

Article

Development Trends of Higher Education Service Quality Indicators in Uzbekistan

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Abstract: The article examines the quality indicators of education in the higher education services market of the country and their development trends. Scientific proposals and practical recommendations have been developed for improving the quality of higher education services in the country and enhancing their prestige at the international level.

Keywords: Higher education, higher education services, faculty members, international ranking, higher education institutions.

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Introduction

Ensuring the quality of higher education services today occupies a place among the urgent problems of priority importance at the global level, since it has provided the opportunity to achieve many positive results, such as being of urgent importance in improving the investment efficiency of human capital for achieving global-level competitiveness in any national economy, improving production efficiency through the training of personnel who meet the professional competency requirements of hired workers by employers, and improving the quality indicators of national economic growth [1], [2].

The fact that this scientific problem is of urgent importance in the conditions of Uzbekistan, as in other countries, finds its expression in the priority tasks directly and indirectly related to the sphere of providing higher education services in strategic development programs adopted by the government in recent years, such as the “Concept of Development of the Higher Education System until 2030”, “Digital Uzbekistan-2030”, “Innovation Development” and “Uzbekistan-2030” [3].

In particular, within the framework of state programs aimed at improving the quality of higher education services, the fact that “the National Agency for Ensuring Education Quality under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was established for the purpose of introducing a system of evaluating educational and research processes in educational institutions based on international standards and effectively utilizing opportunities for consistently improving the quality of personnel training” demonstrates that this issue is of importance at the government level [4]. Taking this situation into account, in developing scientific proposals and practical recommendations aimed at improving the organizational-economic mechanism for enhancing the quality of higher education services in the country in the coming years, we found it appropriate to assess the development trends of quality indicators in the country’s higher education services market today [5].

Literature Analysis

The scientific and methodological foundations of improving the quality of higher education services and evaluating the quality of provided higher education services find their expression in the scientific research of such foreign scholars as T. Brown, M.B. Flek, O.B. Adedoyin, R. Clemons, O.I. Ban, and C. Cheng.

By such uzbek scholars as P.M. Lutfullaev, N.Zh. Sotvoldiev, F. Khoshimov, N.G. Zufarova, Sh.Sh. Zakhidova, and Kh.Kh. Rezhapov the development characteristics of the higher education services market in the country, the strengthening of mutual integration relations between higher education and production, and the priorities of integrating higher education institutions into the international university rankings system have been studied [6].

Research Methodology

The article employs the methods of systemic-theoretical analysis, comparative and selective research, grouping, monographic analysis, economic-mathematical analysis, and forecasting.

Analysis Results

According to the analysis of official statistical data (Table 1), during 2017–2025, the number of educational institutions providing educational services in the country's higher education services market increased 2,6-fold, from 77 to 207, and structural changes in their organizational forms were observed. In particular, while the share of state higher education institutions relative to the total number of higher education institutions operating in the country's higher education services market constituted 90,9 percent in 2017, by 2025 this indicator decreased to 49,8 percent due to the sharp increase in the number of higher education institutions established in the form of branches of non-state and foreign higher education institutions as a result of reforms implemented by the government to form a healthy competitive environment in the country's higher education services market [7]. At the same time, during the analyzed period, it was determined that the share of branches of leading foreign higher education institutions in the total number of higher education institutions increased from 9,1 percent to 14,9 percent, and the number of non-state (private) higher education institutions increased to 35,3 percent.

Table 1. Number of higher education institutions in Uzbekistan and their structural indicators by organizational form.

№	Indicators	Unit of measurement	Years		
			2017 y	2021 y	2025 y
1	Total number of higher education institutions	units	77	159	207
	<i>including:</i>	<i>in percent</i>	<i>100,0</i>	<i>100,0</i>	<i>100,0</i>
2	State higher education organizations	units <i>in percent</i>	70 90,9	103 64,8	101 48,8
3	Branches of foreign higher education organizations	units <i>in percent</i>	7 9,1	26 16,4	32 15,5
4	Non-state higher education organizations	units <i>in percent</i>	– –	30 18,8	74 35,7

The trends observed in the diversification of the structural indicators by organizational forms of organizations providing higher education services in the country indicate that the attractiveness of the national higher education services market is increasing.

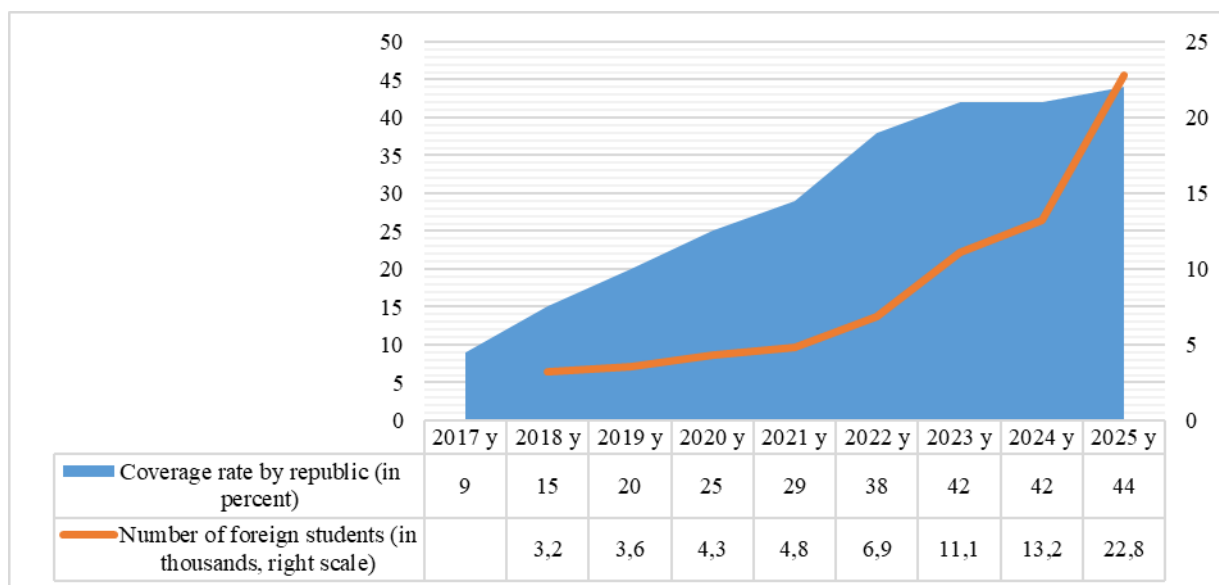


Figure 1. Development trends of the coverage level of the Uzbekistan higher education services market.

Furthermore, due to the reforms aimed at increasing the coverage level of the population with quality higher education services implemented by the government in the country in recent years, positive trends are manifesting in this direction. In particular, during 2017–2025, it was determined that the indicator of the coverage level of the local population with quality higher education services, when assessed as the level of covering the total general secondary school and academic lyceum graduates with higher education relative to the number of graduates, reached from 9 percent to 44 percent [8]. In particular, due to the rapid development trends of the country's higher education services market in recent years, the number of foreign students is also growing significantly (Figure 1).

According to the data, during 2018–2025, the number of foreign students utilizing the country's higher education services increased 7,1-fold, reaching 22,8 thousand persons in total from 3,2 thousand persons. Based on the analysis of the coverage level indicators of the country's higher education services market, it can be concluded that the year-by-year increase in the quality of provided services is providing the opportunity to significantly increase the volume of higher education service exports, together with expanding the opportunities to cover not only the local population but also foreign students with this type of services [9].

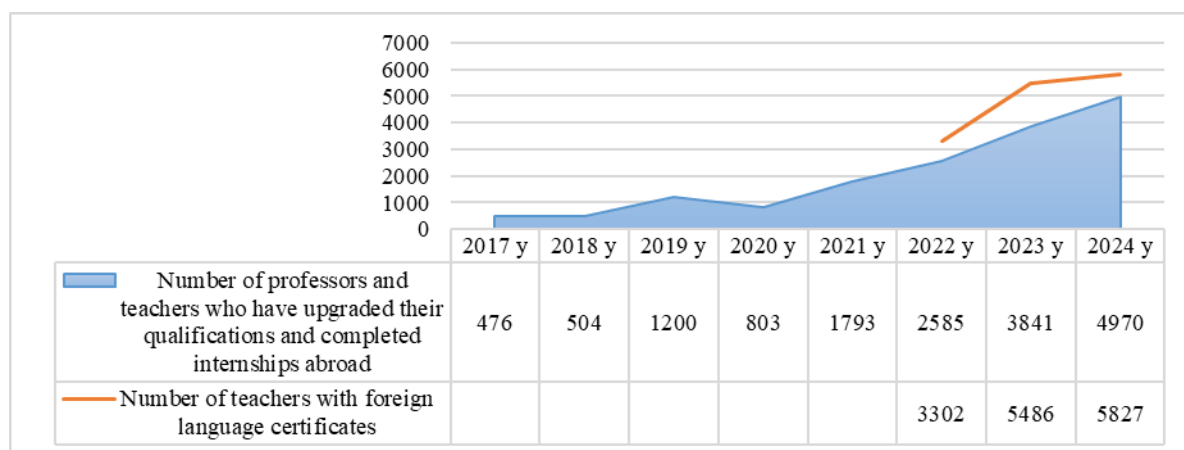


Figure 2. Development trends of academic mobility of faculty members of Uzbekistan higher education institutions.

Measures for fundamentally developing the academic-oriented activities of faculty members of higher education institutions who directly participate in providing higher education services in the country have also been consistently implemented in recent years. According to analyses, the indicators of advanced training and internship of faculty members who teach students at higher education institutions at leading foreign higher education institutions increased 10,4 fold during 2017–2024, with their number reaching from 476 to 4 970, and is characterized by a stable growth trend [11]. At the same time, due to the gradual transition to the practice of teaching subjects in foreign languages at higher education institutions, the number of teachers with certificates of foreign language proficiency among the faculty composition increased approximately 1,8 fold during 2022–2024, reaching from 3 302 to 5 827 (Figure 2).

In particular, during 2017–2025, the number of participants in the advanced training courses organized for the purpose of improving the quality of provided services through ensuring that faculty members engaged in teaching students at local higher education institutions conduct educational sessions based on modern pedagogical technologies increased by 156,4 percent, with their number reaching from 7 579 to 11 872, while the number of faculty members who participated in the retraining courses organized for the quality preparation of students in modern professions at higher education institutions reached from 174 to 2 698 during the studied period, and it was determined that this indicator increased 15,5 fold in total (Table 2).

Table 2. Development trends of the practice of advanced training and retraining of faculty members of higher education institutions.

No	Indicators	Years								
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
1	Number of retraining course participants	174	71	762	759	781	789	709	752	2698
2	Number of advanced training course participants	7 579	6 467	6 496	8 795	8 304	7 477	9 880	9 945	11872

The positive trends achieved above in the area of developing the practice of providing quality educational services to the population at the country's higher education institutions, in particular, ensuring the effectiveness of reforms being implemented in improving the organizational-economic mechanism for enhancing the quality of higher education services, ultimately served to increase the research capacity indicator of higher education institutions across the republic from 32,7 percent to 51 percent, through the sharp increase in the number of those with academic degrees in the composition of faculty members, along with the number of faculty members participating in teaching students increasing by 49,2 percent during 2017–2025, reaching from 25,4 thousand persons to 37,9 thousand persons (Figure 3).

It should be noted here that the increase in the number of degree holders in the composition of faculty members is assessed as a factor that directly exerts a positive influence on the quality of educational sessions at higher education institutions.

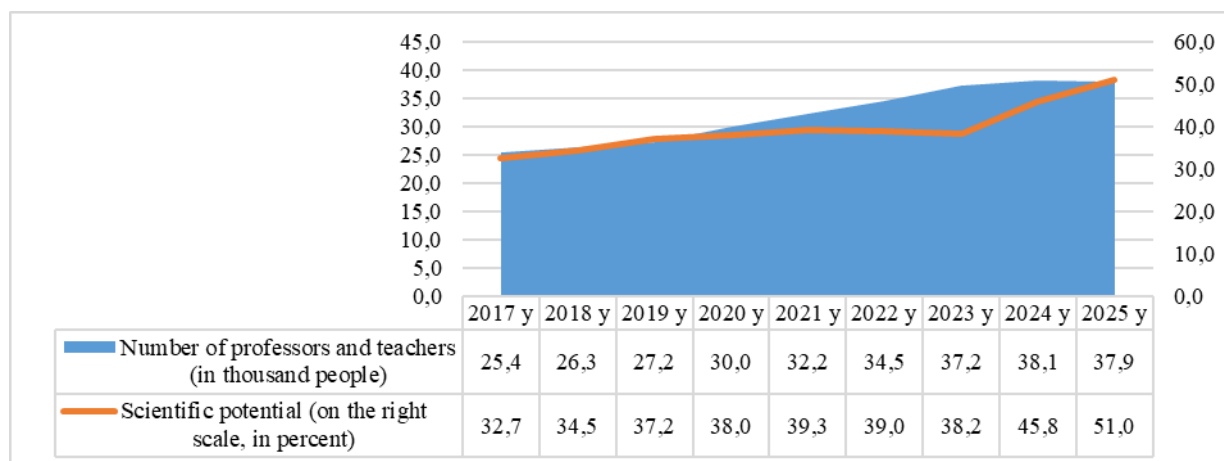


Figure 3. Number of faculty members of Uzbekistan higher education institutions and their research capacity indicators.

For the purpose of accelerating the integration of the quality of services provided in the country's higher education services market into the global standards system, large-scale reforms are being implemented in encouraging the increase in the number of publications by faculty members of local higher education institutions in journals indexed in reputable local and foreign scientific databases [12], [13]. As a result of the systematic measures implemented in this direction, during 2017–2025, the number of articles published by faculty members operating at higher education institutions in reputable local scientific journals reached from 3 736 to 48 439, while the number of publications in journals indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, which are included in the composition of reputable foreign scientific journal databases, reached from 364 to 11 504 (Figure 4).

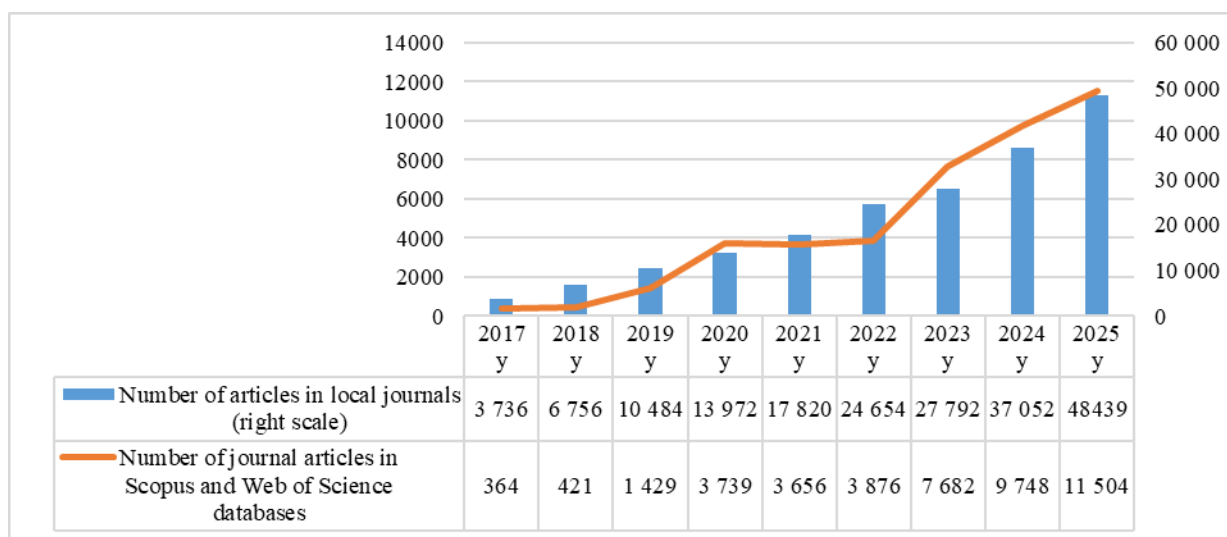


Figure 4. Number of publications by faculty members of local higher education institutions in reputable scientific journals.

It should be noted here that the year-by-year stable increase in the number of articles by faculty members operating at local higher education institutions in reputable local and leading foreign scientific journals may serve to significantly increase the h-index of faculty members at higher education institutions in terms of the citation indicator in the long-term perspective. This, in turn, serves for the international recognition of local faculty members.

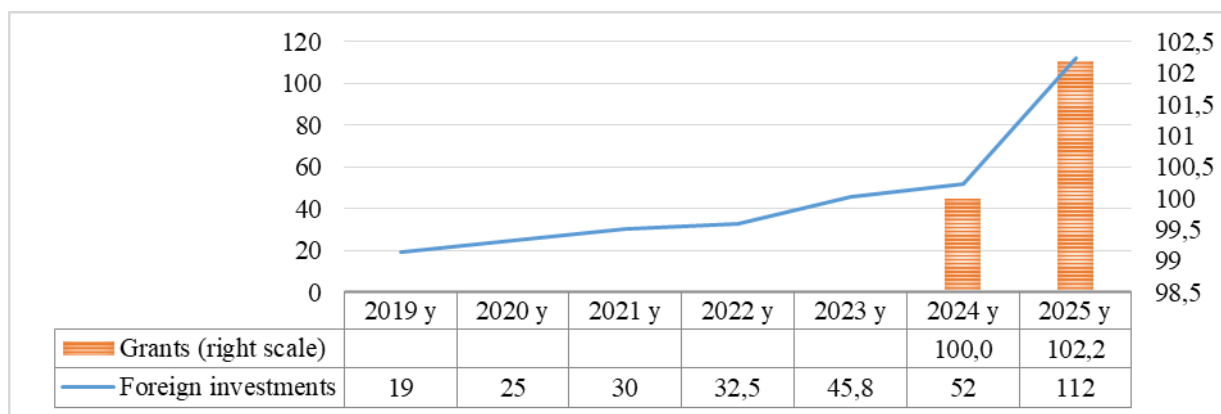


Figure 5. Value of investment projects implemented in improving the organizational-economic mechanism for enhancing the quality of higher education services in Uzbekistan (mln. USD).

In improving the organizational-economic mechanism for enhancing the quality of higher education services in the country, effectiveness of the reforms aimed at accelerating the processes of integration into the international quality standards system through entering into international cooperation relations has been achieved in recent years [14]. According to analyses, during 2019–2025, a total of 518,5 million USD equivalent in foreign investments and grants were attracted for the purpose of improving the quality of educational services provided at local higher education institutions. According to the analysis of the structural indicators of these investment projects, 38,9 percent or 202,2 million USD of the total investment resources were attracted through foreign grant and gratuitous aid programs in 2025, while 61,1 percent of financial resources were utilized in the form of foreign investments during 2019–2025 in the direction of improving the organizational-economic mechanism for enhancing the quality of local higher education services on a step-by-step basis (Figure 5).

The reforms being implemented by the state in integrating the activities of local higher education institutions into the international quality standards system in developing the country's higher education services market enabled the number of higher education institutions that have passed international-level accreditation to reach from 6 to 12 during 2023–2025. At the same time, positive trends are also manifesting in the integration of educational programs at local higher education institutions with international accreditation, with 21 educational programs having been integrated into the international standards system in 2023, while in 2025 this indicator increased to 52 [15].

Conclusion

In the overall situation, based on the research we carried out in analyzing the development trends of the practice of improving the quality of higher education services in Uzbekistan and perfecting its organizational-economic mechanism, the following scientific conclusions were formulated:

first, in improving the quality of higher education services, priority is being given to developing academic activity through encouraging publications by faculty members—who directly participate in teaching students at higher education institutions—in scientific journals indexed in reputable databases at the international level, in particular, enhancing their research capacity, including stimulating the publication of their research results. This, in turn, exerts its positive influence on the quality of preparing educational materials in the process of teaching students by faculty members in the overall situation;

second, in improving the organizational-economic mechanism for enhancing the quality of higher education services in the country, strengthening the integration of the

activities of higher education institutions into the international standards system through attracting foreign investments within the framework of state programs is being achieved. At the same time, priority is being given to the practice of advanced training and internship of faculty members of local higher education institutions at leading foreign higher education institutions, which serves to expand the opportunities for utilizing leading foreign practices in organizing educational sessions.

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