

Artículo de investigación

Russian education trends: protracted regression or moving forward

ТЕНДЕНЦИИ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В РОССИИ: ЗАТЯЖНАЯ РЕГРЕССИЯ ИЛИ ДВИЖЕНИЕ ВПЕРЕД

Tendencias de la educación en Rusia: regresión a largo plazo o movimiento hacia adelante

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Written by:

A. P. Garnov¹³³

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1435-8698

https://elibrary.ru/author_items.asp?authorid=295432

O. N. Bykova¹³⁴

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-7671-7994

https://elibrary.ru/author_profile.asp?authorid=706578

A. V. Brykin¹³⁵

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0163-7770

https://elibrary.ru/author_items.asp?authorid=704580

A. A. Gudilin¹³⁶

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-8719-4781

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to conduct a comparative analysis of educational reforms in advanced economies and in Russia so performed differently at various instances and to identify positive and negative trends in the system of Russian education based on the results of moving to a two-tiered system of education.

Research methodology: the article presents a description of the methods of theoretical research (analysis, synthesis, generalization), expressed in the consistency of the conceptual apparatus, the relationship of concepts and basic principles, ensuring the relationship between functional theoretical principles based on the reform of the Russian education system, and empirical methods (observation, measurement), providing research results based on the realities of modern reality. The systematic approach is analyzed for a qualitative study of the processes and phenomena occurring in the Russian education system, aimed at solving the following problems of professional education: development of theoretical concepts based on system principles; educational process management; substantiation of the consistency of

Аннотация

Цель исследования – провести сравнительный анализ образовательных реформ в странах с развитой экономикой и в России, проведенных по-разному в разных случаях, и выявить положительные и отрицательные тенденции в системе российского образования на основе результатов перехода к двухуровневой системе образования.

Методология исследования: в статье представлено описание методов теоретического исследования (анализа, синтеза, обобщения), выраженных в согласованности концептуального аппарата, взаимосвязи концепций и базовых принципов, обеспечивающих взаимосвязь функционально-теоретических принципов на основе реформирования российской системы образования и эмпирические методы (наблюдение, измерение), обеспечивающие результаты исследований, основанные на реалиях современной реальности. Системный подход используется для качественного изучения процессов и явлений, происходящих в российской системе

¹³³ Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, Moscow, Russia

¹³⁴ Plekhanov Russian University of Economics, Moscow, Russia

¹³⁵ Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation, Moscow, Russia; Ruselectronics, JSC, Moscow, Russia

¹³⁶ National University of Science and Technology «MISIS», Moscow, Russia

conclusions and proposals characterizing the processes of education.

Results: annually forecast the need for staffing in territorial planning, introduce a correlation in the recruitment for higher and secondary vocational education programs, revive the training system for workers and restore the prestige of secondary vocational education.

Keywords: Educational reform, two-tiered education system, trends in Russian education, the Bologna Process.

образования, направленных на решение следующих задач профессионального образования: разработка теоретических концепций на основе системных принципов; управление учебным процессом; обоснование согласованности выводов и предложений, характеризующих процессы обучения.

Результаты: ежегодно прогнозировать потребность в кадрах в территориальном планировании, вводить корреляцию при наборе на программы высшего и среднего профессионального образования, возрождать систему подготовки рабочих и восстанавливать престиж среднего профессионального образования.

Ключевые слова: образовательная реформа, двухуровневая система образования, тенденции российского образования, Болонский процесс.

Resumen

El objetivo del estudio es realizar un análisis comparativo de las reformas educativas en países con economías desarrolladas y en Rusia, llevado a cabo de manera diferente en diferentes casos, e identificar tendencias positivas y negativas en el sistema educativo ruso en función de los resultados de la transición a un sistema educativo de dos niveles. Metodología de la investigación: el artículo describe los métodos de investigación teórica (análisis, síntesis, generalización), expresados en la consistencia del aparato conceptual, la relación de conceptos y principios básicos que aseguran la interconexión de los principios teóricos funcionales basados en la reforma. Sistema educativo ruso y métodos empíricos (observación, medición) que proporcionan resultados de investigación basados en las realidades de la realidad moderna. Se utiliza un enfoque sistemático para un estudio cualitativo de los procesos y fenómenos que ocurren en el sistema educativo ruso, con el objetivo de resolver las siguientes tareas de la educación profesional: desarrollo de conceptos teóricos basados en principios del sistema; gestión de procesos educativos; fundamentación de la consistencia de conclusiones y sugerencias que caracterizan los procesos de aprendizaje. Resultados: pronostica anualmente la necesidad de personal en la planificación territorial, introduce correlación en el reclutamiento para programas de educación vocacional superior y secundaria, revive el sistema de capacitación para trabajadores y restablece el prestigio de la educación vocacional secundaria.

Palabras clave: Reforma educativa, sistema educativo de dos niveles, tendencias en la educación rusa, el proceso de Bolonia.

Introduction

Education is becoming one of the most important factors in the formation of a new quality of the economy and society. Sustainable socio-economic growth of the country and its competitiveness in the global economic community are largely driven by its focus and performance.

The transformation of the economy and the development of the knowledge society require

restructuring the education system taking into account the need for specialists with new professional skills and the ability to acquire and use new knowledge in a rapidly changing environment.

Materials and methods

Empirically, the study is based on the data of Rosstat and National Research University Higher

School of Economics (NRU HSE). The analysis was carried out using statistical methods for analyzing data obtained from official information resources. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of a table.

Review of publications

Reforms in the field of education were studied in the works of Bordovskiy G.A. (2018), Druzhilov A.S. (2010), Ilyinsky I.M. (2009), Krasinskaya L.F. (2018), Petrov V.V. (2014) and many other domestic authors who come to the conclusion that layering reforms in the Russian education system erodes the decades-old features of the Soviet educational school. The pros and cons of the Bologna process in Russian higher education were considered in the works of Gretchenko A.I and Gretchenko A.A. (2009), Libin I., Modesto S.V., Oleinik T. et al. (2012), Vostrikov V.N., Lischuk E.N. and Savchenko N.V. (2018), Plaksiy V.I. (2012) and other scientists, noting that the new reforms give universities autonomy, independence, and the opportunity to participate in scientific collaborations, however, in practice, universities essentially do not change anything in their educational process, leaving the previous educational model virtually unchanged.

An important role in the scientific development of building a model of a progressive educational process is played by the work of foreign researchers: Becker G.S., Bok Derek., Brammer, S., Millington, Bryson, J.M., Schulz T., Sokolik Stanley, who believe that every 3-4 years the education system should be modified to meet the needs of the market, to the requirements of the employer, regularly conduct educational audits in ongoing educational programs, give them a practice-oriented character, and graduates with competencies in demand on the labor market.

At the same time, the impact of educational reforms on the quality of training in Russia is not well understood.

Results

The modern educational reform was based on the alienation of the historical postulates of national education. A negative aspect of this reform is the introduction of a two-tiered educational system by violent methods, in contrast to European countries, which smoothly introduced new educational trends into existing educational models. I. V. Vorobyeva notes, "at first glance, all the provisions of the Bologna Process look attractive. At the same time, these pluses become minuses due to the difficulties of their

implementation, the lack of technology for their bringing to practice, and discrepancy with realities" (Vorobyeva, 2013, p. 76).

Of course, there are positive trends in the Bologna system: the integration of our educational programs in the international space; improving the quality of education using modern educational technologies; increasing academic mobility; using internationalization strategies; and import and export of educational services (Libin, et al. 2012).

The educational reform allowed students to flexibly change themselves adapting to market conditions.

Nevertheless, there is a mismatch between the needs of the economy for workers and specialists and their actual availability. The competencies of a significant part of graduates do not meet the requirements of the labour market. A particularly strong gap is observed in the innovative sector of the economy and in high-tech industries.

Discussion

Since the early 2000s, Russia has been building an education system to meet international standards. In 2003, Russia signed the Bologna Declaration, and the country began reforming the national education system in line with the requirements of the Bologna Process.

The Bologna Process is aimed at creation of a compatible pan-European educational system of two-stage education (undergraduate and graduate programs) (Schulz, 1960). This requires the following: introduction of the same type of educational cycles, academic qualifications and labour intensity assessments; increasing the academic mobility of students, teachers and managerial staff of universities. It was assumed that the creation of such a system would increase the quality and competitive ability of European university-level education (Bykova et al., 2018).

Now the teacher, not just a teacher trying to transfer knowledge, but a mentor who shapes knowledge, skills and lays down core competencies through active and interactive attendance (Garnov and Khlevnaya, 2011).

The advanced European countries use an educational model, which is based on university education plus ongoing professional training in various vocational schools and centers, and which are also built on a multilevel principle (Bordovskiy, 2018).

By 2011, all Russian universities have switched to a two-tiered education system.

Educational reforms in the early 2000s also touched the secondary vocational education system and should have led to a structure consisting of lyceums and colleges using new educational approaches. The state program of the Russian Federation called "Development of education for 2013-2020" (2014) sets the following target for the vocational education system: "A significant increase in the contribution of vocational education to the socio-economic and cultural retrofitting the Russian Federation, increasing its global competitive ability, ensuring the demand for each student by the economy and society." In 2016, the priority project "Education" specified this target under the topic "Training of highly qualified specialists and workers taking into account modern standards and advanced technologies" as follows: "Creation in the Russian Federation of a competitive system of secondary vocational education aimed at training of highly qualified specialists and workers in line with up-to-date standards and leading-edge technologies ensuring an increase in the number of graduates of educational organizations up to 50,000 persons by the end of 2020 who put secondary vocational education programs into practice and who have demonstrated the level of WorldSkill-compliant training." (Government of Russia, 2016).

Attention should be given to forecasting the staffing needs of individual areas and regions suffering from a shortage of workers and specialists who have just been put on the labour market. Now the time-frame for forecasting the staffing needs of the socio-economic growth of the areas is at least 5-7 years, because the plans for admission to vocational education institutions formed on the basis of the forecasting results determine the graduation structure of the relevant specialists: in 2 - 3 years: vocational schools and lyceums, 3 - 4 years: technical schools and colleges, 5 - 6: universities. Assessment of the labour market including its analysis and prediction is the basis for determining the scope and vocational qualification structure of training workers and specialists; involves analyzing the economic situation in the country, the state of employment and labour shortages, selecting enterprises that operate in a particular area with the purpose of forming their HR policy (Bykova, 2019, p. 8).

Thus, many experts believe that Russia's joining the Bologna Process had both positive and negative consequences. So, S. I. Plakhsy, who

positions himself as a supporter of the Bologna Process, notes as a positive aspect of the Bologna Agreements the competitive ability, self-containment and independence of universities, their European cooperation in ensuring the quality of education with "full respect for the difference in cultures, languages, national educational systems and university autonomy" (Plakhsy, 2012, p. 8).

In addition to that, S. I. Plakhsy states that these basic provisions are implemented contradictory: "For a number of provisions stipulated in the Bologna Process, Russian system of higher education generally goes the other way round" (Plakhsy, 2012). However, the basic principle of the Bologna Agreement, which consists in the ability of universities to choose their own growth path, taking into account new trends in science, education, politics and society as a whole, is not used in practice.

According to many experts, the current education system did not fully meet the expectations of the reformers. Largely, this is due to the fact that turning to a new model of education froze in between state. Russia did not completely switch to the Anglo-Saxon model of education instead of the Humboldt model that radically differed from it, which lied at the heart of Soviet higher education.

Formally, universities use a level-type education system; however, the entire content remains the same. For many employers, such training does not suit the root and in the community, there is an opinion that a graduate of the bachelor's degree is simply 'dropout' (Bordovskiy, 2018).

Blind adherence to European and American standards in the system of national education are negative trends that will appear in 10-15 years (Druzhilov, 2010, p. 53). I. M. Ilyinsky (2009) holds the same position, who analyzing the reform ongoing in the higher education system, notes that most of the declared requirements of the Bologna Agreement suggest its 'tough breaking' resulting in negative consequences, and destruction of the existing system of national education.

Completing the undergraduate studies in many European countries, the graduate becomes a full-fledged specialist ready to enter the labour market with a certain trade (Sokolik, 1970). "The undergraduate studies is all about the independent formation by the student of his educational path. The purpose of the bachelor is not to work in a narrow professional niche, but be flexible to rebuild adapting to market

conditions...” (Gretchenko, A. I. And Gretchenko, A. A., 2009, p. 122).

The Federal Law “Concerning Education in the Russian Federation” (2012, p. 60) states that having graduated from both a specialty and a bachelor's degree, a graduate applies for a diploma of higher education. It has to be said that the educational system does not differ at all in undergraduate and specialty, except for reducing the duration of training, and a set of disciplines.

The problem is particularly acute in technical universities, which, as part of the implementation of the Bologna Agreement, have switched to level training. Undergraduate training is a necessary level of technical education. A graduate of such a program is certainly needed by a company, but only with a long on-the-job training at this company, or with an interested mentor. And only a few years after receiving an additional education, such a graduate can become a full-fledged engineer (Vostrikov et al., 2018). In this regard, bachelors are frequently not perceived by employers as full-fledged specialists with higher education, especially in the technical field.

The quality of human resources, and, consequently, the state of the economy, industry, and production, directly depends on the level of education. Applied education received in secondary vocational institutions is a factor in the reproduction of the socio-professional structure of society.

Thus, higher education is no longer a guarantor of work in the field of professional expertise. Obviously, the higher education system needs to be revised in terms of existing standards and should be guided by market conditions and labour market needs. Moreover, the system of secondary vocational education shall prepare such specialists, which are wanted by employers. (Bykova, 2019, p. 11)

Let's exemplify by developed countries where reforms in the education system have positive trends. In many European countries, high school education has been practiced for 12-13 years and not everyone gets such education. In Western Europe, 20% of the population does not have a full secondary education. Of course, there are countries in which less than 50% of the population has complete secondary education (Bryson, 2004). In such countries as Canada, USA, Norway, Sweden, more than 25% of the population aged 25-64 have higher education, in Russia more than 61% of the population in the

same age group have higher education (Canetti and Malraux, 2019).

To reduce the number of people who want to get higher education in Russia, it is necessary to introduce a 12-year period of full secondary education (Canetti and Malraux, 2019). According to UNESCO, the duration of school education (primary + secondary) in the world is as follows: 10 years in 8 countries; 11 years in 35 countries; 12 years in 124 countries; 13 years in 47 countries; 14 years in 5 countries. Thus, countries with 12 years or longer schooling make up 80% (Bok, 2017).

The state should clearly define the ratio of persons receiving higher and secondary vocational education (Bykova et al., 2018). For example, in such countries as Canada, 51% of the population receive higher education, the United States - 35%, Belgium - 31%, Germany - 26%, and the United Kingdom - 24% (Becker, 2016). To identify this ratio, countries with the number of university students in excess of 200 students per 10 thousand population can serve as the target. These are: Canada (354); Spain (344); United States (341); Austria (321); New Zealand (314) and others (Becker et al., 2015).

Today, an equally important challenge of national education lies in increasing the prestige of Russian education for foreign students and bringing the share of foreign students in the total student population to the performance level of world powers (Bykova et al., 2018). For example, the share of foreign students in the total number of students in Austria and Switzerland is 11%, in Belgium - 10%, more than 5% - in Australia, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Norway (Brammer and Millington, 2003).

For decades, all sorts of programs have been tested in Russia aimed at enhancing the quality and prestige value of Russian education, for example, federal targeted programs adopted: Integration of Science and Higher Education of Russia for 2002-2006, Research and Development in Priority Areas for Scientific and Engineering Growth of Russia for 2007-2012, National Technological Capability for 2007-2011. In 2014, the Concept of the federal target program for the advancement of education for 2016-2020 was approved. The top priority of this program was “to ensure conditions for the effective advancement of Russian education, the formation of a competitive human potential and the increase in the competitive ability of Russian education at all levels, as well as internationally” (Government of Russia, 2014).

In the course of educational reforms in Russia, the number of educational organizations that train mid-level specialists and the number of students in them has grown (Table 1) (Bykova, 2019).

The number of educational organizations that trained mid-level specialists in 2018 versus 2005

increased by 26% driven by both the public and private sectors.

The number of students in educational organizations training mid-level specialists has grown by 5%. This was possible due to an increase in the number of students studying under contracts for the provision of for-profit educational services in both governmental and private educational organizations.

Table 1. Vocational educational organizations providing training for mid-level specialists (at the beginning of the school year)

	Years					
	2005/06	2010/11	2015/16	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Number of educational institutions*	2905	2850	2891	3278	3682	3658
Number of students, thousand persons	2591	2126	2180	2305	2931	3006
Number of students per 10,000 people, persons	181	149	149	157	163	168

*Including vocational organizations providing training for skilled workers, employees, and professional organizations providing training for mid-level specialists. Originated by the authors according to Rosstat (Federal State Statistics Service, 2019).

In the course of educational reforms, the number of educational and scientific

organizations introducing bachelor's, specialty, and master's programs has decreased by 31% (Table 2).

Table 2. Vocational educational organizations providing educational background in undergraduate, specialty, and master's programs (at the beginning of the school year)

	Years					
	2005/06	2010/11	2015/16	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Number of educational institutions*	1068	1115	896	818	766	742
Number of students, thousand persons	7065	7050	4766	4399	4246	4162
Number of students per 10,000 people, persons	493	493	325	300	289	272

* Until 2016 – the number of higher education institutions. Originated by the authors according to Rosstat (Federal State Statistics Service, 2019).

Turning to the Bologna education system made the education accessible to those who can pay for it; on the other hand, education has become inaccessible to those who are not able to pay for

education, even with a high level of knowledge, but lacking the required points for the Unified

State Exam (Starkova, 2006). This point of view is also supported by the analysis conducted by the Higher School of Economics, which showed that now the accessibility of higher education is very different depending on regional, social, material and other factors (Didkovskaya, 2017). There is no doubt that higher education has become widespread. Over the past decade, the share of people with higher education has been

continuously growing reaching 34% by 2017 (Table 3). At the same time, the share of employees with secondary vocational education

remains sustainable. The share of employees who have only secondary or basic general education is decreasing.

Table 3. The number of employees aged 15-72 years by educational level in 2005-2017, %

Level of education	Years						
	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2017
University-level	25.1	27.2	29.1	30.4	32.2	33.5	34.2
Secondary vocational education including the mid-level training program under the skilled workers (employees) training program	44.5	45.3	46.7	45.7	44.9	45.1	44.9
Secondary general education	26.1	26.7	27.1	26.2	25.8	25.9	25.7
Basic general education	18.4	18.6	19.6	19.5	19.0	19.2	19.2
Basic general education not available	22.1	20.8	19.9	19.9	19.2	18.1	17.4
	6.1	4.5	4.0	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.3
	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2

Originated by the authors according to Rosstat (Federal State Statistics Service, 2018)

Universities that accomplishing training programs based on distance learning technologies came in the availability of higher education. Therefore, in 2018, the proportion of students who used remote learning technologies in the total number of students increased to 11.3% from 10.2% in 2017 (Federal State Statistics Service, 2019).

Currently, many university graduates work where higher education is not required; at the same time, companies are experiencing personnel shortages due to a lack of skilled workers and mid-level specialists (Krasinskaya, 2018).

Inconsistency of the staff training structure with the labour market needs is confirmed by the fact that only 60% of

employed graduates in 2015-2017 have a job corresponding to the specialty they got in the educational institution of secondary vocational education and 71% of graduates from higher education institutions (Federal State Statistics Service, 2019).

The unemployment rate among graduates is much higher than the average for the economy. Thus, according to a labour force survey conducted by Rosstat in 2018, the unemployment rate among graduates ranged from 6.9% to 12.1% (Table 4). At the same time, the unemployment rate of the population of the Russian Federation aged 15-72 years in 2018 did not exceed 5.6% (Federal State Statistics Service, 2019).

Table 4. Distribution of graduates who graduated from educational institutions in 2015-2017 by labour force participation status

Level of education	Labour force participation rate, %	Employment rate, %	Unemployment rate, %
University-level	90.2	84.0	6.9
Secondary vocational education in line with mid-level specialists training program	87.3	78.0	10.6
Secondary vocational education in line with skilled workers (employees) training program	87.2	76.6	12.1

Originated by the authors according to Rosstat (Federal State Statistics Service, 2019).

In almost two decades, radical changes of the Russian education system have taken place, both the strategically and tactically, but all these changes do not result in a university graduate is ready to begin to perform his/her professional duties without gaining additional professional competencies (Petrov, 2014).

Our society faces the challenge of creating high-tech jobs in the innovative sector of the economy and university graduates must meet these challenges so that when they start working in a production undertaking, there will be no need to educate or retrain a specialist, as many employers now practice in their corporate educational centers. However, the labour market is now tending towards the working trades and

graduates of secondary vocational education, who are so necessary for the real sector of the economy (Analytical Center under the Government of the Russian Federation, 2017).

Let us talk about financing the education system in Russia. Since 2008, education spending in Russia have actually stagnated. According to Rosstat, over the past ten years, inflation-adjusted spending has increased by only 7%. It was declining from 2013 to 2016, stabilizing in 2017.

Education spending, expressed as a percentage of GDP, continuously decreased from 2014 to 2017 (Figure 1).

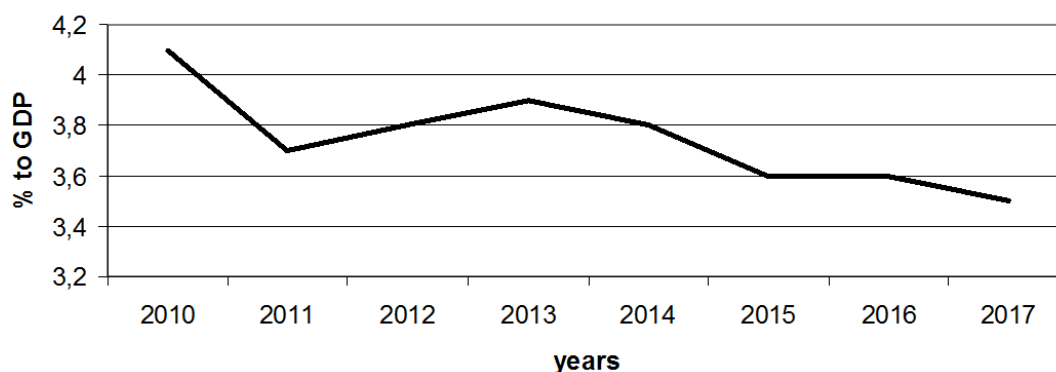


Figure 1. Expenditures of the consolidated budget and budgets of state extra-budgetary funds for education as a percentage of GDP. Originated by the authors according to Rosstat (Federal State Statistics Service, 2019).

Despite a slight recovery growth in 2018, education spending remain much lower than in other advanced countries, both as a percentage of GDP and in terms of per student. As noted in the report of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) “Education at a Glance 2018” (OECD, 2018), countries spend on education averaged 4.5% of GDP in 2016. In Russia, education spending, according to OECD estimates, did not exceed 3.3% in 2016, and amounted to only 2.7% in 2017.

Conclusions

During the educational reforms in Russia, the number of educational institutions that train middle-level specialists and the number of students in them increased, against the background of a decrease in scientific and educational institutions that train university-level specialists.

Despite these trends, the share of people with higher education in the labour market is constantly growing. By 2017, it reached 34%, the highest level in history. The share of employees who have only secondary or basic general education is decreasing.

The introduction of two-tiered training for the majority of humanitarian and natural sciences turned out to be optimal. However, this approach negatively affected the quality of training for a number of technical specialties.

The education system requires further reform as required by the labour market, taking into account national achievements of the past and successful international practices.

Thus, we see the primary target for continuing the educational reform in increasing the quality of education using practice-oriented approaches, active and interactive teaching methods,

changing approaches to the requirements and assessment criteria of teaching staff, timely stimulation and motivation of teachers to increase their level of training, follow the latest developments in their field of knowledge, the opportunity to participate in international projects and international internship.

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