

CHOOSING A STRATEGY FOR EXPORTING HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICES

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Introduction. The export of higher education services is intended to enhance the competitiveness of domestic education. Uzbek higher education has long been experiencing a crisis caused by a sharp reduction in state funding over a prolonged period, the exodus of highly qualified specialists to other sectors of the economy and abroad, and the breakdown of ties with both research and industrial organizations, which has somewhat reduced the quality of education. As a result, Uzbekistan has effectively become a net importer of educational services, with many young people choosing education in Russia and European countries as more prestigious options. To enhance the competitiveness of domestic higher education, attract talented graduates from around the world, and secure an additional source of financial resources, Uzbekistan is implementing measures to internationalize universities and increase the export of educational services. However, these measures do not always produce the expected results. This is due to the central government's inattention to the regional specifics of universities, particularly in the Far East, which border the dynamically developing countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

Key words: international students, education, education services, globalization, educational programs, branches of regional and national universities.

Export-oriented competitive strategies in education are aimed at attracting international students and international partnerships, generating additional revenue for universities and increasing their global competitiveness. These strategies include creating unique programs, developing distance learning, networking with foreign universities, and establishing campuses abroad. Success is ensured through assessing export potential, market research, and direct or joint export of services.

However, the issues of regional higher education services export have been insufficiently studied. Given the importance of regional universities, particularly those focused on the dynamically developing Asia-Pacific region, this paper examines proposals for selecting a strategy for higher education services export based on existing practical results.

Research Methodology and Methods

The methodology and methodological tools of this study are based on a comparison and assessment of educational services exports by universities worldwide. The main research methods include economic and statistical analysis, comparative analysis (comparing educational services exports from Uzbekistan and other countries, as well as from universities in Bukhara), and logical justification.

Key findings of the study: The globalization of socioeconomic processes worldwide has significantly changed the understanding and role of education in the economy. Education has traditionally been viewed as a means of acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform specific job functions in the national economy. In the global economy, education is viewed as an investment that initially requires capital but should eventually generate income sufficient to recoup the investment. This new approach to understanding the format of education is changing the content of education and the process of its delivery.

Education is becoming not a social good, but a service provided for a fee. Globalization means that consumers of educational services are not only citizens of a particular country but also of other countries. Education is ceasing to be an expense and becoming a source of export revenue. Currently, the international educational services market is valued at over \$40 billion [2, p. 30]. This market is expected to grow to \$25 billion over the next five years. The number of



international students in 2016 was 6 million, and is projected to exceed 7 million in the 2020s [10, p. 17]. In addition to economic benefits, education exports increase a country's political influence, acting as a soft power factor.

For Uzbekistan, educational services exports, in addition to economic benefits, should enhance the competitiveness of the domestic higher education system: the desire to attract international students forces universities to improve the quality of education and develop new educational tools. To develop educational programs, implement new teaching technologies, improve the qualifications of teaching staff, and improve the material and technical infrastructure of educational institutions. This will improve the quality of educational services provided not only to international consumers but also within the country. Furthermore, attracting international students should help fill the personnel gap in the context of demographic decline.

In recent years, the Uzbekistan has seen an increase in the number of international students studying in higher education programs: between 2017 and 2025, the number of international students increased from 10000 to 50000. In 2017, the Uzbekistan's total revenue from educational services exports amounted to \$1,607 million, including \$427.6 million in tuition fees [12, pp. 526-527].

The majority of international students in Uzbekistan comes from former Soviet Union countries (over 70% of the total number of international students studying in Uzbekistan). Despite the positive trend in these indicators, Uzbekistan lags behind leading countries in higher education exports. The reasons for this situation are [10, p. 51; 3, p. 14; 7, p. 2]:

- an insufficiently effective system for promoting university educational services;
- imperfect government regulation of student migration;
- insufficiently high rankings of Uzbek universities in international assessment systems;
- Difficulty in adapting international students to the Uzbek socio-cultural environment;
- The material and technical infrastructure of many Uzbek universities does not meet global standards.

In the current situation, the rapidly developing Asia-Pacific region is acquiring strategic importance for the export of Uzbek higher education, and therefore, universities in border regions, including Bukhara, play a key role.

At the beginning of 2024, the higher education system of Bukhara included 11 higher education institutions, 6 of which were branches of regional and national universities.

Strategy is a model for an organization's behaviour in a dynamically changing global market environment. The foundation of strategy is a set of principles and methods for making management decisions that ensure a timely response to the challenges facing the organization.

Bukhara State university occupies a leading position in the region's higher education system, with over 50% of its students enrolled internationally and over 70% of its revenues coming from exporting educational services. Regional and industry-specific universities are also actively attracting international students.

For example, Bukhara Medical Institute (a regional university) had 352 international students in 2024 (an increase of 53 compared to the previous year). Asian international University has more than 250 foreign students. However, half of the region's universities lack a clear strategy for attracting international students. This is due to a lack of necessary resources, primarily material and technical resources, the specific nature of their industry, and a lack of expertise in international markets.

The largest number of international students studying at universities in Bukhara come from countries in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly India(14322 students), Pakistan(1620 students), Tajikistan(2323 students), Jordan(175 students), Russia(158 students), Turkmenia (8348 students), China (more than 1250 students). The share of students from the CIS countries does not exceed 30%. Focusing solely on the Chinese market limits the region's universities' ability to attract international students.



Algorithm for Selecting a Strategy for Exporting Higher Education Services

The basis for selecting a strategy for exporting higher education services is an analysis of the external environment and the university's resource potential. The influence of the external environment manifests itself in the form of demands emanating primarily from government agencies and potential consumers of educational services. These external requirements are incorporated into the core principles guiding the development and implementation of the strategy. Based on the analysis of the characteristics of higher education service exports by universities in Bukhara, the strategy is proposed to be developed taking into account the following principles:

1) a comprehensive approach to actively promoting educational services in the international market – higher education services must be promoted in the market using a full range of promotional tools;

2) comprehensive coverage of countries in the Asia-Pacific region – it is necessary to promote educational services not only in large countries such as China and India, but also in other developing countries in the region;

3) innovative educational programs – educational programs offered to international students must be innovative in their essence and delivery methods;

4) conducting research within the educational process in priority areas of scientific and technological development of the economy, taking into account the requirements of legislation on protected secrets;

5) adaptation of international students in the Uzbek socio-cultural environment – universities should implement projects that allow international students quickly master the basics of the Uzbek language, gain an understanding of the cultural and social characteristics of the host country, and reduce conflicts based on race, nationality, and religion;

6) Project management - a university's higher education services export strategy should be implemented through the development and implementation of projects for each educational area;

7) Return on investment - providing educational services requires investment in the development of an educational program, attracting highly qualified faculty, and investing in facilities and equipment. The income received from providing educational services to international students should recoup these investments.

Analysis of resource potential aims to identify a university's competitive advantage, which will enable it to establish a sustainable market position. Two main types of competitive advantage are distinguished.

The first type is based on the university's ability to provide educational services to consumers at a lower cost than its competitors. Realizing this competitive advantage in the high-cost environment inherent in the Far East economy is virtually impossible.

The second type of competitive advantage is the university's ability to provide educational services with a distinctive advantage in their content and delivery technology.

This type of competitive advantage is most preferable for universities in Bukhara, but it requires additional investment.

An important component of choosing an educational services export strategy is identifying the target market. The target market is determined based on the following criteria: geographic (country) The following factors determine the educational program's scope of activity: the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East and Africa, the CIS. These factors include the type of educational program (major or minor), the field of study (economics and management, technical sciences, etc.), and the source of funding (student's own funds, foreign government or company funds, or Uzbek budget funds).

Most universities in Bukhara have industry specializations, which imposes restrictions on the educational services they offer in the potential target market.



Based on these principles and the existing competitive advantage for the target market, an educational services export model is selected—a method of operating in the target market based on existing competitive advantages.

The instrumental component of the higher education services export strategy includes international educational projects and other international projects (scientific, exhibition, etc.) that will implement the strategy.

The effectiveness of the educational services export strategy is assessed through the following procedures: self-assessment, accreditation, audit and certification, ranking, and benchmarking.

Conclusion. The study showed that the competitiveness of universities in the global economy is determined by their demand among international students.

The influx of international students to universities improves the quality of educational services and generates additional income. Uzbek universities, as part of their state policy on higher education exports, are implementing measures to attract international students.

However, many universities, including 11 in Bukhara region, lack a clearly defined strategy for exporting higher education services. The recommendations for choosing a strategy for exporting higher education services discussed in this article, in our opinion, should help universities in Bukhara region expand their presence in the international education market and may also be useful to other organizations.

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