

**ALLA DURDAS**

State University of Trade and Economics,  
Kyoto Street, 19, 02000 Kyiv, Ukraine  
a.durdas@knute.edu.ua, ORCID 0000-0001-6456-6108

**TETIANA KRAVCHUK**

State University of Trade and Economics,  
Kyoto Street, 19, 02000 Kyiv, Ukraine  
t.kravchuk@knute.edu.ua, ORCID 0000-0002-0171-8271

**QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION: INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSE**

*The article deals with the state of research of the concept of higher education quality in Ukraine and other countries of the world. The issue of assessment of university education quality has been defined as the insufficiently studied phenomenon in the domestic and foreign scientific literature and, therefore, it requires further research. It has been found out that the world community considers high-quality higher education as a tool for social, cultural and economic growth. The article stresses that nowadays there is no country which would be satisfied with its higher education system, and the search for innovations for provision tangible results continues. The views of the scientists on higher education quality have been revealed: higher education quality is considered as a set of qualities of a person with higher education that reflects his or her professional competence, value orientation, social orientation and determines the ability of higher education to satisfy both personal spiritual and material needs, as well as the needs of society.*

**Key words:** *higher education, quality, assessment, higher education quality assessment, international discourse.*

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**Introduction.** The concept of higher education quality takes the central place in modern scientific discourse. In the current state of Ukraine's integration into the European educational space and due to the requirements of the educational services market and demand for highly qualified specialists capable of meeting the requirements and demands of the international labor market, higher education quality is becoming crucial. The new realities of the modern world put forward new

requirements for the quality of education: universality of graduates' training, their adaptability to social conditions, personal orientation of the educational process, its informatization, etc. The analysis of the scientific literature shows different approaches of scientists, experts and teachers to the concept of "higher education quality" and various views on assessment of higher education quality.

**The purpose of the article** is to research the ideas of the Ukrainian and foreign scientists about the concept of higher education quality and its assessment.

**Methodology.** The study of the problem of the quality of higher education is based on the general scientific provisions of philosophy on the relationship between theory and practice; on the dialectical interdependence of socio-pedagogical phenomena and processes; education and self-education; basic methodological principles of scientificity, objectivity, integrity, social conditionality; provisions of pedagogy and psychology on control and types of control, the formation of the student's personality and his motivation.

**The statement of the problem.** Due to liberalization of higher education which means strengthening of higher education institutions' autonomy and social responsibility, the problem of ensuring efficient, accessible and high-quality education has become a priority today. The world community considers high-quality higher education to be a tool for social, cultural and economic growth. However, nowadays there is not a single country which would be satisfied with its higher education system – everyone is in search of innovations that would give tangible results. Under these conditions, the essence of phenomenon of quality culture has undergone significant transformations: from traditional understanding of it as a mandatory component of the institutional academic culture of a higher education institution to the society's awareness of fundamental role of higher education in shaping the corporate culture of the national quality assurance system in higher education (Avsheniuk, Pro yakisnu vyshchu osvitu).

Foreign and domestic scientists study various aspects of the issue of higher education quality: socio-philosophical, educational, managerial, socio-economic, socio-cultural (Avsheniuk N., Dobriak V., Durdas, A., Endrizzi L., Gibbs G.,

Gordon J., Hénard, F., Roseveare, D., Holovenkin, V., Kubanov R., Stumpf A., Garessus P.A., Zinkovskyi Yu. and others).

The problem of defining the concepts of "quality of education" and "quality of higher education" has always been relevant and quite complex.

Each historical epoch, as well as each stage of human civilization, is reflected in the field of education as in a huge mirror. That is, education is a kind of field where pedagogy, ethics and politics intersect, as well as various social institutions interact in the process of implementing the educational process, and the internal unity of the individual and society is manifested. In education personal, social forms of development intersect along with a universal ontological form, a similar fundamental form of the existence of being (Yakist vyshchoi osvity: teoriia i praktyka).

The formation of a system of higher education quality assessment in Ukraine requires research of the experience in higher education quality and its assessment in the countries where systems of higher education quality assessment have already been formed and gained pan-European recognition.

Higher education quality is the quality of education during the period of formation of a new information society, which, of course, needs a new philosophy of education. After all, this new philosophy of education is able to consider and comprehend the essence and nature of all phenomena in the educational process: ontology, logic, axiology, ethics, methodology, ideology of education and its quality (Yakist vyshchoi osvity: teoriia i praktyka).

According to V. Golovenkin, the main goal of the state system of ensuring higher education quality is to provide citizens with quality educational services; to guarantee that educational institutions or specific educational programs have properly formulated goals and certain conditions for their achievement; to stimulate the development of higher education institutions and educational programs by continuous management of quality assurance process; to enable the integration of higher education into the global education system; to develop conditions for

competition of the Ukrainian higher education in the global and European markets of educational services (Holoventin, 2009).

According to the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" (2014), the quality of higher education is a set of qualities of a person who has got higher education, which reflects his or her professional competence, value orientation, social orientation and determines the ability of higher education to satisfy both personal spiritual and material needs, as well as the needs of society (Zakon Ukrainy "Pro vyshchu osvitu").

In the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" the emphasis shifts noticeably towards graduates' professional competence:

- quality of higher education is the level of knowledge, skills and abilities acquired by a person, reflecting his or her professional competence in accordance with the standards of higher education (Zakon Ukrainy "Pro vyshchu osvitu");

- quality of higher education is the qualitative and quantitative indicators of the learning outcomes of persons who have obtained higher education of the appropriate educational or educational and scientific degree, which testify the level of their competence and ability for professional activity in accordance with the area of training and specialty or specialization (Zakon Ukrainy "Pro vyshchu osvitu");

- quality of higher education is the level of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other competencies acquired by a person, reflecting his or her competence in accordance with the standards of higher education (Zakon Ukrainy "Pro vyshchu osvitu").

Today, however, higher education does not only deal with specialists' training. Moreover, global trends also show opposite directions. Along with the transition from elite to mass higher education, which is taking place all over the world today, there is a shift in assessment of higher education quality towards meeting students' needs. As for the needs of the state and of the labor market, their satisfaction can be carried out through various mechanisms to encourage students to choose and master appropriate educational programs and educational courses. It is also advisable to use the mechanisms for attestation of professional qualifications

outside a higher education system – by employers, professional public institutions, etc. (Durdas, 2021, p. 57).

According to D. Medvedovska, higher education quality is the ability to meet the needs of consumers and subjects of the educational process. Therefore, the main criterion for education quality is the degree of satisfaction of the needs of an individual and society, compliance with the needs of an individual, employers and society. Since the needs of different social, professional groups, individuals can be different, therefore, the results of education can be evaluated by different subjects (students, parents, teachers, employers, etc.) according to different criteria, at different levels, and this actualizes the problem of approaches on the technology of monitoring and higher education quality management" (Osnovni kryterii yakosti vyshchoi osvity: dosvid Velykoi Brytanii, p. 49).

Yu. Zinkovskyi considers higher education quality as a complex characteristic that reflects the range and level of educational services provided by an educational system in accordance with the interests of an individual, society and the state. According to the author, higher education quality is a systemic category that encompasses the concept of "quality of education" and "quality of training". (Zinkovskyi, 2008, p. 1016).

Despite an active development of this issue, there is no consensus among teachers and scientists regarding the interpretation of the concept of higher education quality, which emphasizes the need and relevance of the research in this area (Durdas, 2021, p. 73).

The concept of "culture of quality" has already become a conscious permanent part of the professional discourse in the field of educational policy and educational process management, both at the national and international levels. The starting point for higher education quality is the ability of universities to develop a sound internal quality system, and this ability is directly correlated with institutional autonomy and social responsibility (Avsheniuk, Pro yakisnu vyshchu osvitu).

According to V. Dobryak, higher education quality should be understood as the level of knowledge, abilities and professional skills acquired by a person in

accordance with the planned goals of a higher educational institution. The result of the diagnostics is a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the level of relevant educational and professional characteristics achieved by a specialist (Dobriak, 2013, p.69).

R. Kubanov states that it is necessary to take into consideration both quality of the education process and quality of its result. According to the scientist, quality of educational process is the most significant characteristic of the content of the category under consideration (Kubanov, 2014, p.31). Within the framework of his publication, R. Kubanov insists on the necessity to consider the phenomenon of education quality within two aspects, namely:

- *the external aspect*: quality of the result of educational process – the compliance of the level of graduates' training with the demands of employers (requirements of standards);
- *the internal aspect*: characteristics of the quality assurance system for this – the content of education, the level of students' training, the qualification of teaching staff, information and methodological support, material and technical support for high-quality training, scientific activity and educational technologies which are used, (Kubanov, 2013, p.29-30).

L. Endrizzi, a scientist from France, emphasizes three interdependent levels of influence on education quality: educational institution, education and personality [Endrizzi, 2014].

According to other French scholars, A. Stumpf, P.-A. Garessus and to L. Endrizzi, who was mentioned above, there is no consensus in the literature on determining higher education quality or the methods of its measuring (Stumpf & Garessus, 2017; Endrizzi L., 2014). Nevertheless, the authors accept the fact that education quality concerns three objects: development of culture of quality, high-quality educational offer and support for teaching and learning (Endrizzi, 2014; Hénard, 2010).

As L. Endrizzi admits that there are no universal dimensions of education quality, that is why this involves the use of many methods in an integrated approach (Endrizzi, 2014, p.29).

According to F. Hénard and D. Roseveare, quality teaching is the use of pedagogical techniques to produce learning outcomes. It includes several dimensions, including the effective construction of the curriculum and course content, a variety of learning contexts (including guided independent learning, project-based learning, collaborative learning, experimentation, etc.), the search for feedback and its use, effective evaluation of learning results. High-quality learning also includes a well-adapted learning environment and support services for students (Hénard & Roseveare, 2012).

Australian scholars G. Joughin, Ph. Dawson and D. Boud state that, despite the widespread recognition of the need to improve assessment in higher education, in some courses assessment tasks are too often subjected to conventional methods. Although changes in assessment depend on many factors, improving assessment ultimately depends on the decisions and actions of educators themselves (Gordon et al., 2017).

According to the British researcher G. Gibbs, in the UK, as in many other countries, in recent decades there has been a shift in perceptions of higher education and, in particular, a shift to a utilitarian view of higher education in preparation for employment. In the UK, new types of assessment are required. Their aim is to assess "key skills", "transferred skills", "general skills" or "graduate attributes", rather than only the acquired knowledge. These types of assessments place even more emphasis on feedback (as far as skills are acquired through cycles of practice and feedback), and are inherently more expensive and time-consuming than regular written exams. The lack of experience in concretizing these skills often led to excessive number of aspects being identified in each course, leading to an increase of cases of students' assessment, as well as more complex and multifaceted tasks and tests. The possible resource implications often lead to a more superficial assessment (Gibbs, 2006).

To J.R. Baird's opinion "quality in education relates to development of intellectual independence" (Baird, J.R, 1988.). According to the researcher, "... secondary and tertiary education should differ only in the extent of student' development towards the desired goal. Accordingly, institutions of higher education must take the lead in fostering improvement in quality of education at all levels" (Baird, J.R, 1988.).

H. Raharjo, M. Xie, T.N. Goh and A.C. Brombacher express an interesting view of an effective strategy of quality enhancement in the field of education: "In order to formulate an effective strategic plan in a customer-driven education context, it is important to recognize who the customers are and what they want" (Raharjo, H. et al, 2007).

Tikly, L., Barrett, A.M. outline two central approaches that frame the debate about education quality, namely, the human capital and human rights approaches and set out an alternative approach based on a theory of social justice and of capabilities. (Tikly, L., Barrett, A.M, 2011).

In turn, Biesta, G.J.J. explores why the question of good education has become so much more difficult to ask and shows why this has been harmful for the quality of education and for the level of democratic control over education. The researcher provides "concrete suggestions for engaging with the question of purpose in education in a new, more precise and more encompassing way, with explicit attention to the ethical, political and democratic dimensions of education" (Biesta, G.J.J., 2015).

**Conclusions.** Having studied the problematic field of education quality and its management, we can say that in almost all scientific sources researchers point to contradictions between modern needs of society, including the economy, and the results of educational systems that do not always meet such needs. Summarizing the results of the thematic review of scientific research we can admit that the issue of assessment of education quality concerns scientists from various spheres of activity, but there is no systematic vision of this problem. Specialists in pedagogy, philosophy, management, economics and engineering point to the low level of



practical solution to this problem in our country and a gap with the global trends in development of higher education quality assurance in scientific theory. At the same time the world community considers high-quality higher education a tool for social, cultural and economic growth. Development of culture of quality, high-quality educational offer and support for teaching and learning have been outlined as three objects that education quality concerns. The absence of universal dimensions of education quality is stated leading to the use of numerous methods in an integrated approach. Ultimately, changes in assessment of higher education quality depend on many factors, but the improvement of assessment ultimately depends on the decisions and actions of educators themselves. The phenomenon of quality culture and the components of higher education quality have not been studied sufficiently and they will be considered in our further research.

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**АЛЛА ДУРДАС**, Державний торговельно-економічний університет  
вул. Кіото, 19, 02000 Київ, Україна, [a.durdas@knote.edu.ua](mailto:a.durdas@knote.edu.ua)

**Тетяна Кравчук**, Державний торговельно-економічний університет  
вул. Кіото, 19, 02000 Київ, Україна, [t.kravchuk@knote.edu.ua](mailto:t.kravchuk@knote.edu.ua)

## ЯКІСТЬ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ: МІЖНАРОДНИЙ ДИСКУРС

*У статті аналізується поняття якості вищої освіти, яке є одним із центральних у сучасному науковому дискурсі. Зазначено наявність різних підходів вчених, експертів та викладачів до визначення поняття «якість вищої освіти» та поглядів на оцінку якості вищої освіти; пріоритетність забезпечення ефективної, доступної та якісної освіти через лібералізацію вищої освіти та, як результат, посилення автономії закладів вищої освіти та їхньої соціальної відповідальності. Зауважено сприйняття високоякісної вищої освіти світовим співтовариством як інструмент соціального, культурного та економічного зростання; наявність суттєвих трансформацій у понятті культури якості: від традиційного розуміння як обов'язкової складової інституційної академічної культури закладу вищої освіти до усвідомлення суспільством фундаментальної ролі вищої освіти у формуванні корпоративної культури закладу вищої освіти. Якість вищої освіти зазначено головною метою державної системи забезпечення якості вищої освіти – надання громадянам якісних освітніх послуг; стимулювання розвитку закладів вищої освіти та освітніх програм шляхом безперервного управління процесом забезпечення якості; забезпечення інтегрування вищої освіти у глобальну систему освіти; створення умов для конкуренції української вищої освіти на світовому та європейському ринках освітніх послуг. З іншого боку, якість вищої освіти розглядається як сукупність якостей особистості з вищою освітою, яка відображає її професійну компетентність, ціннісні орієнтації, соціальну спрямованість і визначає здатність вищої освіти задовольняти як особистісні духовні, так і матеріальні потреби, а також потреби суспільства. У статті наголошено на тому, що основним критерієм якості освіти є ступінь задоволення потреб особистості та суспільства, відповідність потребам особистості, роботодавців та суспільства, тому результати освіти можуть оцінюватися різними суб'єктами (студентами, батьками, викладачами, роботодавцями тощо) за різними критеріями, на різних рівнях, а це актуалізує проблему підходів до технологій моніторингу та управління якістю вищої освіти. Якість вищої освіти розглядається як комплексна характеристика, що відображає спектр і рівень освітніх послуг, що надаються системою освіти відповідно до інтересів особи, суспільства та держави. Незважаючи на те, що ця тема широко обговорюється вченими, викладачами та фахівцями в інших галузях, серед викладачів та науковців не існує єдиної думки щодо трактування поняття якості вищої освіти, що підкреслює необхідність та актуальність досліджень у цьому напрямку.*

**Ключові слова:** вища освіта, якість, оцінка, оцінка якості вищої освіти, міжнародний дискурс.

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