

Таким чином, Національна поліція України виконує не лише охоронну функцію, а й виступає активним учасником процесу формування справедливого, відкритого й толерантного суспільства. Через повагу до прав людини, розвиток партнерства з громадою, неупереджене ставлення до кожного громадянина та підвищення рівня професійної культури поліцейські сприяють побудові держави, у якій панують взаєморозуміння, гідність і рівність. Саме така поліція є запорукою довіри громадян і стабільного розвитку демократичного суспільства в Україні.

Джерела.

1. Формування комунікативної толерантності в поліцейських Національної поліції України за допомогою інтерактивних засобів навчання. Автор: Рівчаченко О.А. кандидат юридичних наук, старший викладач кафедри юридичної психології Національної академії внутрішніх справ, м. Київ, Матеріали круглого столу Національної академії внутрішніх справ, ст.112.

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MODERN APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICES

The article defines the ultimate outcome of higher education institutions' operations as the provision of educational services, which encompass both the process of meeting students' intangible needs for knowledge and the provision of material resources—such as textbooks, teaching aids, monographs, methodological guidelines, etc. The main categories of educational service consumers are identified, and their key characteristics are outlined. The existing interpretations of the term "quality of education" are analyzed, and the appropriateness of distinguishing it into three separate and non-identical concepts is substantiated: the quality of educational services; the level of education or knowledge acquired in the learning process; the effectiveness of the structure and functioning of the education system. These concepts reflect different aspects of higher education institutions' activities. The article examines scientific approaches to defining the essence of educational service quality and the quality of services provided by higher education institutions, and also proposes an original interpretation of this concept. Keywords: quality of educational services, higher education institutions, level of education, characteristics of the educational process.

Problem Statement. The population's level of education—alongside health status and well-being—is one of the key indicators that define the quality of life in a country. The quality of educational services plays a fundamental role in shaping individual life prospects, contributes to personal well-being, ensures competitiveness in the labor market, and strengthens both personal and economic security.

Improving the quality of educational services directly affects the achievement of key national policy objectives, including: promoting socio-economic development, creating conditions for citizens' creative self-realization, integrating Ukraine into the global educational space, and enhancing the country's authority in the international educational services market.

In this context, there arises a need for theoretical and applied research in the field of educational service quality within the framework of the economic security of higher education institutions (HEIs). For effective regulation of the educational services market, ensuring high quality, and strengthening the economic sustainability of HEIs and the country as a whole, it is crucial to clearly define the content of key concepts such as:

- "service",
- "educational service",
- "quality",

- "quality of services",
- "quality of educational services".

Additionally, related categories—often mistakenly used as synonyms—also require clarification, including: "quality of education", "level of education", and "level of educational attainment".

Analysis of recent research and publications. The issue of the quality of educational service delivery and the development of the education sector has attracted the attention of many scholars. These topics have been addressed in the works of both domestic and international researchers, including: V. Aleksandrov [1], N. Baboval [2], S. Bahdikian [3], O. Burlakova [4], N. Butova [6], A. Dmytriv [8], I. Filippova [8], I. Kaleniuk, L. Tsymbal [10], M. Kisil [12], O. Kozak [13], Iu. Kravchenko, O. Lebedev [14], O. Kuklin [37], O. Liashenko [16], V. Maikovska [17], O. Meshchaninov [18], T. Minakova [19], T. Obolenska [20], V. Oharenko [21], S. Semeniuk [23], A. Subetto [24], L. Tkachenko [25], and other researchers.

Identification of previously unresolved aspects of the general problem. Despite the substantial body of academic work on the quality of educational services, there is currently no single, unified interpretation of the term "quality of educational services." The relationship between this concept and related categories—such as "quality of education", "level of education", and "level of educational attainment"—also remains a topic of debate. This lack of clarity complicates the development of a standardized methodology for evaluating quality in the higher education sector.

Purpose of the article. The aim of this article is to clarify the content of the concept "quality of educational services" in the context of higher education institutions' activities, as well as to analyze related concepts, including: quality of education, level of educational attainment, effectiveness of higher education institutions' functioning, service, and educational service.

Main body. The specific nature of the higher education system makes it difficult to clearly define its ultimate outcome. In scholarly literature, the effectiveness of higher education institutions is approached from several perspectives: as efficient institutional functioning, provision of high-quality educational services to the population, facilitation of students' professional and personal growth, etc.

For instance, I. Kaleniuk argues that the outcome of education is a system of knowledge, skills, and abilities formed in a person during the learning process [10, p. 154]. Meanwhile, L. Karamushka defines the ultimate result of a higher education institution as a "living object"—a personality functioning in the social environment and acting as an active participant in social relations [11, p. 45]. However, it should be noted that the educational process primarily influences not the person as a physical entity, but their system of knowledge, competencies, and ways of thinking. This raises certain concerns about such a definition.

According to the international standard ISO 9000:2005, a service is defined as the result of at least one activity performed in interaction between a supplier and a customer, and is generally intangible in nature. Services may include the delivery of intangible products—such as knowledge or information transfer [7, p. 15]. Thus, the activity of higher education institutions yields a dual outcome:

- On the one hand, a product in the form of intellectual output (textbooks, teaching aids, monographs, methodological guidelines, scientific articles, conference presentations, etc.);
- On the other hand, a service, which consists of the process of transferring knowledge, skills, and abilities from the provider (educational institution) to the consumer (individual, business, state, etc.).

Therefore, the object of this study is the quality of services provided by higher education institutions. Since this concept lacks a universally accepted definition in both scientific and regulatory contexts, it is first necessary to clarify the category of "educational service" or "service of a higher education institution" as a basis for further analysis of the term "quality of educational services."

Further elaboration of the core research content. Given that educational services operate within the framework of market relations, they should be regarded as a process of satisfying consumers' educational needs, which involves acquiring knowledge, skills, and competencies to ensure personal and professional growth.

The position of A. Rumiantsev and Iu. Kovalenko [22, p. 121], who view an educational service solely as a product that transforms into labor force, appears somewhat limited. While it is true that the educational process contributes to the formation of labor potential, the effectiveness of this process also depends on the subjective efforts of

learners. Therefore, an educational service is primarily a process of transferring and assimilating knowledge, skills, and competencies, rather than merely a "finished product."

Based on scientific approaches, it is appropriate to define an educational service as a systematic process of transferring knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies from a higher education institution to the consumer, aimed at their professional, economic, social, and cultural development, as well as meeting employers' demand for qualified personnel and ensuring the reproduction of the labor potential of society and the state.

Educational services are market-based in nature, possess economic value, and are characterized by a range of properties that affect their quality, attractiveness, and effectiveness. In particular, T. Obolenska [20, pp. 168–171] highlights the following key characteristics of educational services:

- intangibility – the inability to physically perceive or evaluate the service before it is consumed;
- inseparability – the inseparability of the service delivery process from the teacher as the knowledge bearer;
- variability – the quality of the service depends on time, place, the student's perception, the lecturer's condition, etc.;
- perishability – the inability to store educational services for future use, with their relevance decreasing over time.

However, academic discourse also explores ways to compensate for or reduce the impact of these negative attributes. For example:

- materialization can be achieved through certification, licensing, issuing diplomas, or publishing academic work;
- inseparability can be mitigated by developing teaching materials that extend the interaction between the "supplier" and "consumer" beyond the classroom;

- variability can be reduced by conducting student surveys and monitoring academic performance;
- perishability is addressed by the concept of lifelong learning.

Additional characteristics of educational services identified by researchers include:

- collective consumption – learning occurs in groups;
- duration and stepwise progression – the educational process is divided into semesters and modules;
- environmental influence – including infrastructure, housing conditions, and emotional atmosphere;
- presence of both direct and indirect consumers;
- impossibility of exact quantitative measurement of service quality;
- competitive access to educational services;
- high cost of educational programs [8, 20, 25].

In academic studies, the term "quality of educational service" is often equated with "quality of education," which is not entirely accurate. The quality of education is a broader, multi-level, systemic phenomenon influenced by economic, social, demographic, political, pedagogical, and psychological factors. At present, there is no unified scientific consensus on the definition of "quality of education."

In general, the concept may refer to:

- the level of learners' knowledge and qualifications;
- the quality of the educational process organization;
- the degree of alignment between learning outcomes and labor market requirements;
- the quality of the educational service itself;
- the overall effectiveness of the education system.

Therefore, in further analysis, it is advisable to distinguish between these components and apply more precise terminology to enable an adequate assessment of the quality of higher education institutions' performance.

A similar multidimensional concept of education quality is proposed by O. Liashenko, who defines it as a methodological concept that reflects essential aspects of social life and is characterized by:

- the quality of educational objectives;
- the quality of the pedagogical process;
- the quality of learning outcomes [16, p. 6].

Some scholars view the concept of education quality as a combination of the state and effectiveness of the educational process, as well as the quality of educational service delivery. For example, N. Butova defines education quality as a set of characteristics of the educational process, which includes:

- quality of the potential to achieve goals (educational objectives, educational standards, curricula, material and technical resources, teaching staff, students, information and methodological resources);
- quality of the formation process (teaching technologies, control of the educational process, instructor motivation, learning intensity, educational management, methods of presenting learning outcomes);
- quality of educational outcomes (awareness and realization of individual abilities, employment, career development, salary, methodology for self-education, practical skills) [6].

N. Baboval interprets education quality as a social category that reflects the state and effectiveness of the educational process in society [2, p. 14].

I. Bulakh and M. Mruha consider education quality as a set of properties of the educational process that ensure the formation of a level of professional competence that meets the needs of the individual, society, and the state — both now and in the future [4, p. 27].

Therefore, to conduct a high-quality theoretical and applied analysis of issues and overcome ambiguities in educational discourse, it is advisable to move away from the overly broad and ambiguous term “quality of education” and instead replace it with several non-identical concepts, such as:

- “quality of educational service”,
- “level of knowledge”,
- “effectiveness of educational institutions”.

These terms reflect different aspects of the education sector and its institutions, each requiring separate investigation, measurement, evaluation, and management.

The concept of “quality of educational service” also lacks a unified interpretation among researchers and requires further clarification. Most commonly, it is understood as:

- a set of characteristics that meet consumers’ needs and most accurately reflect the essence of the terms “service” and “quality”;
- compliance with norms, standards, and requirements, which complements the previous interpretation, as adherence to such norms helps ensure consumer satisfaction;
- the level of graduates’ competitiveness in the labor market — often seen as the ultimate goal of educational service provision, though not necessarily a direct measure of service quality;
- innovativeness, which is one of the key characteristics of educational service quality.

Based on these perspectives, it is proposed to define the quality of educational service or the quality of services provided by higher education institutions as a set of characteristics that are capable of satisfying the needs of both direct and indirect consumers, and are aimed at developing a competitive, highly qualified specialist capable of lifelong learning.

Conclusions. In the course of this study on the essence of the concepts “quality of educational services” and related categories such as “service”, “educational service”, and “quality of education”, their controversial and ambiguous nature has been identified. The fundamental essence of the terms “service” and “educational service” was clarified.

It is proposed to abandon the use of the term “quality of education”, as it is overly burdened with diverse interpretations and requires constant clarification. Instead, it is more appropriate to apply three distinct and non-equivalent categories: quality of educational service; level of knowledge; and effectiveness of educational institutions.

These terms reflect different aspects of educational activity and require independent research, evaluation, and management.

The proposed interpretation of the research object — “quality of educational services” — serves as a theoretical foundation for the development of further methodologies for assessing and managing the quality of educational services. This, in turn, will contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of higher education in Ukraine and to the creation of mechanisms for strengthening the economic security of both higher education institutions and the state as a whole.

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