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Using mixed methods to study Emotional Intelligence and Teaching Competencies in higher education

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Abstract

Education is one of the largest factors in the development of an independent country, especially for such a young country (22 years of independence) as Kazakhstan. The Bologna process was accepted in Kazakhstan only three years ago. This has created a new paradigm in education: competence-based education. Joining the western system of education has brought about many changes in teaching characteristics and style. The modern system encourages expects teachers to be more mobile, which requires competencies such as emotional intelligence and communication. The purpose of this article is to examine the extent to which the competence-based approach has been implemented in the education system of Kazakhstan in terms of mixed methods research approach. The paper outlines the design of a study on emotional intelligence and teaching competencies.

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Keywords: Higher education; emotional intelligence; teaching; competence-based approach; mixed methods research.

1. Introduction

Education is one of the largest factors in the development of any country. The choice of this topic is very important and relevant for such a young country as Kazakhstan. President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, in his address to the nation, "Strategy 2050," pays special attention to the development of higher education and science and speaks of their restructuring. Today, the technological revolution and the global economic picture necessitate a new level of science and innovation. In this time of development, the innovative instructor should be a person of

strong professional and pedagogical qualities, relevant skills and competencies, and appropriate social and psychological traits.

1.1. New paradigm

In 2010, Kazakhstan joined the Bologna process. The Bologna process is the process of convergence and harmonization of higher education systems in Europe with the aim of creating a common European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The main objectives of the Bologna Process:

- facilitate mobility of students, graduates and higher education staff;
- prepare students for their future careers and for life as active citizens in democratic societies, and support their personal development;
- offer broad access to high-quality higher education, based on democratic principles and academic freedom (Bologna declaration, 1999).

The Bologna Declaration contains several key provisions. These provisions include:

- Adaptation of a system of easily and comparable degrees.
- Adaptation of two-cycled education system: undergraduate and graduate.
- Establishment of a system of credits such as in the ECTS system.
- The development of mobility of students and teachers.
- Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance.
- Promotion of necessary European dimensions in higher education (Bologna declaration, 1999).

In recent years, the system of higher education in Kazakhstan has been redesigned based on these key provisions. This has created a new paradigm of education: competence-based education (Prilepina, 2008). In Kazakhstan's system of education the term "competence" has appeared only recently but has not been applied widely.

For many decades, Kazakhstan's education system was dominated by the Soviet paradigm where the traditional approach was the old KAS approach. According to KAS, education in general can be reduced to three main dominant areas: knowledge, abilities and skills (KAS). This traditional approach in professional education is focused on the concept of "professional qualifications." These professional qualifications show the level of formal education or readiness of the "trainee" regardless of the field of study. In other words, the graduate has demonstrated general professional knowledge and has a state certificate that confirms this. But this qualification does not guarantee the worker's ability to change his quantitative and qualitative characteristics to meet the changing professional demands (Sarkisyan, 2010). In our dynamic world, this old system is insufficient, because the main requirements to graduate are the "ability to be competitive, [and] to have professional and personal competencies" (Prilepina, 2008).

1.2. Competence-based approach

The competence-based approach a significant departure from the KAS approach. Serikov (2003) and Prilepina (2008) describe the competence-based approach as one that reorients the traditional educational paradigm with the preferred translation of ready knowledge and skills to create the conditions for a university student to master complex skills and abilities. These skills and abilities are described as readiness to independence, responsibility, productive activity, flexibility and ambiguity in solving personal and professional problems in the modern informational age.

However, the education system in Kazakhstan has no single clear definition of the competence-based approach. To examine the extent to which the competence-based approach has been implemented, we have chosen the mixed methods research approach. Mixed methods research approach allows the researcher to better understand complex issues and develop a more complete understanding of the topic. Mixed methods research involves the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data and its integration (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

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