

DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATION MANAGEMENT: CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction. The centralized management of higher education leads to a narrowing of the field of market competition and the filling of the educational space with bureaucratic networks focused on their own financial and political rents. Thus, the lower the degree of state intervention in the higher education system, the better it serves the public interest through the mechanisms of self-organization and market demand. In this context, the most reliable way to increase the efficiency and social responsibility of higher education institutions is to decentralize the management of higher education.

The purpose of the work is to critically evaluate the transfer of decision-making power from central authorities to individual higher education institutions (HEIs).

Presenting main material. The decentralization policy is based on political motives (democratization of public administration, involvement of the public in it), financial motives (inability of central governments to bear the burden of financing higher education on their own, desire to shift part of the financial burden to local communities), and efficiency motives (moving decision-making centers to lower levels of government allows for a more rapid response to the requirements of society and the labor market) [4].

Expansion of autonomy increases the freedom of self-realization for teachers and management of higher education institutions, but within the framework of higher education institutions and only in teaching and research. In other areas of activity, especially in the financial sphere, the right to freely dispose of funds granted to higher education institutions is accompanied by increased state control over their rational use, which is reflected in the need for higher education institutions to report to the public and the state on both the use

of funds and the results of their activities.

Expanding autonomy in higher education enhances teachers' and management's self-realization within teaching and research, but limits extend to those areas exclusively. Financial autonomy for institutions is balanced by increased state oversight, necessitating transparent reporting on fund usage and activities. Decentralization in education involves strategic administrative and legal approaches, manifested in three interconnected strategies: 1) Public engagement in higher education problem-solving and strategic planning; 2) Enhanced involvement of local communities in sector management and financing; 3) Granting higher education institutions greater financial autonomy.

Transferring decision-making to higher education institutions or the regional level is a significant political strategy driven by a lack of trust in the state's ability to respond adequately to the needs of a demanding population. Those affected by the consequences of implementation should have the right to make decisions. Decentralization is a reliable means of shifting the political debate about education quality to lower levels of the educational system, democratizing and modernizing it. By giving more power to lower levels of the system, responsibility is shifted to them for defining what they understand as quality education. The management and financing of higher education can be improved by involving local communities. This can help mitigate the negative effects of the steady decline in public funding experienced by the sector in the context of globalization [2].

The decentralization of education management has several positive consequences, including the reduction of bureaucracy, democratization of management, and involvement of lower administrative levels for effective management. Additionally, it allows for appropriate use of funds allocated by budgets of different levels and attracted from private sources by higher education institutions themselves [3]. Furthermore, it can increase the efficiency and quality of learning, teaching, and management in educational institutions, ensuring compliance with the requirements of society and local regulations.

In **conclusion**, decentralization of education management presents a compelling strategy for revitalizing higher education. By shifting decision-making power to individual institutions and local communities, the system gains flexibility, responsiveness, and a focus on local needs. While challenges exist, such as the need for robust financial oversight alongside increased autonomy, the potential benefits outweigh the risks. Decentralization empowers stakeholders, fosters innovation, and ultimately aims to provide a higher quality education that aligns with the demands of society and the labor market. The success of this transition hinges on effective implementation strategies that encourage public engagement, local community involvement, and responsible financial management within HEIs. By embracing decentralization, the higher education system in Ukraine can shed bureaucratic burdens and emerge as a dynamic force for social progress and economic development.

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