

Modern universities: the main directions of development strategies

Victoriia Riashchenko*, Jevgenija Dehtjare

ISMA, 1 Lomonosova Str., build. 6, Riga, LV-1019, Latvia

*Corresponding author's e-mail: viktorii.riashchenko@isma.lv



Abstract

The instability of the development of a market economy causes constant changes in the activities of higher educational institutions. The article is devoted to consideration of the processes occurring in recent decades in the system of higher education in Europe and in particular Latvia. The main global trends in the development of higher professional education have been revealed: an increase in the demand for higher education, which led to its mass supply (at the same time, the growth of quantitative indicators is not always accompanied by an increase in the quality of higher education); decrease in the total number of students due to the deterioration of the demographic situation; changes in the structure of specialties and areas of training of specialists with higher professional education in connection with the restructuring of the economy and the needs of the labor market; aggravation of competition. The selected trends lead to the emergence of demographic, political and economic risks.

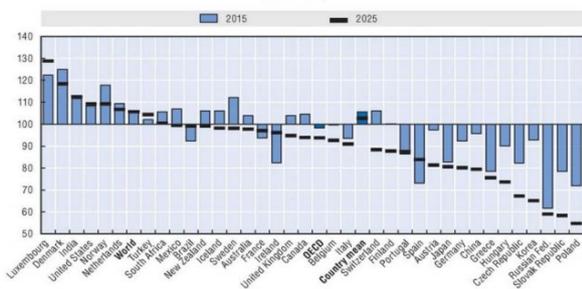
Keywords: university, education system, trends in the development of higher education, continuing education

1 Introduction

In recent years, higher education systems in various countries have been developing under the influence of three global factors:

1. Mass character and increase of accessibility of higher education and, as a result, increase in the number of students;
2. The globalization of education and the strengthening of international competition of universities;
3. Internationalization.

In 2006, the United Nations published a forecast of demographic changes in the population of OECD countries [1]. From the point of view of changes in higher education, there are interesting changes in the population of the age group from 18 to 24 years (Fig. 1), since it is this group of the population that mainly forms the cohort of students.



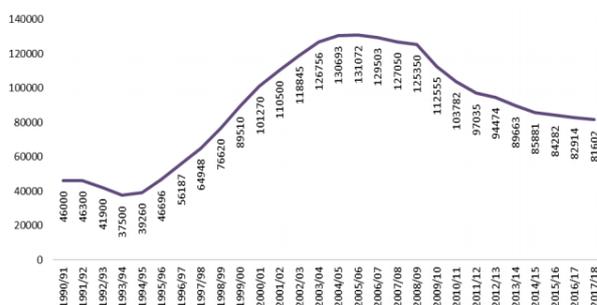
Source: United Nations, median projections (2006 revision).

FIGURE 1 The forecast of quantitative changes in the age group from 18 to 24 years of age of the population of OECD countries in 2015 and 2025

As can be seen from the diagram, in most countries a significant decrease in the number of young people who are potentially applying for higher education is predicted. Today, 80% of university students in OECD countries are under 25

years old, so demographic changes in this age group directly affect the change in demand for higher education.

In Latvia, the changes have the same character.



Ellen Hazelkorn in the article “What does global higher education mean for university leaders?”. Provides data on the development of the UK higher education system. In 1950, only 3.4% of young people were studying at universities. Today this figure is approaching 49%. At the same time, students attend universities, more than two thirds of which were established after 1950. It is expected that the population of Great Britain will steadily increase until 2026. However, the share of the working-age population from 16 to 64 years old, which has remained relatively stable over the past 40 years, according to research forecasts, will decrease.

Similar forecasts are made by researchers for Latvia. Since 1990, the number of Latvian residents has declined by more than 20%, and 40% of Latvia’s population is over 50 years old, besides this age group forms 30% of the total working-age population, the report says “Active aging strategies for longer and better work experience in Of Latvia [2].

Future projections show that the population will continue to shrink and age. By 2030, the share of people of working age will decrease by almost 7 percentage points.

The low birth rate also affects the demographic situation. A World Bank study suggests that there are few families in Latvia without children - only 16% of women aged 39–45 years have no children.

To support economic development, European countries will have to attract qualified specialists from other countries. Even today, leading universities have a strategy of attracting talented foreign students and graduate students from foreign countries, as well as an internationalization development strategy.

For example, to reduce the impact of demographic changes, universities can avoid reducing the demand for educational services by expanding the range of educational services:

- Introduction of distance education in countries where it is not common, as well as other forms of dual education, when the student spends part of the time at the university and part of the time at the workplace;
- Actively attracting foreign students, whose number has increased in recent years;
- Development of various retraining, advanced training programs, etc. to attract additional learners;
- Development of targeted retraining programs for employees of enterprises and organizations;
- Expanding the range of educational programs for retirees. These services are actively offered by European universities. Many pensioners enjoy attending university classes and gain knowledge that they could not get due to employment at work. For many, this new knowledge becomes the realization of an old dream, for many they open up the possibility of continuing to evolve in tune with the times and not feel that life has ended in retirement [4]. For various reasons, such educational programs are very popular among the elderly. And considering the increase in life expectancy and the increase in the share of retirees in the population of most developed countries, programs for the elderly are increasingly popular.

References

- [1] <http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/highereducationto2030vol1demography.htm>
- [2] <https://www.researchcghc.org/news/2017-06-13-new-paper-what-does-global-higher-education-mean-for-university-leaders/>
- [3] <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/284635-par-konceptualo-zinojumu-aktivas-novecosanas-strategija-ilgakam-un-labakam-darba-muzam-latvija>
- [4] [https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/EDIF%2031%20\(2015\)--ENG--Final.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/EDIF%2031%20(2015)--ENG--Final.pdf)
- [5] Skvortsov N G 2017 Competitiveness of universities in the global system of higher education: challenges and strategies Moscow State University Bulletin. Series 18. *Sociology and Political Science* 23(4) 45-57 (*In Russian*) <https://doi.org/10.24290/1029-3736-2017-23-4-45-57>

2 Overview

The data of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development indicates that by 2030 half of all university graduates in the world (aged 25–34 years) will be in India and China, and less than 25% in Europe and the United States. Thus, graduates of European and American universities will most likely work either with representatives of other cultures or within these cultures. Global changes lead to the fact that in the future intercultural interaction will cease to be the exception and will become the norm. This means that the skills and knowledge necessary for effective intercultural communication will become more important than ever for students [3].

3 Decision

Universities should ensure that their graduates are well prepared for new conditions. Knowledge and skills that are relevant to them, including a broad understanding of the world and intercultural competences, can be developed precisely through the internationalization of higher education. Increasing international mobility is an added bonus in the process of developing the so-called “skills of the 21st century”.

4 Conclusion

In our opinion, the 21st century is the epoch of the information society, the epoch of technological culture. The formation of a global information society brings to the fore the problem of the spread of knowledge. Distance education brings knowledge closer to the consumer, allows you to offer educational services to everyone, regardless of geographic, state, time or other factors. The strategic goal of distance education is to ensure the right to receive education at any level at the place of their residence or professional activity. This goal is achieved in line with the global trend of mobile knowledge dissemination through the exchange of educational resources.