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THE FRENCH MODEL FOR ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION: CURRENT TRENDS

The article deals with the current state of development of higher education in the French Republic. The higher education quality in France in the light of the European tendencies has been highlighted; the French model for assessing the quality of higher education has been analysed. The concept of higher education quality has been stated; the structure of France's higher education has been provided. The effectiveness, innovation and productivity which are expected from higher education in Europe today, have been emphasized. The significance of the continuing assessment in the French education system has been stressed. The historical background for the development of the French model for assessing the quality of higher education has been considered. The bodies participating in evaluating higher education in France have been analysed, and their roles and tasks have been stated. The possibility of the use of the positive French experience in higher education quality evaluation in Ukraine has been stated.

Key words: assessment; French model for assessing the quality of higher education; quality of university education; university education.

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Introduction. The issues of functioning of the university education system, its advantages, disadvantages, problems and various strategies for its development are still relevant for the Ukrainian society. The experience of functioning of France's educational system, by virtue of its effectiveness which has been proven by many years of history and traditions, is useful for Ukraine. Many Ukrainian scientists are studying French educational achievements. Various aspects of the organization of the educational process in French secondary and higher educational institutions are covered in the works of O. Alekseyeva, O. Bazhanovska, O. Bocharova, O. Matviyenko, M. Zvereva, V. Poltavets, L. Shapovalova, V. Adruschenko, O. Bazaluk, S. Klepko, M. Vladimirov, S. Golovko, A. Dzhurynskiyi, L. Zyazyun, F. Kontrelyova, K. Korsak, S. Malkova, L. Makarova, A. Maksymenko. Furthermore, the works of foreign authors such as J. Verger, A. Antoine, J.-C. Passeronom, P. Bourdieu, J. Palmeiro, C. Agulhon, D. Albertini, G. Brucy, B. Caceres, P. Champagne, F. Cardi, A. Chambon, C. Charle, J. Verger, A. Prost, J.-R. Cytermann, C. Paradeise, F. A. van Vught,

D. F. Westerheijden, J. Lecocq, H. Papin, F. Pernot, S. Pizarz, are dedicated to different issues of France's education and its quality. The problem of the research is also reflected in a large number of electronic sources. At the same time, the study of the structural features of higher education in France and the French model for assessing the quality of higher education remains relevant and insufficiently studied.

The purpose of the article is to study and analyse the current state of development of higher education in France, to highlight the higher education quality in the light of the European tendencies and to analyse the French model for assessing the quality of higher education.

France's higher education. The current state of development. As has been the case for all developed countries, French higher education has sharply risen after the World War II as a combined result of a growing population and increasing needs of qualified man-power to fuel the labour market. France rose from 40 million inhabitants in 1940, a number which had not changed significantly since the beginning of the twentieth century, to 67 million in 2017. The expansion of a mostly public system of higher education and research was

supported by the booming wealth of its economy. With a GDP per capita of about 42,500 USD in 2017, it is nowadays ranked close to the two oldest developed countries in Western Europe, Germany (46,300USD), and the UK (41,800 USD) (Paradeise, 2017). The proportion of the population engaged in higher education was no greater than 1% or 2% at the beginning of the last century. It rose very slowly up to around 3% by 1936. It increased sharply from the turn of the 1970s on, so as to reach 45% at the beginning of the 2010. Students left school on average when they were 15.2 years old in 1965 and 21.7 in 2006. In 2012, 43% of the groups leaving education had obtained a higher education degree (Prost et al., 2010, p. 31–46). The development of mass higher education followed the progressive saturation of successive levels of education, from primary school to high school, by baby boomers. The number of baccalauréat graduates rose from 31 in 1808 to over 700,000 in 2016. They were less than 1% of their age group at the turn of the twentieth century and 78% in 2015. At the same time success rates to get the degree had increased from 65% in the 1960s to almost 90% in the 2010s. The growing proportions of baccalauréat applicants and their expanding success rate, combined with the attractiveness of higher education for the younger generations facing a depressed labour market, explain the massive rise of student numbers in higher education. In 2016, higher education hosted about 80% of all high school graduates. Altogether, the higher education student population was multiplied by eight between 1960 and 2013, to reach a total of 2,430,000, which is expected to increase to 2,806,000 by 2024. In particular, the growth of the academic staff number in public higher education institutions has followed the growth of the student population, reaching 91,000 scholars in 2013, among which a slowly but continuously rising share of about 35% are not permanent. By far the largest proportion of them (about 95%) teaches in universities, and the remaining 5% are active in professional schools (Paradeise, 2017).

One of the peculiarities of the French education is that after the lycée, students may pursue either a vocational diploma or an academic diploma. Vocational diplomas include the *DUT (diplôme universitaire de technologie)* and *BTS (brevet de technicien supérieur.)* They are two-year technology-oriented degrees. BTS courses are offered by high schools, whereas DUT are awarded by universities. A DUT or BTS may be followed by one additional qualifying year of study, leading to a licence professionnelle.

Academic diplomas are provided by three types of higher education institutions in France: *universities*, *Grandes écoles*, and *specialized schools*. *Universities* are public institutions that offer academic, technical, and professional degrees to any student who has obtained a baccalauréat or its foreign equivalent. University study leads to degrees in many fields. Degrees are awarded at three different levels of achievement, called cycles,

within a framework referred to as licence, master, doctorat (LMD), which is described in the following section. The *Grandes écoles* are selective public and private institutions. They are similar to universities, but typically offer a more specialized three-year course of study, in subjects such as business, public administration, or engineering. Students are admitted to the *Grandes écoles* based on their scores on a competitive exam. Students graduate from a *Grande école* with a master's degree (master). *Specialized schools* are public or private institutions that train students for professional careers in specific fields, such as art, architecture, social work, or tourism. They offer licence and master degrees (Understanding the French Education System).

The governance in the sphere of higher education is ensured by a contractual policy set up by the State with the institutions, which have administrative and budgetary autonomy. During the recent years university governance has become more democratic and more collegial. A new independent administrative authority has been put in place, in order to evaluate institutions, research units and courses. This is the Haut Conseil de l'Évaluation de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur (High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education) which replaces the Agence d'Évaluation de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur (Evaluating Agency for Research and Higher Education). The French higher education system is organized according to the LMD system (Licence – Master – Doctorat) and each stage is based on the number of years spent studying after secondary school. This system is common to university education in all European countries as part of the Bologna process, including France. Thus, three years of university study allow you to obtain a Licence (180 ECTS credits), five years of college allows you to earn a Master's degree (300 ECTS credits) and eight years of study allow you to obtain a Doctorate (PhD) (Durdas, 2018, p. 114).

Higher education quality in the light of the European tendencies. The quality of education is a multidimensional concept that covers all aspects of the activities of a higher educational institution: educational and academic programs, scientific and research work, faculty and students, educational material basis and resources. The quality of education must comply with international requirements; it is provided by a higher educational institution and is guaranteed by the State. As a philosophical category, «quality» expresses the essential certainty of an object, through which it is precisely this, and not the other. On the other hand, the philosophical aspect of the category of «quality» shows the corresponding level of human cognition of objective reality. At each stage of cognition, certain properties of the object are revealed. That is, the environment affects the object, as a result of which it changes, and, consequently, its quality also changes. On this phenomenon, in our opinion, it is possible to trace the openness of the category of «quality», as a system that

flexibly reacts to external changes (Batechko, 2017, p. 96).

From its very beginning, the Bologna process has also put high on its agenda the promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to develop comparable criteria and methodologies. Nowadays, Europe – and not just Europe – is being challenged by a population decrease: there are fewer and fewer young people in almost all countries. The high enrolment ratios achieved during the last few decades will surely continue and even increase to over one half of the relevant age group; on the other hand, the decrease in the young population is expected to reduce in absolute figures the demand for places in the – now extremely expanded – higher education sector. This shift will pose – in fact it is already posing – new challenges in addition to the already known challenges of mass higher education (Zgaga, 2003).

The reasons people in the modern world decide to start higher education differ considerably from the past. Nevertheless, we can still fully understand traditional individual aims like the <pursuit of truth> and <disinterested research> or a simple desire to join a profession (or continue a family tradition in practicing a profession) in order to help people care about their body, property or soul – while simultaneously gaining a highly recognised status in society. We can understand our predecessors but we also know that the specific social contexts in which our individual aims and wishes are formed in concrete ways have changed greatly since previous times (Zgaga, 2003). Higher education is no longer primarily a personal call or privilege; it is a social demand: modern societies cannot function without increasing the number of educated and skilled people who work in the economy and public services or without expanding the research and knowledge that drive modern civilisation.

Higher education in the EU is mainly a forum for the exchange of ideas and good practices; its role is not to create a common education policy but to create a system of co-operation between the EU Member States. Education remains a primary government concern; the Member States preserve their rights in terms of the content and organisation of education and training systems. Effectiveness as well as innovation and productivity are today expected from higher education. Higher education should be innovative and productive: searching for a new identity to meet the new challenges. The effectiveness of higher education should not only be understood as a quantitative entity but as a qualitative (Zgaga, 2003).

The French model for assessing the quality of higher education. The assessment of the education system is a collection of processes that can be split into two broad categories. On the one hand, those processes consist of a number of assessments that cover the system as a whole or one or more of its aspects. The assessments are done by different stakeholders with varying

frequency. On the other hand, there is an annual arrangement for assessing the system with the help of relatively stable indicators; it is done with a view to budget management, and it calls upon a small number of stakeholders (France. Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2018).

Assessing students' achievements lies at the heart of the operation, steering, and assessment of the French education system and its various levels (académies, départements, constituencies, and schools). To that end, several types of assessments co-exist, depending on the objectives that have been assigned to them. Continuous assessment follows students all along their school careers. It enables teachers to measure the progress of training, and, where appropriate, to put in place remedial arrangements for students in difficulty. National assessments leading to qualifications attest to the acquisition of a level of knowledge and skills that enable students to move up to the next educational level or to enter active life. Finally, external assessments (designed by the DGESCO and DEPP directorates of the Ministry of National Education) are most often sample-based. They enable a measuring of the effectiveness of education policies put in place by the central administration, as well as of the progress of students' achievements (France. Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2018).

Looking at the history we can see that the French model may be considered to be the archetype of quality assessment in terms of accountability. In the French model the power to decide what should be studied and who could be allowed to teach at the university was in the hands of an external authority. The guild masters were accountable to the chancellor for the contents of their teaching (van Vught et al., 1994). The French model can be illustrated by the dramatic struggle for autonomy by the University of Paris in the early thirteenth century. It was the chancellor of the cathedral of Notre-Dame, acting as the delegate of the bishop of Paris, who represented the then dominating episcopal outlook that the universities should be seen as «ecclesiastical colonies». The universities were viewed as higher forms of education that were, however, to be integrated in the ecclesiastical structure and that were to remain under episcopal authority. The chancellor of the cathedral of Notre-Dame was an external official set above the masters' guild. As such he claimed the authority to grant or to withhold the teaching license and he claimed the right to decide about the content of studies. The masters fought the chancellor's authority (van Vught et al., 1994).

Today in France, higher education may be independent, public or private. Existing several types of institution (universities, engineering schools, management schools, arts schools, etc.) which are supervised by various ministries and academies are in the process of being regrouped, either as a result of MESR's investissement d'avenir investments programme, or due to French Act 2013-660 dated 22

July 2013 (pertaining to higher education and research), which replaces higher education and research clusters with three new forms of grouping: mergers of institutions, associations of institutions, and the community of universities and institutions (called COMUE). The objectives of these plans include better coordination of the research and education offer, to serve excellence partnerships, and increased international visibility (Understanding the French Education System).

As for higher education quality assessment, the following bodies participate in evaluating higher education:

- The Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur (AERES – Evaluating Agency for Evaluating Research and Higher Education);
- The Comité national d'évaluation des établissements publics à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel (CNE – National Committee for Evaluating Schools of a Scientific, Cultural and Vocational Nature);
- Inspection générale de l'administration de l'éducation nationale et de la recherche (IGAENR – Inspection General of the Administration of National Education and Research);
- The Haut conseil de l'évaluation (HCE – High Evaluation Council).

Higher education institutions also contribute to assessing the system by implementing internal assessment procedures (France. Quality Assurance, 2018).

L'Agence d'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur (AERES) is an independent administrative authority, created by the framework law of 18 April 2006 for research. The following is the remit assigned it:

- evaluating research institutions and bodies, higher education and research institutions, scientific co-operation institutions and foundations as well as the National Research Agency, taking into account the whole range of their remits and activities;
- evaluating the research activities conducted by the research units of the above-mentioned institutions and bodies, with the agency carrying out these assessments either directly or with support from institutions and bodies according to procedures it has validated;
- evaluating the education courses and diplomas of higher education institutions;
- validating the procedures for assessing the staff of institutions and bodies and giving its advice on the conditions in which they are implemented.

AERES can also participate in assessing foreign and international research and higher education bodies. The agency has been recognised by ENQA and the European Register of Assessing Agencies. For its assessment work, the Agency uses many experts with different training, culture and nationalities. Each expert is appointed by the AERES board, composed of 25 French and international members, each appointed by decree:

- nine different persons, a third of whom work in private research;
- seven members work as researchers, engineers or teacher-researchers on proposals by the directors or presidents of higher education and research institutions and research bodies;
- seven members as researchers, engineers or teacher-researchers, on proposals by assessment agencies of people experienced in higher education and research;
- two parliamentarians, members of the parliamentary office of assessment for scientific and technological choices.

Council members may not simultaneously run a higher education institution or a research body, chair the national committee of scientific research or any other evaluation agency, or be a member of the Conseil National des Universités (CNU) or of the Conseil national de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche (CNESER) or of the Conseil supérieur de la recherche et de la technologie (CSRT). The Council ensures the consistency of the agency's assessment procedures and underwrites the quality of AERES evaluations. The Comité national d'évaluation des établissements publics à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel (National Assessment Committee of Institutions of a scientific, cultural and vocational nature) was created in 1984 and it is an independent administrative authority. Its responsibility is to assess all public institutions of a scientific, cultural and vocational nature: universities, schools and higher institutions governed by the Minister of Higher Education. The Committee examines and assesses the activities carried out by all institutions, and by each one of them, in the fields corresponding to the remits of higher education institutions: initial and ongoing education; scientific and technical research as well as the enhancement of its results; the dissemination of culture and scientific and technical information; international co-operation. The Committee draws up a summary assessment of the state of higher education. The national assessment committee is made up of twenty five members, appointed by decree after a decision made in a council of ministers. The committee members are appointed for a non-renewable four-year period.

L'inspection générale de l'administration de l'éducation nationale et de la recherche (IGAENR) has an annual working programme which is defined by the ministers in a mission statement and includes, among other activities, the carrying out of missions and studies in the fields of higher education and research. These thematic studies are the subjects of reports intended for the ministers and may be made public.

Haut conseil de l'évaluation, upon a request by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research, issues opinions and may formulate proposals about teaching, programmes, organisation and results of the educational system and the training of teachers.

The assessment of the state of the French higher education system relies on both *external* and *internal*

evaluations. Various aspects of higher education and research are submitted to *external evaluation*, in particular the following:

- schools;
- research units;
- training courses and diplomas.

The bodies responsible for the external evaluation of higher education (AERES, CNE, IGAENR, HCE) are involved in assessing one or several of these aspects. Each body has its own approach. An institution's assessment is done in several stages: preparation, visits and feedback. As for *internal evaluations*, in conformity with the autonomy principle for institutions, the first responsibility in managing the teaching quality of higher education falls to the institution itself, which lays the foundations for instilling responsibility in the university system itself as part of the national quality framework. Procedures for self-assessment are implemented in institutions under the urging and follow-up of AERES and the DNE. Self-assessment tools are placed at the disposal of institutions by these bodies, as for example the Livre des références (LDR – Reference Book) by the CNED. This tool is composed of three chapters (training policy, scientific policy and management) that respond to the basic remits of universities. The institution is led to identify its strengths, its weaknesses and its progress; it acquires a global view of how it works. Internal evaluations may be done in a onetime manner or as an on-going process.

Conclusions. As a result of the study, we can conclude that a duality of higher education institutions and programmes are a characteristic feature for higher education in France (Durdas, 2018, p. 143). Theoretical analysis made it possible to determine that French higher education system is characterised by the coexistence of several types of institutions. After the lycée students may pursue either a vocational or an academic diploma. Academic diplomas are provided by universities, Grandes écoles and specialized schools. French universities are not the highest link in the structure of higher education in France; instead, this role is played by Grandes écoles. (Durdas, 2018, p. 117). In the European dimension higher education is mainly a forum for the exchange of ideas and good practices and its role is to create a system of cooperation between the EU Member States. Effectiveness, innovation and productivity are expected from higher education today. The French model for assessing the quality of higher education is realized at various levels and it enables teachers to measure the progress of training. Assessment of the quality is done externally and internally.

This article does not cover all the aspects of the problem under study. Further scientific research can be associated with the application in Ukrainian pedagogy of France's experience in implementing the system of assessment of higher education quality for the development of the system of higher education quality assessment in Ukraine.

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ФРАНЦУЗЬКА МОДЕЛЬ ОЦІНЮВАННЯ ЯКОСТІ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ: СУЧАСНІ ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ РОЗВИТКУ

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У статті розглядається сучасний стан розвитку вищої освіти у Французькій Республіці. Висвітлено якість вищої освіти Франції з огляду на сучасні європейські тенденції; проаналізовано французьку модель оцінювання якості вищої освіти; проаналізовано поняття якості вищої освіти. У статті охарактеризовано сучасний стан вищої освіти у Франції. Підкреслено збільшення кількості студентського населення у цій країні у другій половині ХХ століття й до сьогодні; констатовано зростання кількості академічного персоналу, яке відбувалось разом зі зростанням кількості студентів. У статті охарактеризовано типи дипломів, які студенти можуть здобути після завершення навчання у закладах вищої освіти; розкрито особливості типів французьких дипломів. В статті аналізується структура вищої освіти Франції, підкреслюється ефективність, інноваційність та продуктивність, яких очікують від вищої освіти в Європі сьогодні. В статті підкреслено ефективність вищої освіти як якісну характеристику. Проаналізовано систему оцінювання якості вищої освіти як сукупність процесів, які можна розділити на дві широкі категорії, а також виділено значення постійного оцінювання у французькій системі вищої освіти. У статті розглядаються історичні передумови для розвитку французької моделі оцінювання якості вищої освіти. Проаналізовано органи, які беруть участь у оцінюванні якості вищої освіти у Франції, зазначено їхню роль та завдання. Розглянуто підходи та методи забезпечення якості вищої освіти у Франції; виділено зовнішнє та внутрішнє оцінювання та зазначено їхні особливості. У статті згадуються процедури самооцінки, інструменти для їх реалізації та їх склад. Зазначається можливість використання позитивного французького досвіду при оцінюванні якості вищої освіти в Україні.

Ключові слова: оцінювання; університетська освіта; французька модель оцінювання якості вищої освіти; якість університетської освіти.

ФРАНЦУЗСКАЯ МОДЕЛЬ ОЦЕНИВАНИЯ КАЧЕСТВА ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ: СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ ТЕНДЕНЦИИ РАЗВИТИЯ

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В статье рассматривается современное состояние развития высшего образования во Французской Республике. Подчеркивается качество высшего образования во Франции в свете европейских тенденций. Анализируется Французская модель оценки качества высшего образования. В статье формулируется понятие качества высшего образования. Рассматривается структура высшего образования Франции. Подчеркивается эффективность, инновации и производительность, которых ожидают сегодня от высшего образования в Европе. Подчеркнута важность постоянного оценивания во французской системе образования. Рассматриваются исторические предпосылки развития Французской модели оценки качества высшего образования. Анализируются органы, участвующие в оценке высшего образования во Франции, их роль и задачи. Указывается возможность использования положительного французского опыта оценивания качества высшего образования в Украине.

Ключевые слова: качество университетского образования; оценка; университетское образование; французская модель оценивания качества высшего образования.

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