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## **INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

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*Methodological approaches to the organization of social and labour relations are systematized. The dynamics of the institutional environment of the labour market and vocational training system interaction in Russia is revealed. The peculiarities of the Russian experience of institutionalization of labour relations in the field of qualifications are shown. Post-industrial development of socio-economic systems, the processes of globalization, the transition of the Russian economy to an innovative model of development, the knowledge economy, the acceleration of scientific and technological progress and other objective challenges have necessitated the development of new human resource management mechanisms. In modern conditions the staff of an organization is considered to be the human capital, i.e. the field for strategic investments, a key factor in ensuring the competitiveness and sustainable development of the country, the region, the sector, the company rather than the costly part of the economy. Currently, one of the main problems of human resourcing for economic growth in the European Union and the Russian Federation is professional and qualification imbalance of supply and demand on the labour market. The National Qualifications System is aimed at solving the problems of linking the labour market with vocational training. Problematic aspects of development of the Russian National Qualifications System are marked.*

*Key words: National Qualifications System, National Qualifications Framework, occupational standards, vocational training system, employment*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The main vector of social and economic development of Russia is an innovative development that is directly related to the efficient and highly skilled labour. Systematic approach to solving labour problems is generated in the concept of decent work on the basis of interaction of all participants of social partnership: employees, employers and the state. The ILO Declaration 'On Social Justice for Fair Globalization' strategic objectives are defined to achieve decent work [1]:

- promotion of employment through creation of sustainable institutional and economic environment;
- development and expansion of social protection;
- promotion of social dialogue;
- provision, promotion and implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work.

Implementation of Decent Work standards as the basis of human well-being and development of the country should be the strategic goal in achieving economic growth. In Russia, these are the standards of decent wages, decent employment, effective social partnership in the sphere of social insurance [2].

Employment and decent wages strongly depend on strengthening the relationship between the labour market and the vocational training system. Effective interaction

of the system of vocational and higher education, on the one hand, and the labour market, on the other hand, is aimed at ensuring sustainable development of the socio-economic system and increasing social welfare.

Currently, one of the main problems of human resourcing for economic growth in the European Union and the Russian Federation is professional and qualification imbalance of supply and demand on the labour market. The study of the European Commission 'Skills and qualifications' states that 30% of university graduates are working in jobs which do not need a university qualification. At the same time, 40% of employers cannot find people with the right skills to fill their vacancies [3].

In the Russian Federation for the period of 2015-2017, the job of employed graduates correlated with the specialty obtained at the higher education institution by 71%, and did not correlate by 29%, accordingly. High compliance was observed in the fields of chemistry (86%), computer science and computer engineering (82%), health sciences and preventive medicine (97%). Low levels of compliance were observed in agriculture, forestry and fishery (42%), machinery and technical facilities (63%), economics and management (66%). Employment after graduation from a secondary professional education establishment corresponds to the profession acquired by only 60%. High level of correlation was observed in clinical

medicine (91%), low level was admitted in agriculture, forestry and fishery (36%), law (48%), economics and management (53%) [4].

The transformation of the socio-economic system of the Russian Federation on the way of market reforms have formed the labour market and significantly changed the structure and forms of employment, organizational, economic and financial conditions of labour-management relations. Key changes in the last decade have been due to increasing requirements to the professional level and personal qualities of workers and specialists in the post-industrial society, the need to adapt vocational training to the internationalization of production, trade and labour markets. These processes actualize new search interface of the labour market mechanisms and the system of vocational training.

The purpose of the study is to disclose the dynamics of the institutional environment of interaction of the labour market and vocational education in Russia.

The tasks aimed at achieving the objectives of the study are as follows:

- to systematize methodological approaches to the interaction of the labour market and vocational education on the basis of historical experience;
- to reveal the main elements of the National Qualifications System;
- to analyze the development of higher education along with the development of professional standards and independent assessment of qualifications.

The concept of long-term social and economic development of the Russian Federation stipulates as one of the main tasks is creation of a continuous system of education based on the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, the certification system of qualifications in order to maximize human potential and create conditions for self-organization of citizens throughout their lives. The problem of staffing the economic development and the ways of its solving play a special role in the national projects undertaken in accordance with the Presidential Decree No. 204 of 07 May 2018, 'On the national goals and strategic objectives of the Russian Federation development for the period till 2024'. The national project 'Labour productivity and employment support' encompasses 'Support to employment: employment, education, and infrastructure development' federal project. Similar projects and programmes are developed on the level of the subjects of the Russian Federation. The focus of the project is made on the human capacity measures to improve labour productivity. The key objectives of the federal project 'Human Resources for Digital Economy' are to supply the digital economy with competent personnel, assist the citizens in the development of digital literacy and competences of the digital economy.

The necessity for creating effective institutional framework of labour relations to ensure sustainable economic growth, competitiveness, productivity growth is con-

firmed in theoretical and applied research of domestic and foreign scientists. A National Qualifications System is considered by scholars, professional business communities and professional education institutions in the context of development of social and labour relations [5,6,7,8,9,10,11]. National Qualifications System is a set of legal and institutional mechanisms to regulate the qualifications of employees ensuring labour market interaction with vocational education in order to improve the quality of training of workers and their competitiveness on domestic and international labour markets [12].

## RESEARCH METHODS

Let us consider the transformation of the domestic institutional environment of qualifications. A classical approach to the theory of organization based on the technological, functional, vocational and professional division of labour and organization of selection, training and skills development became widely spread during the period of planned economy and industrial stage of development. Theoretical and applied aspects of this approach were considered in scientific organization of labour aimed at solving economic, social and psycho-physiological problems.

Two mega systems were formed in National Qualifications System: professional education system (elementary vocational education, vocational secondary education, higher professional education) and the system of labour-management relations in terms of establishing and compliance with professional qualification requirements for employees.

The basis of the institutional environment of professional qualifications is the All-Russian Classifier of Occupations; the Russian National Classification of Occupations of Employees, Positions of Civil Servants and Wage Category; the Unified Rating and Skills Guide for Jobs and Occupations of Manual Workers (EKTS); the Managers, Specialists and Workforce Qualification Reference Book (EKS). Development of qualification standards for the 'workers' category is based on professional skills. The compliance with the uniform approach to pricing and level of qualification of workers in different industries was ensured. Job position principle is the basis for EKS. Estimation of the complexity of the work of managers, specialists and other employees is taken into account in the classification according to the qualification and position groups based on their function in the management system.

By now, job evaluation manuals have been normative documents in the field of labour relations. About 5,500 vocational professions and about 2 million office workers positions are described there. Job evaluation manuals are contingent on the basic legal documents regulating labour relations and training of workers and specialists. Changes and additions to the basic documents regulating labour relations such as the Labour Code of the RF, the All-Russian Classifier of Occupations and job eval-

uation manuals have mostly been evolutionary to date.

The fundamental changes in the institutional environment of labour and vocational training system is based on the creation and development of the National Qualifications System. The National Qualifications System (NQS) comprises the following basic elements: Professional Standards; National Qualifications Framework; Branch Qualifications Frameworks; educational standards; mechanisms for evaluation, accumulation and validation of qualifications. Systematic work to develop a national qualifications framework and professional standards began in 2007 under the initiative of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs.

The core of NQS is the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The National Qualifications Framework is comparable with the European Qualifications Framework established to implement the concept of lifelong learning and support mobility on the European labour market. The main task of the National Qualifications Framework is linking of the world of labour and the education system. The European Qualifications Framework has 8 qualification levels, for each level learning outcomes being defined against descriptors: knowledge, skills and competence [4].

In the Russian Federation the National Qualifications Framework refers to the levels of qualification in order to develop projects of professional standards approved by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation, Order No. 148H of 12 April 2013. Qualification levels in NQF are revealed through appropriate indicators of professional activity (descriptors): breadth of the powers and responsibilities (general competence), complexity of the activities (skills profile), knowledge-intensive activities (the nature of knowledge). The NQF identifies the ways of achieving an appropriate level of qualification. It includes 9 qualification levels [12]. The content of the NQF descriptors forms the requirements for the results of the vocational education and training.

Sectoral qualifications frameworks are based on the National Qualifications Framework and reveal its contents in the respective economic activities. For example, applied research project forming sectoral qualifications frameworks in the field of professional activity 'forestry' was conducted by a consortium of international project Tempus SUFAREL - JPHEs-No. 516796 'Qualifications Framework in Forestry of the European Union and Russia' (2011-2014). The participants of the project were higher educational institutions and organizations from the European Union and the Russian Federation [3]. The draft sectoral qualifications framework having nine qualifying levels proposes and discloses the descriptors of professional activity: breadth of authority and responsibility (general competence), complexity (skills character), research intensity (the nature of knowledge); personal competences, the ways of achieving the appropriate lev-

el of qualification, the main types of labour activity.

Legislatively new institution - the professional standard - is introduced by the Labour Code. Professional standard is the description of a qualification of an employee necessary to perform a certain type of professional activity. The basis for the development of professional standards is the method of functional analysis. The structural units of description in the professional standards are labour functions, work activities ensuring the implementation of these functions, the characteristics of the qualification level. Unlike the job evaluation manuals professional standards describe the functions in a specific area of professional activity.

As of 31 December 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation approved 1,225 professional standards, 135 of which being approved and 72 actualized in 2018. More than 1,300 qualifications for specialists with higher and secondary vocational education are entered into the register of qualifications [5]. Since 2018 ETKS and EKS have been gradually replaced by the professional standards.

An independent assessment of qualifications as part of the National Qualifications System is aimed at realization of modern 'lifelong learning' paradigm. In accordance with the federal law 'On the independent assessment of qualifications' No. 238-FZ of 3 July 2016, independent assessment of a qualification is the process of confirming the conformity of the professional qualification of the applicant to the provisions of a professional standard or qualification requirements established by the legislation and conducted by qualification assessment center. Currently a command and control system of independent assessment of qualifications is formed, regulatory and methodological approaches to its implementation are defined [5, 8, 9, 12, 15].

At the same time, an independent certification does not form any skills, knowledge, and competencies in a person. Therefore, to build an effective independent assessment of qualifications is only possible in a system of interacting structures: government, business, education, and all the elements of the National Qualifications System.

Modern model of innovative development is the theory of the 'Triple Helix' created at the beginning of the XXI century by G. Itskovich and L. Leydesdorf. The participants of the 'Triple Helix' model are universities (science), business and the state [13]. In the innovation economy interaction of institutional spheres 'state-business-university' (power-business-university) occurs through differentiation and integration of innovative business activities and science, public administration transformation. We believe that the gnosiological aspect of the 'Triple Helix' concept is productive in the study of the institutional environment of interaction of the labour market and vocational education system in Russia.

## DISCUSSION OF OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Experts identified a set of systemic problems in establishing the domestic National Qualifications System [10]:

- the opposition of professional and educational qualifications;
- linking of educational and professional standards;
- duplication of procedures of awarding qualifications in vocational education and at the same time an independent assessment of qualifications.

The key problem of development of the Russian qualifications system is the opposition of professional and educational qualifications; linking of educational and professional standards, in particular the standards of higher education.

According to the Labour Code of the Russian Federation, 'the employee qualification is the level of knowledge, skills and experience of the employee' (Article 195.1.). *Learning outcomes are defined in professional standards as qualifications in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework including 9 skills levels.*

In the federal law 'On Education in the Russian Federation' 'qualification is the level of knowledge, skills and competence that characterizes the readiness to perform a certain type of professional activity' (Clause 5, Article 2). A document about education and training received on a bachelor's training programme is a certificate of bachelor's degree, the qualification is Bachelor; in the area of master's training programme it is a certificate of master's degree, the qualification is Master. Sectoral approach is saved in higher education for specialties [12]. The objects of the classification in the 'All-Russian Joint Academic Coding System' are professions and specialties of secondary vocational education, as well as specialties and training programmes of higher education. Profession, specialty, training programme are understood as a *set of competencies* acquired within secondary vocational or higher education and ensuring formulation and solution of certain professional tasks [8].

Changing the paradigm of higher education is focused on learning outcomes, competence paradigm of education. [12] In accordance with Federal educational standards of higher education learning outcomes are evaluated against the development of universal, general professional and professional competences. According to the Federal law 'On Education in the Russian Federation' development of requirements of the Federal educational standards of higher education of the third generation (FGOSVO 3++) to the learning outcomes in terms of professional competence is based on the relevant Professional standards [15].

The establishment of new institutional mechanisms of the National Qualifications System takes place in parallel with the old institutions regulating social and labour

relations by making changes and additions to the regulations, which creates difficulties in their application. For example, along with the development of new institutions of domestic National Qualifications Framework, changes are made to the All-Russian Classifier of Occupations. This document is harmonized with the International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008 (ISCO-08). The level of qualification and specialization required for a certain occupation are adopted as classification features. The level of qualification is defined as the ability of an employee to perform certain work functions with specific structure and difficulty level. Specialization reflects the specific types of activities based on the knowledge required, business process technology peculiar features, machinery and equipment, materials, products (goods and services). There are four qualification levels in the All-Russian Classifier of Occupations. The first qualification level corresponds to basic general education and general secondary education, the second qualification level is in line with professional training, the third one corresponds to vocational secondary education, the fourth level is in line with higher education and the scientific degree.

Rector of Moscow State University V. A. Sadovnichiy considers the system error in the formation of the National Qualification Framework to be 'in the direction of the process vector: the process is not 'top-down' (from the simulation of the entire field of professional activities to developing professional standards), but rather a 'bottom-up' one, i.e. there is a pointwise and often random filling of individual professional standards of not yet simulated field of professional activity'. Professional Standard is ideal for activities that do not require high professional skills. As proposed by the scientist, high-tech types of professional activity require another approach, i.e. development of sectoral requirements for the qualifications of employees [14].

We believe that there should be ensured the continuity of the areas of professional activity with the National Classification of Economic Activities.

Such forms of training as vocational training programmes, informal and autonomous learning are not built into the Russian NQF implementing the principle of 'lifelong learning'.

An important problem of sectoral qualifications frameworks development in accordance with their purpose is to create a tariff system that provides visibility and control of the wage system. The results of the analysis of a number of professional standards reveal not only the lack of compliance with wage categories of NQF levels, but also the lack of continuity of methodology and specificity of ETKS / EKS, i.e. the principles and approaches on the basis of which the organization and the system of remuneration at most Russian enterprises was built [10]. The problem was not solved in the approved Branch Qualification Frameworks. For example, wage recommendations are contained in the Sectoral Tariff Agreement in

the elevator industry and the field of vertical transport of the Russian Federation for 2019-2021. The document stipulates compliance of qualification levels required by professional standards in the field of professional qualifications with wage categories set out in ETKS and EKS. The Agreement contains the recommended tariff schedule of the minimum wage for qualification levels. The range of tariff coefficients for determining the tariff is determined 1 (1 qualification level): 4.5 (9 qualification level). At the same time the industry organizations can keep their current system of payment.

Development and implementation of incentive schemes for employees to provide employment and implement the principle of lifelong learning is a necessary condition for the development of the National Qualifications System.

### CONCLUSIONS

Deepening imbalance between the labour market and the vocational education system necessitates the search for new institutions for their interaction. Dynamic labour market is characterized by multistructurality of the Russian economy, emergence of new professions in the development of the sixth technological order, digitalization, formation of network organizational structures, and other factors. Therefore, advanced professional training generates new knowledge, affects the development of the structure and efficiency of the national economy. This ensures mutual influence of the labour market and the education system in the creation of an innovative economy (knowledge economy). The regulatory role of the state is to establish clear rules of interaction between all the participants of the National Qualifications System.

Summarizing all mentioned above, it should be noted that establishment of a new National Qualifications System is regarded to be one of the most important areas of linking the labour market with the education system to promote economic growth and improve the welfare of the population. The importance of labour resources (human capital, human development), highly productive labour as a production factor should be addressed consistently with other factors of production, investment and innovation processes in the domestic economy.

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