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Monitoring Employers' Requirements to Quality of Training Higher Education Specialists: Functions and Structure

Key words: *monitoring of employers' requirements, quality of education, quality management.*

Annotation: *the problem of monitoring the requirements of employers to the quality of training graduates is considered. The functions and structure of the monitoring are highlighted, ensuring the receipt of relevant and complete information about the opinion of employers regarding the quality of training graduates*

At the present stage of development of the system of higher professional education in Uzbekistan, which is largely determined by the requirements of state educational standards, the role of employers at all stages of vocational training is significantly enhanced, starting with the development of targets, participation in the process of implementing basic educational programs and completing the final state certification. The constant change in the conditions for carrying out professional activities in all spheres of society requires that higher education look for effective ways to study the opinion of employers. The monitoring of the requirements of employers for the quality of specialist training has significant potential in this regard.

Monitoring in the theory and practice of education began to be widely used in the CIS countries in the 90s. XX century. His theoretical understanding involved VA. Kalnee, A.N. Mayorov, D.Sh. Matros, N.A. Selezneva, S.E. Shishov and others. After analyzing the texts of dissertations, abstracts, monographs, scientific articles, we identified two groups of studies devoted to the problem of monitoring. The first group includes works in which monitoring is considered as a method for studying the characteristics of the pedagogical system / process (D.Sh. Matros, N.A. Selezneva, etc.). So, D.Sh. Matros as monitoring in education understands the system of collecting, storing, analyzing and presenting information about the quality of the educational process at school, and also as a system of accumulating psychological and pedagogical experience (3). O.N. Seleznev monitors the quality of higher education as “the complex functioning of a special system designed to monitor, measure, evaluate, analyze and predict the quality of higher education (as a result, as a process, as an educational system, as a set of its actual internal and external relations)” (7, p. 27). Monitoring is a specially organized, systematic observation of the state of objects, phenomena, processes for the purpose of their assessment, control, or forecast.

In the second group of studies, monitoring is considered as a means of managing the educational system / process (N.A. Kulemin, A.N. Maiorov, A.I. Pulbere, E.V. Sergeeva, M.Yu. Chandra, etc.). The most complete definition of monitoring, which emphasizes its capabilities in managing the educational system, was given by N.A. Kulemin: “Monitoring is a system for collecting, processing, storing and distributing information about any system or its elements,

focused on information support of managing this system, allowing to judge its state at any time and predicting its development” (1, p. 18).

In the last decade, studies have emerged that address the problems of using monitoring as an effective means of managing the quality of higher education (A.I. Pulbere, E.I. Sakharchuk, E.V. Sergeeva, etc.). A.I. Pulbera in his dissertation research showed that pedagogical monitoring is “a form of organizing the collection, processing, storage and dissemination of information about the activities of the pedagogical system, ensuring continuous monitoring of its condition and forecasting its development” (5, p. 54). E.V. Sergeeva believes that the monitoring is aimed at researching and developing solutions for managing the quality of the educational process at the university (8). This definition focuses on the procedural characteristics of the monitoring. According to a number of authors (A.I. Pulbere, E.I. Sakharchuk and others), the main purpose of monitoring is to create conditions for timely management decisions regarding the improvement of the quality of the educational process.

The analysis of various interpretations of monitoring in education made it possible to identify the main features of this concept - this is the process of collecting and processing information about the state of a system / process to predict a given system / process and its / its correction. We consider monitoring employers' requirements for the quality of training of specialists with higher education as a process of collecting, storing and processing data on employers' satisfaction with the quality of training young professionals in order to improve the quality of all components of the educational process at the university, ensuring harmonization of the requirements of the state educational standard and the labor market.

Monitoring the requirements of employers allows us to assess the quality of training graduates in two aspects:

- identifying the views of employers on the results of the implementation of the university educational services (ie, the compliance of the graduate with the stated requirements)
- identification of problem areas in graduates' training in order to take timely corrective actions.

This forms a closed cycle of interaction between the university and the employer: identifying the level of employer satisfaction with the final "product" (quality of graduate training) - identifying the main problem areas in preparation - making adjustments to the educational process - again examining the employer's satisfaction level.

In the scientific literature devoted to the problems of monitoring in education, various classifications of its functions have been proposed. Most often, researchers (N.A. Selezneva, A.P. Chernyavskaya, N.A. Kulemin, A.N. Mayorov, A.I. Pulbere, E.V. Sergeeva, M.Yu. Chandra, and others) distinguish following functions: analytical, analytical, evaluation, diagnostic, integrative, informational, control, prognostic, pragmatic, reflexive, comparative, expert, etc.

To identify the specific functions of monitoring the requirements of employers, it is necessary to take into account the peculiarities of this target audience. In the scientific literature, we could not find descriptions of such features, so we identified the characteristics of employers as a target audience for monitoring based on our own observations and experience in organizing

interviews with heads of educational institutions in Namangan and the region, which have been conducted at the Namangan Institute of Civil Engineering since 2017. First of all, it is an interest in competent specialists who can bring something new into the work of an organization / institution; desire to get a specialist who does not need to retrain; critical attitude towards graduates in certain areas of training; willingness to cooperate with the university.

Taking into account these features, we consider monitoring the requirements of employers as a means of managing the quality of the educational process at the university and highlight the following functions: informational, diagnostic, comparative, reflexive, integrative, and image forming.

The information function allows you to identify complete, versatile and timely information about the current requirements of a modern employer, his opinion on the level of competence of young professionals, which makes it possible to form a critical judgment on the state and quality of the educational process at the university, to see its strengths and areas for improvement.

The diagnostic function is that the monitoring of employers' requirements is a monitoring and evaluation mechanism within the framework of quality management of the educational process at the university. The implementation of the diagnostic function stimulates all stakeholders (employers, university management, teachers, students) to improve performance, and also allows the academic community of the university to assess the quality of the educational process at the university at its various stages, from admission of graduates to graduates.

Comparative function is that the information accumulated in the process of regular evaluation procedures of the same type (employers questionnaire, focus group interviews, conversations, etc.), allows you to compare results with each other, to identify positive or negative dynamics of employers' satisfaction with the quality of training university graduates by year, in areas of training, etc.

The reflective function allows you to provide feedback to all stakeholders, in our case - not only with employers, but also with teachers, students and members of the public. openness of information, its distribution and discussion at different levels of management creates a situation of trust and prerequisites for all stakeholders to accept the necessary changes in their activities, as well as pooling efforts to achieve a common goal - improving the quality of professional training of specialists.

The integrative function of monitoring employers' requirements is that its results allow conclusions to be drawn about the general tendencies to improve the quality of vocational training, to establish links between the changes made and the results obtained. In the quality management system of the educational process at a higher education institution, this function makes it possible to identify the system-forming links between various monitoring objects and take into account the totality of factors that influence the integral quality of the educational process.

In the course of our study, it was revealed that monitoring the requirements of employers also implements an image-forming function. Sociologists argue that image is the art of "managing impression." Image is a generalized portrait of an organization, created in the representation of groups of the public on the basis of statements and practical affairs of the organization and forming an emotional attitude to this organization in public or individual consciousness.

According to A.Yu. Panasyuka, the flow of "image-forming information" acts as a feedback inducer - the result of image exposure (4). One of the most important components for building trust in an organization and, accordingly, for the formation of its positive image are the ideas of people about social responsibility to society - the quality of work, type of activity, focus on the consumer, client, care about him. Thus, it can be argued that the image-forming function of monitoring employers' requirements is that as a result of turning to the employers' opinion, an atmosphere of trust is created in the university, not only among them, but also among future applicants and their parents. The identified functions served as the basis for determining the structure of monitoring employers' requirements for the quality of training specialists with higher education. We consider the stages of monitoring as structural elements.

1st stage - prognostic. The main objective of this stage is the development of diagnostic tools for monitoring behavior. At this stage, the reflexive and comparative functions of monitoring are implemented primarily. The development of "sensitive" tools is possible only on the basis of reflection of previous experience of addressing the opinion of employers, a comparative analysis of the content and form of interaction with employers to study their opinions about the quality of training at university and the results obtained and the possibility to use them to improve the quality of the educational process at the university. At this stage, a questionnaire is drawn up containing a number of questions aimed at identifying employers' opinions on various aspects of the quality of graduates' training. Questions of the questionnaire are combined into blocks that allow to reveal the opinion of employers about the knowledge, skills and personal qualities of the graduate, contributing to successful professional activity. In addition, it provides for employers to freely express their attitude to the quality of training at a university and to make proposals.

2nd stage - organizational. The main purpose of this stage is to clarify the characteristics of the target audience for monitoring, ways of organizing interaction, the number of respondents, the timing of surveys, ways of processing the received materials and solving other organizational issues. At this stage, the information and diagnostic monitoring functions are implemented primarily, because using written and oral surveys, information is collected, which is the basis for launching a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the quality of specialists training at the university.

At this stage, there is an active interaction with the faculties and departments of the university, the department for the employment of graduates, education authorities at the city and region levels to determine the contingent of respondents and conduct direct surveys.

3rd stage - analytical. The main goal of the stage is to process and present the obtained results. At this stage, the comparative and reflexive functions of monitoring are implemented primarily, since a comparative analysis of the survey results over several years, the results obtained from

the questionnaire and focus group interviews, and interviews with employers is carried out. Reflection of the obtained results, the procedure for their discussion by interested parties allows to draw conclusions regarding the improvement of the monitoring procedure, diagnostic tools, etc.

The obtained data is processed using an Excel computer program, then analyzed, and on this basis an analytical report is compiled. The report presents both quantitative data and their text explanation, describes problem areas and recommendations for eliminating the latter. The report is replicated and distributed to each department of the university, one way or another, interested in the results of the survey, and is also sent to employers who took part in the survey. In addition, versions of analytical reports are published on the information resource of the university.

The study revealed a special role of image-forming and integrative functions of monitoring employers' requirements for the quality of training specialists with higher education. The image-forming function is implemented at each stage of monitoring, since monitoring employers' requirements allows the university to be positioned as a reliable and stable educational institution that is open to external evaluation and is aimed at maximally satisfying the needs of all stakeholders. The integrative function plays a systemic role, since it sets the vector for monitoring, determines its strategic goals, which are to respond promptly to changes in employers' requests and harmonize the requirements of all interested parties to the quality of specialists with higher education.

Monitoring the requirements of employers, which fully implements the selected functions and is carried out in accordance with the structure developed by us, creates prerequisites for bridging the gap between the level of training of specialists in higher education and the demands of the modern labor market, improves the competitiveness of university graduates. Employers have a real opportunity to actively influence the quality of professional training of specialists with higher education, which fully corresponds to modern trends in the development of the system of higher professional education.

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