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CORRUPTION RISKS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The article examines some corruption risks that exist in the field of higher education in Kazakhstan. Currently, the identification of corruption risks in the activities of higher education institutions is one of the most effective mechanisms to prevent the occurrence of corruption in the field of education. In this regard, the anti-corruption authorities in the Republic of Kazakhstan pay special attention to this problem. The paper provides examples of ongoing activities initiated by both state bodies: the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan (carried out by departments of the Anti-Corruption Service), and higher education organizations and their associations (the League of Academic Integrity), as well as public associations registered on the territory of the state, which contribute to the identification of corruption risk factors. A brief description of certain types of corruption risks in the field of higher education is given. Among them: low wages, violations in the distribution of state grants, non-compliance with the principles of academic integrity. Proposals have been developed to reduce corruption risks, as a result of which the factors of corruption risk will be minimized, which will lead to the elimination of corruption in higher education institutions.

Key words: corruption risks, corruption, higher educational institutions, Sanaly urpak, academic integrity, salary, state grant, teacher, student.

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Жоғары оқу орындарындағы сыбайлас жемқорлық тәуекелдері

Мақалада Қазақстанның жоғары білім беру саласындағы жекелеген сыбайлас жемқорлық тәуекелдері қарастырылады. Қазіргі уақытта жоғары оқу орындары қызметінде сыбайлас жемқорлық тәуекелдерін анықтау білім беру саласында сыбайлас жемқорлықтың пайда болуының алдын алатын тиімді тетіктердің бірі. Осыған байланысты Қазақстан Республикасындағы сыбайлас жемқорлыққа қарсы күрес органдары бұл мәселеге ерекше назар аударады. Жұмыста мемлекеттік органдар: Қазақстан Республикасы Білім және ғылым министрлігі, Қазақстан Республикасы Сыбайлас жемқорлыққа қарсы іс-қимыл агенттігі (сыбайлас жемқорлыққа қарсы қызмет департаменттері жүзеге асыратын), сондай-ақ жоғары білім беру ұйымдары мен олардың қауымдастықтары (Академиялық адалдық лигасы), сыбайлас жемқорлық тәуекелдерінің факторларын анықтауға ықпал ететін мемлекет аумағында тіркелген қоғамдық бірлестіктер бастамасымен жүзеге асырылатын іс-шаралардың мысалдары келтірілген. Жоғары білім беру саласындағы сыбайлас жемқорлық тәуекелдерінің жекелеген түрлеріне қысқаша сипаттама берілді. Оның ішінде: жалақы деңгейінің төмендігі, мемлекеттік гранттарды бөлу кезіндегі бұзушылықтар, академиялық адалдық қағидаттарын сақтамау туралы айтылды. Сыбайлас жемқорлық тәуекелдерін төмендету бойынша ұсыныстар әзірленді, оның нәтижесінде жоғары оқу орындарында сыбайлас жемқорлықты жоюға әкелетін сыбайлас жемқорлық тәуекелінің факторлары барынша азайтылатын болады.

Түйін сөздер: Сыбайлас жемқорлық тәуекелдері, сыбайлас жемқорлық, жоғары оқу орындары, саналы ұрпақ – сознательное поколение, академиялық адалдық, еңбекақы, мемлекеттік грант, мұғалім, студент.

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Коррупционные риски в высших учебных заведениях

В статье рассматриваются отдельные коррупционные риски, существующие в сфере высшего образования Казахстана. В настоящее время выявление коррупционных рисков в деятельности высших учебных заведений является одним из эффективных механизмов, предупреждающих возникновение коррупции в сфере образования. В этой связи, органами по борьбе с коррупцией в Республике Казахстан этой проблеме уделяется особенное внимание. В работе приведены примеры осуществляемых мероприятий, инициированных как государственными органами: Министерством образования и науки Республики Казахстан, Агентством по противодействию коррупции Республики Казахстан (осуществляемые департаментами антикоррупционной службы), так и организациями высшего образования, и их ассоциациями (Лига академической честности), а также общественными объединениями, зарегистрированными на территории государства, которые способствуют выявлению факторов коррупционных рисков. Кратко дана характеристика отдельных видов коррупционных рисков в сфере высшего образования. Среди них: низкий уровень заработной платы, нарушения при распределении государственных грантов, несоблюдение принципов академической честности. Разработаны предложения по снижению коррупционных рисков, в результате которых будут минимизированы факторы коррупционного риска, что приведет к искоренению коррупции в высших учебных заведениях.

Ключевые слова: коррупционные риски, коррупция, высшие учебные заведения, Саналы ұрпақ, академическая честность, заработная плата, государственный грант, преподаватель, студент.

Introduction

Today, in the era of modernization, for each country, the first priority is to fulfill the task of ensuring citizens' rights protection, improving efficiency of public administration, as well as financial condition of the country, which creates an appropriate image at the appropriate level. To achieve these goals, various measures are being implemented in the country aimed at instilling zero tolerance in society. Combating corruption is an important area, as it hinders country's development. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, according to international standards, appropriate areas for combating corruption are being created (<http://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U1400000986>). In the Address to the people of Kazakhstan "The Third Modernization of Kazakhstan: Global competitiveness", First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev said: «We have made significant steps to reduce the level of corruption in the country. At the same time, the main focus is on combating the consequences of corruption. It is necessary to strengthen the work to identify and eliminate the causes and prerequisites of corruption» (<https://www.zakon.kz/4841781-nazarbaev-neobkhodimo-usilit-rabotu-po.html>).

Statistical data of the Anti-Corruption service of the Republic of Kazakhstan show that every year, on average, more than 2000 corruption crimes are detected and registered in the country, and more than

1000 persons are brought to justice (<https://kapital.kz/gosudarstvo/78350/prezident-nazval-sem-zadach-po-iskoreneniyu-korrupcii.html>).

In the educational sphere, 163 corruption-related offenses were recorded in 11 months of last year. This is approximately 9 % of all registered corruption violations (<https://rus.azattyq.org/a/29727812.html>).

These indicators represent a high level of corruption. Undoubtedly, in the educational sphere, this is due to the low index of management efficiency at all levels. All this also affects the field of higher education. According to the Head of State, The Ministry of Education and Science should instill in citizens the basics of an anti-corruption culture from an early age (http://www.akorda.kz/ru/events/akorda_news/meetings_and_sittings/glava-gosudarstva-kasymzhomart-tokaev-provel-soveshchanie-po-voprosam-borby-s-korrupciei). It is worth noting that expenditures on education are increasing every year. Since gaining independence, Kazakhstan has taken effective steps to integrate the educational space. It should be noted that the university environment belongs to the zone of high level of corruption risks and development of directions for overcoming corruption receives full support.

Nowadays, development of anti-corruption policy pays great attention to the factors of corruption risks. Assessment of such risk factors makes it possible to develop an effective anti-corruption

tool. As practice shows, there is a need to improve the methods that will allow systematic assessment of corruption risks. This will make it clear how to identify corruption risks, as well as definition of organization's functions, how and why appearance of corruption is associated. A thorough analysis of corruption risks in higher education institutions is necessary to assess the current and future situations, as it will lead to development of a new anti-corruption strategy and improvement of anti-corruption legislation. Today, the study of corruption risks, its methods, as well as its assessment, is particularly relevant in Kazakhstan.

Main part

There is no doubt that there are factors in the higher education system that relate to corruption risks. Presence of corruption risks suggests that education provided by a university becomes inferior, as their development is undermined, both in the academic sense, in the scientific sense, and also in the economic sense.

Corruption and all sorts of it were discussed at various events aimed at its neutralizing. Thus, at the seminar-meeting on anti-corruption policy in universities in 2015, representatives of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan announced information that there is a shadow turnover in the higher education system, which, according to some experts, can exceed \$ 100 million per year. According to the analysts, in Russia, the annual turnover of funds from corruption is estimated at \$ 5.5 billion (Почем нынче экзамен, аттестат, диплом?).

Presence of directions and various state programs to combat corruption shows insufficient desired results, which makes the situation worse, as a result of which much attention is paid to solving this problem, in particular in the field of higher education. All this is due to the fact that state anti-corruption programs are ineffective, it is necessary to re-examine the corruption itself, the corruption risks that apply to higher education, during which to develop steps that will minimize corruption-causing factors in the higher education system.

Material and Methods

Relevance of the study at the moment is accompanied by an insufficient degree of its scientific development. The problem of corruption in higher education institutions is currently relevant

for the Republic of Kazakhstan. However, in the scientific community, this problem has not received proper coverage. Scientific research in this direction practically was not carried out. Some issues of corruption manifestations in the field of education are found in the works of M.Ch. Kogamov (Kogamov 2017), O.B. Khusainov (Khusainov 2021), Zh.Z. Kosybaev (Kosybaev 2014). The issues of corruption in higher education are reflected in the works of Russian specialists S.D. Krasnousov and N.V. Khlonov (Khlonov 2015), A.N. Mitin (Mitin 2018), M.M. Polyakov (Polyakov 2016), M.N. Makarova and R.V. Vakhrushev (Makarova 2014).

In recent years, much attention has been paid to this issue by State bodies, including the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Civil Service Affairs and Anti-Corruption, as well as by higher education institutions themselves. Among the socially significant projects, we can mention "Sanaly Urpaq" project which aims to eradicate corruption in the education system, to create environment of universal rejection of corruption through the education system. Within the framework of the anti – corruption project "Sanaly Urpaq-Zharkyn Bolashak", representatives of universities, colleges and schools, together with representatives of anti-corruption bodies, carry out various measures to eliminate possible corruption risks. In particular, a Map of corruption risks in the field of education has been developed. It reflects activities of educational institutions in various fields such as management, financial and economic, educational and scientific, social and educational. The prepared draft of the Corruption Risk Assessment Map contains criteria for monitoring and rating indicators of the state of anti-corruption activities of educational institutions, which will allow forming anti-corruption technologies and recommendations for effective use of resources of educational institutions aimed at preventing corruption. Monitoring and rating activities for assessing corruption risks will be carried out through conducting sociological surveys using a specially developed methodology. Use of the tools provided by the Map will allow assessing the state of anti-corruption measures, identifying their effectiveness and rating effectiveness of anti-corruption activities in educational organizations. The anti-corruption rating will be an incentive for educational organizations to improve their anti-corruption policy (<https://www.kaznu.kz/RU/18288/news/one/14182/>).

Results and Discussion

In order to consolidate anti-corruption activities and reduce corruption risks, the leading universities of Kazakhstan established the association of universities “League of Academic Integrity”. It includes ten universities of Kazakhstan, they are the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the University of KAZGUU named after M. S. Narikbayev, Almaty Management University, Kazakh National Research Technical University named after K. K. Satpayev, Kazakhstan-British Technical University (KBTU), Karaganda Medical University, International University of Information Technologies, North Kazakhstan State University named after M. Kozybayev, Suleiman Demirel University (SDU), University of International Business (UIB) and S. Asfendiyarov Kazakh National Medical University. The main goal of the League is to improve the quality of higher education through the application of academic integrity principles (<http://kazguu.kz/ru/2018/09/03/v-kazgyuu-sozvana-liga-akademicheskoy-chestnosti/>).

In accordance with paragraph 12 of Article 1 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Combating Corruption” dated November 18, 2015 No. 410-V, the possibility of occurrence of causes and conditions that contribute to commission of corruption offenses is recognized as a corruption risk. Methods of assessing corruption risks allow us to assess not only the consequences for the person committing the illegal act, but also for third parties who may suffer as a result of person’s corrupt actions. Risk assessment acts as an analysis tool that reveals information about possible outcomes and assumptions of potential threats. International organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and others consider assessment of corruption risks as one of the priorities on the agenda.

According to the USAID study, corruption risk assessment is carried out in order to understand the corruption situation in the state, determine the goals and priorities of anti-corruption programs, and predict the desired results of anti-corruption activities.

According to scientists’ opinion, corruption in the field of higher education is not only bribery of teachers and abuses in the educational process, but also misuse of budget funds, premises and other assets of the university, sectoral corruption in the

field of higher education management, including embezzlement of funds, violations in the course of public procurement and other fraudulent and illegal actions (Kogamov 2017). The danger of corruption in higher education institutions has a high index of social danger, since it leads to disintegration and degradation of society. Negative consequences of corruption in higher education institutions include involvement of young people in corrupt practices. Participation in such vicious schemes the student, in the future the graduate, perceives corruption as a normal phenomenon and perhaps in future activities will spread the same vicious social practices.

As a rule, data on the level of corruption and corruption risks in higher education institutions are contained in the results of external audits of the country’s universities. Audits pay special attention to rational and targeted use of public funds, which are reflected in the financial statements. Data from the audit results of the Accounts Committee of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2016 show that in one quarter, approximately 110 financial offenses are committed in higher educational institutions of the country, the working amount of which is about 14.3 billion tenge (https://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/schetnyiy-komitet-nashel-narusheniya-v-rabote-mon-rk-330379/). In 2018, the amount of such violations amounted to more than 58 million tenge (<https://24.kz/ru/news/economy/item/286620-vyyavleny-finansovye-narusheniya-v-sfere-obrazovaniya-i-nauki>). Research on corruption risks in education identifies such forms of corruption as bribery, embezzlement, circumvention of criteria, fraud and abuse in the academic environment, unethical individual behavior, favoritism, nepotism, and commercial bribery.

One of the factors of corruption risk is the system of distribution of state educational grants. The state educational grant for training in universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan is distributed by the republican competition commission and is the main source of state support for students in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The educational grant is awarded after the completion of secondary or specialized secondary education. In cases where a grant is released in the process of obtaining higher education, students studying on a paid basis can apply for it. Due to the high cost of higher education, the released grants are very much in demand. The corruption risk in this case lies in the lack of transparency in distribution of the free grant.

Applicants often do not know that there are released grants. If the primary grants are distributed by the republican competition commission, then

receipt of a vacant grant by an Applicant depends on the university, that is, universities themselves, in my inner belief, should control this process, in order to comply with the principle of transparency and openness. This process is regulated by the “Rules for awarding an educational grant to pay for higher or Postgraduate education with the award of a bachelor’s or master’s degree”, approved by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 58 of January 23, 2008. These Rules regulate the procedure for granting a free grant, and they also describe the procedure, requirements for candidates, application process and grant registration. At the same time, the Rules do not establish obligation of a university to ensure transparency of the grant allocation process, in particular, to publish information about the released grants in a timely manner. The Rules do not regulate the right to appeal against a decision. According to the report “Anti-Corruption Reforms in Kazakhstan” within the framework of the Istanbul Anti-Corruption Action Plan, this corruption risk is indicated as one of the main ones in the analysis of corruption in the higher education sector (<https://www.oecd.org/corruption/acn/OECD-ACN-Kazakhstan-4thRound-Monitoring-Report-RUS.pdf>). This factor of corruption risk is a serious threat to the fair allocation of budget funds.

In this regard, the following measures should be taken:

- to ensure distribution of the state educational grant within the framework of a transparent process, including by publishing information about the released grants, their distribution and decisions in advance

- provide an opportunity to file an appeal in case of disagreement with the decision to refuse a grant with a clearly defined procedure;

- ensure high-quality consideration of complaints and application of sanctions to violators.

It should also be noted that measures are being taken at various levels to reduce corruption risks in the process of distributing state grants. Thus, in 2018, at the initiative of the Agency for Civil Service Affairs and Anti-Corruption of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the project “Map of Public Control” was developed with involvement of citizens of Kazakhstan in the process of distributing educational grants. Interested citizens, as independent observers, participated in the work of competition commissions that distribute grants for admission to universities and colleges in Kazakhstan. Strengthening public control will

become one of the most effective mechanisms for preventing corruption in this area (Khusainov 2021). The danger of corruption in higher education institutions has a high index of social danger, because it leads to the disintegration and degradation of society. The negative consequences of corruption in higher education institutions include the involvement of young people in corrupt practices. Participation in such vicious schemes the student, in the future the graduate, perceives corruption as a normal phenomenon and perhaps in future activities will spread the same vicious social practice

Currently, individual universities are responsible for ensuring academic integrity in preparation of written works, i.e., recognizing academic dishonesty as a violation.

It is assumed that they independently develop rules for academic integrity, covering performance of written assignments, preparation of scientific papers and written answers during tests and exams. While the adoption of such rules is a condition of accreditation, the framework standards do not require that rules and academic dishonesty be formulated in any particular way.

The only clarification can be considered that they should be focused primarily on students, and not on teachers. Given that the framework of standards is formulated in the most general way, it can be assumed that, in all likelihood, there is a formal mention of the principle of academic integrity in the documents of all higher education institutions.

The Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 235-V of July 5, 2014 provides for sanctions against higher education institutions that do not comply with the requirements for rules development against academic dishonesty. As for the choice of punishments for individual violators, it is the prerogative of universities. The Model Certification Rules contain only an indirect indication that universities can exclude students who resort to cheating and other forms of deception. However, according to information received during the visit, this measure is rarely used. From the point of view of experts, weakness of control in this area can be explained by a limited set of sanctions. Regardless of severity of the offense, the only sanction provided for by the Model Rules is expulsion of a student from the university (<https://www.oecd.org/corruption/acn/OECD-ACN-Kazakhstan-4thRound-Monitoring-Report-RUS.pdf>).

In our opinion, this problem can be solved by changing sanctions towards the possibility of imposing milder penalties, together with the

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