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ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER VOCATIONAL PEDAGOGICAL EDUCATION IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: PROBLEMS AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

ANÁLISIS DEL ESTADO ACTUAL DEL SISTEMA DE EDUCACIÓN PEDAGÓGICA PROFESIONAL SUPERIOR EN LA REPÚBLICA KIRGUISA: PROBLEMAS Y SOLUCIONES PROPUESTAS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article was to analyze the current state of the education system in Kyrgyzstan and identify the underlying problems and propose solutions. In the course of the study, authors used general scientific methods, including the principle of objectivity and consistency, as well as theoretical and historical analysis. Authors have analyzed legislation and scientific literature, compared international approaches to solving the problem. The modern vocational higher education system in Kyrgyz Republic is striving to solve problems of modern education system development. Authors conclude that the competencies in the field of pedagogical activity of subject teachers are very different and do not correlate with the professional standard of a teacher either in quantity or in quality, prescribed in the SES HVE for the subject education. Therefore, at the moment, it is important to develop a plan for the development of state standards for higher education.

Keywords:

Higher education, education system, Kyrgyz Republic, pedagogical education.

RESUMEN

El propósito del artículo fue analizar el estado actual del sistema educativo en Kirguistán e identificar los problemas subyacentes y proponer soluciones. En el curso del estudio, los autores utilizaron métodos científicos generales, incluido el principio de objetividad y consistencia, así como el análisis teórico e histórico. Los autores han analizado la legislación y la literatura científica, compararon los enfoques internacionales para resolver el problema. El sistema moderno de educación superior vocacional en la República Kirguisa se esfuerza por resolver los problemas del desarrollo del sistema educativo moderno. Los autores concluyen que las competencias en el campo de la actividad pedagógica de los docentes de la asignatura son muy diferentes y no se correlacionan con el estándar profesional de un docente ni en cantidad ni en calidad, prescrito en el SES HVE para la enseñanza de la asignatura. Por lo tanto, en este momento, es importante desarrollar un plan para el desarrollo de estándares estatales para la educación superior.

Palabras clave:

Educación superior, sistema educativo, República Kirguisa, educación pedagógica.

INTRODUCTION

According to the law “On Education” (Government of Kyrgyzstan, 2003), The Kyrgyz Republic establishes state educational standards for all levels of basic education, which determine the mandatory minimum content of basic education programs, the maximum amount of academic load of students, requirements for the level of training of graduates, forms of documents certifying the acquisition of certain educational programs by students (Bondaletova et al., 2022).

Fulfillment of state educational standards for basic educational programs is mandatory for all types of educational organizations, regardless of the form of education”.

In 2004, the State Educational Standard for School Education of the Kyrgyz Republic was adopted in which, for the first time in the educational practice of our country, the general principles and norms of education in the Republic were specified in the Law “On Education” .

An important positive point was the presence of items 4.6.2 - 4.6.3 in the State Educational Standard of School Education: “Requirements for the level of preparation of students and graduates are set in an activity form: “To know and understand”, “to be able (to master the ways of cognitive activity)”, “to use the acquired knowledge and skills in practical activities and everyday life”.

This approach was aimed at forming generalized ways of learning activities (general skills and abilities), specific (special) ways of learning activities in certain subjects, generalized ways of learning communicative, practical and creative activity, which are designed to provide the formation of the ability to learn, independently set goals and find ways to solve them.

Thus, the first step in the transition from the knowledge paradigm to the competence paradigm has been taken (Borodina et al., 2022).

At the same time, the analysis of the State Standard and the subject standards developed on its basis (2005) shows that they do not define the final goals of teaching school disciplines and do not formulate the requirements that would allow describing and measuring the competencies formed by the subjects. The stated problem of integrating school disciplines into the educational field has not been solved either.

The state educational standard for general school education (Government of Kyrgyzstan, 2014) was aimed at standardizing learning outcomes in general education institutions, and also contained a set of norms and rules

defining basic requirements for the quality of graduates, the maximum allowable teaching load of students, etc.

The main goal of the SES was the reorientation of the education system from the transfer of factual material to a competency-based approach that allows students to use the knowledge, skills, experience of value relationships, etc. in personal, professional and socially meaningful situations (Bolina et al., 2022).

The core of the State Standard was the key competencies, the criteria for determining their set were the main categories of resources, the mastery of which is necessary to be successful and competitive in the modern world.

- information competence
- Social - communicative competence
- “Self-organization and problem solving” competence

For the first time, there have been clearly defined levels of formation of key competencies –

Levels of formation of key competencies:

The first level is the ability of students to follow a pattern (a given algorithm for performing an action).

The second level is the ability to perform a simple activity, to apply the learned algorithm of activity in a different situation

The third level is the implementation of a complex activity with elements of independent construction of own activity and its justification.

Unfortunately, the educational results in the subjects that were prescribed in the subject standards and which formed the subject competencies, were not differentiated by level, which did not allow the development of level standards.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Currently there are 18 public higher educational institutions and 12 private higher educational institutions providing training for future teachers (statistics of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic as of July 1, 2022). There are pedagogical specialties in all regional universities (Osh State University, Jalalabad State University, NSU, TSU, Batken State University, ISU), which provides training for pedagogical personnel who know the specifics of the region. In total 60,715 students (2021 - 2022) study “Education” major, which is about 26.2% of the total number of students.

It is important to note the gender imbalance - 42424 girls and only 18291 boys are planning to become teachers.

This disproportion persists and even intensifies in schools: about 85% of women and only about 15% of men work there. At the same time, men usually occupy higher (leadership) positions.

Every year about 2 thousand grant places are allocated for admission to pedagogical specialties. Every year Kyrgyzstan receives about 4.5 thousand graduates of pedagogical specialties, which are distributed to schools of the republic. However, only about 75% of these graduates come to schools. The need in the republic for general education teachers at the end of the academic year was 2,785. At the beginning of the 2022/23 school year, considering salary increases, there were about 900 vacancies not closed. There is a particularly acute shortage of teachers of mathematics, physics, and elementary school.

As a rule, school graduates with low achievement results become students at pedagogical universities, while in countries with successful systems of school education, the best school graduates become students of pedagogical universities on a rigid competitive basis. The reason is that the teaching profession is unattractive, primarily due to low pay.

Studies from many countries show that a decent teacher's salary is considered to be at least at the level of the average salary in the country. Until 2022, the average monthly salary in the education sector in Kyrgyzstan was about 20% lower than the average monthly salary in the country and almost 40% lower than the average monthly salary in the public administration sector (this includes salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff of state and private educational institutions, as well as academic institutions). Raising salaries in 2022 is the first step towards solving the problem of raising the status and attractiveness of the teaching profession. However, the structure and, in general, the policy of wage formation does not motivate teachers to quality work and development. The project plans to assist the Ministry of Education in developing a fair pay policy for teachers (making additions to relevant government decisions, developing provisions for incentive components).

As part of the previously held expert focus groups, it was proposed to revise the criteria for accrual of incentive payments, in order to make them more specific and focus on the stimulation of professional development and orientation on the results of learning, to introduce such indicators as Mentoring, Methodological work, rewarding teachers for student achievement (one-time payment) into the criteria of the incentive fund.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In 2022, the State Educational Standard was updated (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers #393, as of July 22, 2022). The key competencies had been retained third, but the wording of the competency was changed to "Self-awareness and problem solving", which allows for a greater emphasis on the self-development of the student, the formation of not only cognitive, but also affective and behavioral aspects of the personality.

The standard also included section 4 - "Organization and results of the educational process", the content of which is a model of a graduate of elementary, secondary and high schools.

A high-school graduate (11 grades):

- has mastered the content of general secondary education at the level, determined by the requirements of the State and subject educational standards and the content of profile education in accordance with professional interests and abilities ;
- has a high cognitive motivation, can make a conscious choice of profession, is ready to master programs of vocational education;
- has the ability to carry out various activities (study and work activities): planning, designing, modeling, predicting, researching, as well as rational methods of learning and self-learning;
- has a variety of communicative skills and abilities, ways of communication (business, personal) to solve academic problems necessary for the future profession;
- speaks the state language (Togaibayeva et al., 2022; Satkeeva et al., 2022), the official language, and one of the foreign languages. Levels of proficiency: the Kyrgyz language in schools with Russian, Uzbek and Tajik languages of instruction (B1 - intermediate, if there is no language environment), and B1+ (upper intermediate, if there is a language environment); Russian in schools with Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Tajik as the language of instruction - at the level of B1 (intermediate, if there is no language environment), B1+ (upper-intermediate, if there is a language environment), foreign language - B1 (intermediate);
- knows the basic principles of working with Internet services (email, cloud storage, social networks, etc.);
- successfully uses digital technologies to solve life's problems and improve the efficiency of learning;
- creates data processing programs (lists, tables, big data);

- has skills for a healthy and safe way of life, environmentally responsible behavior;
- has the ability for self-actualization, self-knowledge, self-assessment, self-control;
- has a life strategy for the preservation and development of their physical, mental and moral health;
- has a certificate confirming that he/she has mastered one and/or more professions.

Thus, a university applicant in Kyrgyzstan should not only have a certain level of subject knowledge, but also be able to learn, have strategies for working with information, including the use of IT technology, and have an idea of their preferences and building a future educational and life strategy (with the “ability to consciously choose a profession, the willingness programs to master vocational education”).

As a rule, high school graduates with poor academic performance become students of pedagogical universities.

The next step in testing a graduate’s knowledge and competencies (and ability to study in higher education) is nationwide testing.

The nationwide test has one purpose: to determine the applicants most capable of further study at universities of the country. It is focused on the understanding and application of the educational material learned at school, on the application of the skills acquired during the study period

In this sense, subject tests are an important element, as they show what level of knowledge and competencies a high school graduate can demonstrate as basic for a profession.

Accordingly, the output parameters of the school SES and the results of nationwide testing should be the input parameters for the HVE SES and/or the graduate’s entry into the labor market.

Building on the competencies formed in school, university graduates should build up their potential in personal and professional development.

Since academic standards must be developed on the basis of professional standards, Kyrgyzstan developed and approved by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic the Concept of National Qualifications System, which included the National Qualifications Framework, the sectoral qualifications framework (“Education”) and the professional standard for teachers of secondary and higher vocational education.

Teachers eligible to work in education, from kindergarten to higher education, are at levels 6-9 of the National Qualifications Framework

School teachers are at level 6-7 of the National Qualifications Framework.

The professional standard indicates some requirements for the profession of schoolteacher (Table 1).

Table 1. Requirements for the profession of schoolteacher

Code	Name of generalized labor functions	Qualification level	Name of labor functions	Code	Qualification level
AND	Pedagogical activity in the implementation of educational programs in mainstream educational organizations	6	Planning and implementation of training in accordance with the requirements of the State Standard of school education	A1.	6
		6	Creating a motivating safe educational environment	A 2.	6
		6	Assessing, giving feedback, and reporting on student learning outcomes	A3.	6
General/Cross-cutting functions: C 1. Creating conditions for the spiritual, moral and socio-personal development of students C 2. Effective interaction with participants in the educational process C 3. Continuous professional development. C 4. Compliance with occupational safety, industrial sanitation and fire safety.					

Accordingly, the standards for higher professional education in pedagogy include standards for pedagogy, as well as for the subjects of all six school educational areas.

All standards (2021) have common **universal competencies**, and varying professional competencies, depending on the subject matter.

Universal competencies are:

General Science

GSC- 1. Able to critically evaluate and use scientific knowledge about the world around him/her, navigate the values of life, culture and take an active civic position, show respect for people and tolerance;

Instrumental

IC-1. Able to conduct business communication in the state, official and one of the foreign languages in the field of work and study;

IC-2. Able to acquire and apply new knowledge using information technology to solve complex work and learning problems;

IC -3. Able to use business knowledge and skills in the professional activity.

Socio-personal

SPC-1. Able to ensure the achievement of goals in the professional activities of individuals or groups.

If we correlate these competencies with the requirement of the professional standard, they cover such a cross-cutting function as “ C 3. Continuous professional development” and - partially - “ C 1. Creation of conditions for spiritual, moral and socio-personal development of students”. Undoubtedly, the active civic position of the teacher himself/herself and his/her tolerance and respect for people will allow becoming a moral guide for students.

However, all these competencies are still more focused on the development of the student/graduate himself/herself than on his/her ability to create conditions for the development of these competencies in students, which is required by the professional standard of a teacher.

Professional competencies describe directly the scope of a teacher’s activity. In general, they correlate with the requirements of the professional standard recorded in Section 3. In subsections 3.1. - 3.2. each of the functions is written down, which allows a more comprehensive presentation of the teacher’s activity, as well as preparation of materials for certification, which should verify the presence and level of competences of the teacher of the educational organization (Table 2).

Table 2. Professional competencies requirements.

Bachelor Pedagogy	Master Pedagogy
is ready to use psychological and pedagogical competencies to solve professional problems and is able to use the results of pedagogical research in professional activities (PC-1);	In the field of pedagogical activity: is ready to explore the possibilities of the educational environment and offers ideas, innovations in the design of new conditions, including information, to ensure the quality of education (PC-1);
knows how to solve methodological problems (models, methods, technologies and techniques of teaching) and is able to use technology to assess the quality of learning (PC-2);	able to use modern methods and technologies to organize and implement the educational process at different educational levels in different educational institutions (PC-2);
able to form optimal pedagogical conditions of the educational process in accordance with the principles of person-centered education for sustainable development (healthy lifestyle, nature conservation and environmental management, energy efficiency, cultural diversity, gender, inclusion, etc.) (PC-3)	is ready for teaching specialized disciplines in higher education schools (PC-3);
Has mastered the methods and techniques of socialization of students and is able to create the conditions for the personal self-determination of students (PC-4);	able to combine knowledge and complex practices, adapt methods and techniques, taking into account individual, age and cultural characteristics of students in educational institutions (secondary and higher education) and to design individual routes of their education (PC-4)
is able to choose educational programs independently, selects didactic materials for them and is able to use them after adaptation in the educational process on the basis of pedagogical reflection (PC-5);	able to supervise the research work of students (PC-5);
able to plan training sessions in the subject (subjects), taking into account the specific topics and sections of the program and in accordance with the academic plan (PC-6);	able to carry out professional and personal self-education, to design further educational route and professional career (PC-6);
is able to set objectives for own development on the basis of the conducted professional reflection (PC-7);	is ready to interact with different groups (colleagues, parents, partners, etc.) regardless of generations, culture, place and use information and communication technologies and media to solve the tasks (PC-7);
able to use modern methods and technologies of organization and implementation of the educational process in elementary school (PC-8);	in the field of research activity: is ready to use scientific methods, including information and innovative technologies to solve research problems (PC-8);

able to diagnose the level of development of students in different areas (mental, social, moral, etc.) and, accordingly, conduct preventive work to avoid various negative influences (violence, drug and alcohol use, etc.) (PC-9);	able to analyze, systematize and summarize the results of scientific research, to identify current problems of modern education system development (PC-9);
able to cooperate with students in creating new projects and work plans (PC-10);	is ready to use individual creativity to solve original research problems (PC-10);
has theoretical knowledge of the cognitive, social-emotional, physical, aesthetic development of the preschool and primary school age child (PC-11);	is ready to independently carry out scientific research using modern methods of science, to integrate the results of the analysis of research and examination of professional activity into educational and methodological recommendations and materials (PC-11);
able to apply knowledge of theoretical foundations and technologies of primary education disciplines, to use methods of development of figurative and logical thinking, to form subject skills and abilities of younger students (PC-12);	able to organize the activities of expert/professional groups/organizations and provide the scientific community with research achievements in the form of scientific articles, reports, multimedia presentations in accordance with the accepted standards and formats of the professional community (PC-12);
has knowledge about the structures of different developmental disabilities of children: with intellectual and mental developmental disabilities, with speech, hearing and vision disabilities, with disorders of the musculoskeletal system and behavioral features (PC-13);	In the management area: is ready to study the state and conduct an examination of the educational environment of an institution, to determine the administrative resources for the development of the institution (PC-13);
has special methods and techniques for teaching children with speech impairments in special general education organizations (PC-14);	is ready to research and evaluate the implementation of the management process (PC-14);
able to conduct psychological and pedagogical diagnostics and counseling (PC-15);	is ready to use innovative technologies of management, corresponding to the general and specific laws of development of the managed system (PC-15);
is capable of solving the problems of education and personal development of children with hearing impairment, taking into account the peculiarities of their psychophysical development (PC-16);	is ready to use individual and group technologies of decision-making in the management of an educational institution, based on domestic and foreign experience (PC-16);
able to use the knowledge of patterns and features of psychology of persons with visual impairments in the organization of interaction and cooperation of students (PC-18).	able to organize interprofessional interaction of specialists of educational institution and determine the range of potential partners of the educational institution in solving management problems (PC-17);

able to use the knowledge of patterns and features of psychology of persons with visual impairments in the organization of interaction and cooperation of students (PC-18).	ready to use the available capabilities of the environment of the managed system and use modern technology to design development paths and quality management (PC-18);
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If we look at the correlation between the teacher’s job and general/ cross-cutting functions, we can note that a significant part of the competencies describes the function (Zueva et al., 2022; Baideldinova, et al., 2021) “Planning and implementation of teaching in accordance with the requirements of the State Standard of School Education” and “C2. Effective interaction with participants of educational process”. The remaining functions relate to a much smaller number of competencies. At the same time, very little attention is paid in the undergraduate and graduate standards to such a critical function for competency-based education as “Assessment, providing feedback, and reporting on student learning outcomes”. Although the implementation of three types of assessment - diagnostic, formative, and summative - is a requirement of the state standards of general school education, and graduates of pedagogical specialties are required to be skilled in the use of these types of assessment.

A great deal of attention in the education system is currently being paid to creating a safe and comfortable learning environment for students. Given that the pedagogy standard also covers working with children with special needs, competencies in creating such an environment should be among the leading ones. However, the competencies for creating such an environment are clearly insufficient in the undergraduate standard, and nothing exists at all in the master’s standard (Gladilina et al., 2022).

In turn, at the level of competences in the bachelor’s degree nothing is said about the knowledge and ability of graduates to comply with the requirements of occupational health, industrial sanitation and fire safety, and at the level of master’s degree PC-13 can be attributed to the implementation of this task quite conventionally.

Meanwhile, in the subject standards of school education there is a section 4) “Requirements for the organization of the educational process:

- minimum requirements for resource support, allowing for implementation of the requirements of the subject standard;
- Creating a motivating and safe learning environment

Thus, the teacher should have the knowledge and competencies to shape such an environment (Cornelius-White, 2007), but the higher education process does not pay attention to this issue.

Turning to the SES of school education and looking at the development of competencies that school graduates and university graduates should have, we can note that at the school level, a number of competencies are formulated more clearly than in university standards.

Table 3. Differences in the requirements for graduates of schools and universities.

The state standard of school education	Pedagogy (bachelor's degree)	Pedagogy (master's degree)
- masters the Kyrgyz language in schools with Russian, Uzbek and Tajik languages of instruction (B1 - intermediate, if there is no language environment), and B1+ (upper intermediate, if there is a language environment); Russian in schools with Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Tajik as the language of instruction - at the level of B1 (intermediate, if there is no language environment), B1+ (upper-intermediate, if there is a language environment), foreign language - B1 (intermediate);	IC-1. Able to conduct business communication in the state, official and one of the foreign languages in the field of work and study;	IC-1. Able to conduct professional discussions at the level of profile and related industries in one of the foreign languages

Since there is no clear description of language proficiency levels (Table 3) at the undergraduate level, we cannot trace the growth of a school student-university student's language competence. The university standard should probably have described language skills more clearly, using language proficiency levels:

For example: reading special literature, academic writing in foreign languages, communication in personal, academic and work spheres, etc.

As for the master's degree program, students' communication skills in the state and official languages have been lost altogether.

The professional standard requires both professional and personal development from the teacher:

In the SES HV of the Bachelor's Degree it is noted:

In the field of personal development, the purpose of HVE in the specialization of 550700 Pedagogy is to develop social and personal qualities of students: purposefulness, self-organization, responsibility, civic position, communication, tolerance, etc., increasing their overall culture, the desire for self-realization and self-improvement in the profession within the framework of lifelong learning and self-education.

But in the learning outcomes (competencies) that a graduate must possess, these goals are not specified, but rather simply repeated, and some are even omitted (self- organization, responsibility):

General Science:

GSC-1. Is able to critically evaluate and use scientific knowledge about the world around him/her, knows the values of life, culture and takes an active civic position, shows respect and tolerance for people;

Professional:

- is able to set objectives for own development on the basis of the conducted professional reflection (PC-7);

The very formulation of GSC-1 is questionable, since respect for people and the manifestation of tolerance, for example, are rather value qualities that may be very loosely related to general scientific ideas about the world.

And PC-7 speaks more about professional than personal development, which is, however, very important for the teacher.

Looking at the SES of school education, one can see that skills of students in the organization of independent cognitive activity, self-education and self-development are more clearly and deeply defined than in the university standard:

- has a high cognitive motivation, the ability to make a conscious choice of profession, the willingness to master vocational education programs;

- has the ability to carry out various activities (learning, work): planning, designing, modeling, predicting, researching, as well as rational methods of learning and self-learning;

- has a variety of communicative skills and abilities, ways of communication (business, personal) to solve academic problems necessary for the future profession;
- successfully uses digital technologies to solve life's problems and improve the effectiveness of learning;
- creates programs to process data (lists, tables, arrays of information);
- has skills for healthy and safe lifestyles and environmentally responsible behavior;
- has the ability for self-actualization, self-knowledge, self-assessment, self-control;
- has a life strategy for the preservation and development of their physical, mental and moral health;

Thus, it is difficult to trace the continuity and development of personal and civic qualities in schoolchildren and university students.

Looking at the requirements of the professional standard, one can also see that a number of requirements associated with the organization of independent cognitive activity and development of a number of personal qualities of the teacher - for example, creativity - is not fixed at all in the SES HVE (Table 4).

Table 4. requirements of the teacher's personal competencies.

Personal competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Commitment to the teaching profession; . Communication and interaction with participants in the educational process without any manifestations of gender, ethnic, cultural stereotypes, or any kind of discrimination; . ability for personal and professional reflection; . self-regulation and the ability to learn throughout life; . creativity, communication, critical thinking, mastery of methods of persuasion, argumentation
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CONCLUSIONS

It is necessary to make managerial decisions on the formation and activities of school and methodological associations (SMA), responsible for the development of state standards of higher education. To date, the SMAs are formed on the basis of the profile university, mainly from the teachers of this university.

Often their activities are formal, based only on the vision of their university. Experts note the lack of correlation between the SES and the modernized school standards, insufficient involvement of methodologists and schoolteachers, and a weak scientific and methodological base.

It is possible to transfer the activities of the SMA to a competitive basis with mandatory funding of the best

developments of state educational standards, corresponding to the sectoral structure of qualifications and professional standards in the framework of scientific projects, annually funding the Ministry of Education and Science.

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