it possible to test the readiness of all stages of the education system of the world countries for force majeure situations. Due to the pandemic, all educational institutions in the world were forced to switch to a new form of teaching and implement distance learning experience in a mass way. This situation has led to the following problems in the form of distance learning in the educational system of most countries:

❖ the lack of sufficient level of literacy in the use of digital technologies among professors and students for the use of Internet technologies in emerging and developing countries. Especially the significantly lower qualifications of older professors and teachers in this regard and their inability to use online platforms independently;

❖ in some countries, the level of providing households with the Internet is low, there is almost no possibility to connect to the Internet in residential areas;

❖ the fact that some participants of the educational process, professors and students do not have appropriate technical means to participate in distance education (computer, laptop, gadgets, etc.);

❖ internet speed and software issues. Including low Internet speed, interruptions in the Internet due to the increase in the number of simultaneous

Internet users, lack of high-quality programmers developing online educational platforms, etc.[1]

According to the experts of international organizations, the "Lockdown" measures introduced due to the "Covid-19" pandemic have created new opportunities for the education system at the international level, including the education of students in higher education institutions. For example, in the conditions of "Lockdown" in Cyprus, the Ministry of Education and Science through the Institute of Pedagogy conducted rapid training of professors and teachers for the organization of distance education, and organized online classes for students in HEIs. The only "iUniversity" platform of distance education universities in Armenia has been developed, and the processes of online training of students have been launched. In the United Arab Emirates, education and business continuity has been ensured through applications such as "Google Hangouts Meet", "Blue Jeans", "Avaya Spaces", "Slack" and "Cisco Webex".[2] In Russian universities, the use of Augmented Reality (AR) technology has become an innovation in education.[3]

In the context of the "Covid-19" pandemic in Uzbekistan, a remote "Moodle" platform system was created to manage the activities of higher education institutions, and classes were conducted remotely. Despite the fact that this system was introduced in the education system of our country several years ago, its operation has caused enough problems in practice. Including:

-    despite the establishment of professional development courses on the use of ICT among professors and teachers, the skills of distance work practice were not sufficiently formed among professors and teachers who were adapted to the traditional form of education. This situation has led to the transfer of the duties of some professors and teachers to other staff with higher knowledge and skills in the use of ICT;

-    low internet speed not only in the regions, but also in the center of the regions. Also, there is almost no possibility of connecting to the Internet in areas far from the center;

-    lack of technical means for students to participate in online classes. In most cases, the family had one gadget and had to stand in line to use it;

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[1] Пандемия как вызов мировому образованию. Мнение эксперта. https://sn.ria.ru/20200415/1570022927.html

[2] Как коронавирус меняет образование: глобальные проблемы и опыт других стран https://xn--80aabdc3aef1bhdbbd1amr9v.xn--p1ai/kak-koronavirus-menyaet-obrazovanie-globalnye-problemy-i-opyt-drugih-stran/

[3] Фойдали карантин: Covid-19 пандемияси олий таълим тизимини қандай ўзгартиради? https://www.uzanalytics.com/jamiyat/7460/

- the duration of video lessons was 20-30 minutes, not 80 minutes, due to a number of problems such as extremely low internet speed, students' financial ability not being able to purchase internet traffic;

- lack of possibility to fully monitor students' learning through video lessons. Also, not only teachers, but also parents are responsible for the education of students. There was a need for parents to monitor their children's learning. But it was not possible because of the lack of communication between professors and parents of students;

- Student participation in online classes organized through the "Zoom" platform has decreased. According to the analysis, the participation rate of students in online classes was 10-50 percent on average. This situation is explained by the unsatisfactory performance of communication companies in the country and insufficient skills of students in video lessons;

- since distance education is sharply different from live education in the classroom, the effectiveness of professors and teachers' communication with students during the educational process was low. For example, it is easy to understand that students are understanding the subject of the lesson through their facial expressions in classroom conditions, but this process is relatively difficult in distance education;

- the existence of technical problems regarding the development of IT infrastructure in the republic's HEIs, etc.[4]

According to the results of a survey conducted among students through social networks, 35% of the 800 students who took part in it assessed distance education as ineffective, while 16% said that the country's higher education institutions were not ready for such an innovation. For example, 8% of respondents said they were not against distance education, while 25% of respondents voted in favor of distance education, saying that it was an opportunity to introduce innovations into the country's education system. 16 percent of students evaluated distance education as an interesting experience in the educational system of our country and supported distance education.[5]

In our opinion, the widespread introduction of distance education in the higher education institutions of our country, together with the creation of facilities for the use of higher education services for consumers with special needs, will allow the formation of additional income of the higher education institutions. In

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[4] Фойдали карантин: Covid-19 пандемияси олий таълим тизимини қандай ўзгартиради? https://www.uzanalytics.com/jamiyat/7460/

[5] Ўзбекистонда масофавий таълим ривожига туртқилар ва тўсиқлар – эксперт фикри. https://anhor.uz/uz/society/uzbekistonda-masofaviy-talim-rivozhiga-turtkilar-va-tusiqlar-ekspert-fikri/

most cases, applicants who wish to study in higher education institutions do not submit documents to higher education institutions due to the lack of time to attend classroom classes and difficulties in movement.

According to research, it can be assessed that the Covid-19 pandemic, along with its negative impact on the higher education system of our country, has been beneficial in the following aspects:

- in a report published by the international publication TNE (Times Higher Education) in 2018, it was predicted that by 2030, only the world's elite universities will switch to online education.[6] The global Covid-19 pandemic accelerated this process and led to the development of the online education system in our country for at least 10 years;

- cooperation relations of local higher education institutions with prestigious foreign universities aimed at improving the quality of education have increased. In particular, on May 11-12, 2020, an online seminar on the organization of distance education was organized in accordance with the mutual cooperation agreements concluded between the Tashkent State Law University and Boston College Law School of the USA;

- during the quarantine period, the skills of professors and teachers of higher education institutions and students in organizing classes using the distance education system (Moodle) and online platforms (Zoom, Telegram) increased. In particular, professors and teachers have received relevant qualifications for effective use of Bandicam, OBS-studio, and Zoom programs for recording videos. As a result, huge media platforms were created by most higher education institutions of the republic;

- professors and teachers of higher education institutions began to widely use innovative methods in organizing online classes and forming platforms. In particular, providing links to web-resources related to the current topic on the Internet during the lesson organized in an online form ensured virtual interactivity of students and professors;

- The "Covid-19" pandemic has led to the development of flexibility skills of professors and teachers. This situation makes it possible to achieve positive results in evaluating the adaptability of graduates in research on the subject of "Soft Skills" conducted by the International Labor Organization on a global scale. In particular, the students' skills in working with web platforms have significantly

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[6] How will technology reshape the university by 2030? https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/how-will-technology-reshape-university-2030

increased, and a number of digital archives and sites have been created on historical topics about Ernest Hemenguey[7], Lebanon[8] and Oman[9].

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[7] https://hemingway.omeka.net/items/browse?sort_field=added&sort_dir=a
[8] https://kamolabakiriddinov.wixsite.com/welcometolebanon
[9] https://aboutoman.omeka.net/