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OPTIMIZATION OF THE ACTIVITY OF A HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN THE CONDITIONS OF CRISIS PHENOMENA: SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECT

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Abstract. The article highlights the interrelationship of financing the activities of a higher educational institution during political, military, economic or socio-cultural crises and the possible ways of optimizing the socio-economic sphere of management, which will allow, despite various crises, to continue working and have stable financial and economic indicators. Within the framework of the study, the interpretation of the definitions "socio-economic development", "educational management", "crisis phenomenon", "digital educational environment" was analysed, and it was established that the managerial activity of a head of a higher educational institution can be divided into five elements. The author determined that for socio-economic development in the conditions of crisis phenomena of the institution of higher education, it is necessary to intensify the provision of additional paid services in order to obtain additional profit, to introduce secondary processing of raw materials, administrative processes of economic management in the digital educational environment of the educational institution, to improve the organizational management of individual areas of activity, attract investments for development of the university space, make changes to the accounting policy, rationally use resources and bring objects into compliance with European infrastructure security conditions.

Key words: higher educational institution, crisis phenomena, modernization, development, socio-economic development, management activity.

Introduction. The search for innovative ways of socio-economic development of the educational environment and support of stable performance indicators of a higher educational institution, taking into account economic crises, cultural changes, political problems, social and organizational transformations taking place in Ukraine determine the relevance of the study.

The aim of the study. To theoretically substantiate the processes of socio-economic development of a higher educational institution in crisis conditions. In accordance with the purpose of the research, the following task was formulated: to analyse the ways of socio-economic development of a higher educational institution proposed by the author.

The following research methods were used to implement the goal and task of the research: terminological analysis (study of the conceptual apparatus of the research); systematization of scientific sources (study of the conditions of the researched problem); study and generalization of practical experience (acquaintance with leading practices, scientific developments and their provisions, notation of basic information); the method of expert assessment (analysis of the normative legal act, scientific works, practices of higher educational institutions and providing them with an assessment based on established norms and the real level of the issue); method of classification (ordering and classification of educational phenomena on the basis of their homogeneity, further relying on scientific knowledge).

Analysis of recent research and publications. V. Andrushchenko, V. Bobrytska, L. Grynevych, I. Ivanyuk, V. Kremen, S. Nikolayenko, V. Savelyev and others are actively developing the theoretical and methodological foundations of the educational policy of Ukraine. The scientific foundations of

educational management are the subject of research by L. Belov, S. Burdin, R. Vernydub, V. Gamanyuk, O. Zhabenko, S. Krysyuk, S. Nikolayenko, L. Prokopenko, L. Yurchuk, etc. T. Vasylyuk, N. Volkova, L. Kalinina, I. Lysokon, I. Makarenko, N. Protasova, M. Stepka, etc. investigate separate areas of educational development and management.

Main part. Higher education is one of the leading social institutions of the state, as it trains various specialists for implementation of the social order, taking into account the regional aspect and needs of the labour market. Starting from the 19th century, the processes of formation of modern nations and constant political, military, and social contradictions take place. Since the declaration of Ukraine's independence, there have been quite a few crisis phenomena, such as: the Transnistrian conflict (1990-1992), the Crimean crisis (1992–1994), the uprising on SKR-112 (1992), the conflict over the island of Tuzla (2003), the global economic crisis (2008), the Orange Revolution (2004–2005), the Revolution of Dignity (2013–2014), the annexation of Crimea (since 2014), the occupation of Donetsk and Lugansk regions (since 2014), the global COVID-19 pandemic (2019–2022), and Russia's military aggression against Ukraine (since 2014).

A crisis phenomenon should be understood as a situation that ultimately leads to the optimization or decline of the system due to the inability to adapt to new conditions (Grygoryeva, Mishchenko, 2017:78).

Each of the phenomena as a certain political, social, economic, spiritual or cultural phenomenon affects both the development of global processes and local, in particular, national educational doctrine. That is why, in modern interpretations, education has an integrated characteristic as a social institution, the basis of personality development and a set of knowledge acquisition processes (Vasylyuk, Lysokon, Razmolodchikova, Shymko, 2022:13). In state educational policy of Ukraine, the transformational processes are taking place, which characterize the tasks and goals of the development of the national educational system (Bobrytska, 2015:147), in particular in the field of socio-economic development.

The leading mission of the Ukrainian higher school and its institutes is to train highly qualified specialists capable of self-realization in various spheres of social life. The competitiveness of prepared future specialists directly depends on a number of factors – the level of professionalism of the academic staff, the involvement of practitioners and leading scientists in the educational process, the interaction of the university with stakeholders, the development of scientific and scientific and technical potential of the representatives of a higher educational institution, as well as the level of material and technical support.

The improvement of the system of higher education in Ukraine takes place taking into account domestic practices, the latest social challenges and tasks of the authorities with the aim of improving the efficiency of the system, overcoming regional peculiarities in the quality of educational services and organization of their provision, ensuring the right for self-government in management and transparent financing (Bobrytska, 2019:16).

In our opinion, the level of material and technical support and the quality of the infrastructure of the university play one of the leading roles, as the classroom fund of an educational institution, its digital educational environment, barrier-free environment create conditions for obtaining high-quality higher education. Currently, the search for optimal models of educational management, including the socio-economic direction, is of particular importance, because every crisis phenomenon makes adjustments to public administration and financing.

According to the Ukrainian researcher M. Stepka, it is the uncoordinated financing of the higher educational sector and its institutions that is the reason for slowing down their development, which has led to delay in the integration of the domestic educational environment into the European space of higher education (Stepka, 2012:46-47). So, for example, in the conditions of a global pandemic, the financing of the healthcare system has increased, during military aggression

there is a massive process of militarization and reduction of state budget expenditures for the functioning of the social and humanitarian sphere, in particular, the sphere of education. Under such conditions, financing of education is actually carried out according to the residual principle, and it is important to find new approaches and methods of socio-economic development of an institution of higher education.

In our opinion, the main possible proposals for socio-economic development of Ukrainian universities include:

- activation of profit opportunities from provision of additional paid services;
- introduction of secondary processing of raw materials;
- digitalization of administrative processes of managing the economy;
- modernization of organizational management of individual areas of activity;
- investment activities for development of university educational space;
- bringing infrastructure into line with European security conditions.

Before considering each of the proposed ways of socio-economic development of the university, it is worth paying attention to such definitions as educational management and socio-economic development. The concept of socio-economic development should be understood as the level of financial and economic development of a business entity, which affects the solution of socially significant problems at a certain level (Konchakovskiy, Boyko. 2017:1). At the same time, within the scope of the study, we are impressed by the interpretation of the definition of educational management as «set of processes regulated by authorized state and interested social institutions and directly related to decision-making functioning of the national system of education» (Lysokon, 2022:146).

It is worth noting that an important step for optimizing the administrative and economic activity of a higher educational institution is the essential replacement of concepts from "administrative-economic" to "social-economic" activity. Administrative and economic work, as a concept and direction of management activity, is the Soviet legacy of educational management. Under administrative and economic activity in the educational management system, it is customary to understand the technical maintenance of premises, carrying out cosmetic repairs of the classroom fund and ensuring the functioning of communal systems.

In leading European universities, this direction of management is called socio-economic activity, as it covers the solution of current and prospective administrative, security, infrastructural, organizational, planning-economic and legal issues. Currently, there is a gradual transition from certain elements of the Soviet model of higher educational management to the European one. Such a transition is an important condition for socio-economic transformation in the educational space of a higher school, as there is a conscious process of changing the principles and approaches to management.

Let's move on to the direct analysis of proposals for socio-economic development of higher educational institutions and start with ***the activation of opportunities for obtaining profit from provision of additional paid services***. In Ukraine, all state and communal educational institutions are non-profit organizations that cannot make a profit from their own activities. That is why there is a certain myth that higher educational institutions in Ukraine cannot make a profit from their own activities, but there is an opportunity for them to provide additional paid services.

According to the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On approval of the list of paid services that can be provided by educational institutions, other institutions and institutions of the system of education belonging to the state and communal form of ownership" (Postanova, 2010), higher educational institutions are able to provide paid services in the field of education, scientific and scientific and technical activities, international cooperation, household and housing and communal services, healthcare, recreation, leisure, health improvement, tourism, physical culture and sports. In general, according to this document (Postanova, 2010), the university has an opportunity to provide more than 100 different services.

The provision of additional educational services is a good opportunity to involve students of higher education in their implementation in the form of practical work or practical training in order to gain work experience and interaction with stakeholders in terms of providing them with services within the market value, which ensures the systematic replenishment of the special fund of the university, individual groups resources and a positive image among interested parties.

It is worth noting that in the realities of the development of the Ukrainian educational system and its financing during crisis phenomena, according to the residual principle, the development of the system of providing additional paid services is a good opportunity for universities to remain with stable financial and economic indicators.

No less interesting is *introduction of secondary processing of raw materials* on the basis of the university. The implementation of this system has two effects at once - economic and social. The economic benefit consists in: 1) paper sorting, its secondary internal use and further sent for recycling, which makes it possible to save money on the purchase of paper; 2) disposal of glass containers, batteries and plastic bottles allows you to receive additional funds for a special fund, which can be sent to energy modernization programs in future.

The social impact of waste sorting and recycling is the implementation of a number of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals until 2030, such as "Responsible consumption and production", "Climate change mitigation" and "Protection of terrestrial ecosystems" (UNU, 2015), which makes any university socially responsible to its students, employees, partners and local community.

Increasing attention to environmental issues has long been no surprise, as environmental protection is an active object of public discussions in various spheres of human life. Problems of human or society interaction with nature are now very common (Shedlovska, 2011:196). Therefore, one of the possible ways of solving this problem and promoting the formation of ecological culture among interested parties is the introduction of secondary processing of raw materials in a certain university centre.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, all educational institutions have faced the problem of transition from face-to-face learning to distance or mixed (face-to-face) learning. Despite the long process of introducing information and communication tools into the educational process, which lasted for about 20 years in Ukraine, the system of education was not ready for the process of mass digitization. However, within a fairly short period of time, the system of education has successfully adapted and continues to operate in a digital environment and makes maximum use of available resources.

Digitization of administrative processes in business management of the educational environment is a relevant issue, since the positive practice of transferring the educational process to the online format allows us to make assumptions about the possibility of digitalization of the university management process both in general and in its individual directions, in particular socio-economic.

In our opinion, equipping representatives of the management team and experts of the middle echelon of the economic support of an institution of higher education with means of information and communication technologies, the use of special software and computer tools as the main tool for quality management of property and economy allows to significantly increase the efficiency of the work of the institution of higher education. The use of online storage and databases will allow to store the necessary documentation in an electronic version. Long-term storage documents can be stored both in paper form and in a special database or special online resources.

In this case, within the scope of the study, we support the interpretation of the definition of the digital educational environment as «set of resources aimed at organizing and ensuring the educational process, implementation of scientific, technical and international activities, creating conditions for educational services and management of higher education». According to this definition, the digital educational environment is considered as a set of modules: scientific, educational, administrative

and informational module. The administrative module is represented by electronic document flow, management of the educational process, operational processes of administration, digital security and protection systems, etc. (Vasylyuk, Lysokon, Shymko, 2021:167).

The next proposal regarding the optimization of the socio-economic system of the educational environment, which needs clarification within the framework of the study, is *the modernization of organizational management of individual areas of activity*. This management activity should be divided into the following elements:

– informational (identification of a set of data on economic activity to be disclosed in the form of open data on the official website of the university and publication of information on the material and technical base);

– infrastructural (studying the issue of the efficiency of the use of premises, classroom fund, resource base, as well as carrying out measures to support the working condition of the objects and economic infrastructure, implementation of energy efficiency elements at workplaces);

– normative (revision and updating of some normative acts of the university in terms of administrative and economic support);

– organizational (creation of a clear action plan for development of the infrastructure and resource base of the educational environment, analysis of available resources for each object separately and as a whole for the university);

– technical (improvement of the work system of the main, construction, furniture, and metal shops, implementation of energy-efficient systems and alternative energy, rationalization of the use of movable and immovable property).

The identified elements reflect the current directions of management activities in the institution of higher education, which require correction or significant changes in order to successfully adapt the educational environment to complex socio-political conditions at the global or local levels.

The opening of the European educational space for Ukrainian universities becomes the basis for development of domestic educational and scientific and technical products, improving the quality of the organization and provision of educational services, reforming the socio-economic component of the management of the educational institution, in particular its investment activities. That is why investment activity in the university space is gaining momentum, being actively used in educational practice and developing in the discourse of educational and pedagogical sciences.

The success of the socio-economic development of a university depends on the ability to attract the necessary investments in time for implementation of planned projects or programs, the achievement of goals set, the development of a new educational product, etc. Investments in higher education act as a means of achieving goals and development, and partially become an element of financial activity.

Within the framework of the study, it is worth highlighting the main areas of investment activity of the university: educational, research, informational, social, international and infrastructural ones. The listed areas of educational investment affect the solution of the main issues of the higher educational institution, which consist in interaction with the community and the involvement of all interested persons in the management of the institution, the formation of a certain image of the university and the realization of its social mission.

The general development of state and society affects the development of the system of education, in particular the field of higher education. It is known that the investment of means and resources in education is a profitable decision, which is confirmed by the tendency of the educational sphere towards improvement and socio-economic growth (Chervatyuk, 2004: 472).

In our opinion, the organization and management of investment activities of a higher educational institution is a poorly researched issue, however, from the point of view of management, these processes significantly affect the life of the university, contributing to the modernization of material and technical support, improvement of quality of educational services, development of social infrastruc-

ture and accessibility, development of scientific and technical potential and integration of European educational practices in Ukrainian institutions of higher education.

The social significance of the investment activity lies in drawing attention to global and local educational needs that require solutions or arise during crisis phenomena. In this way, educational investment ensures the systematic development of an educational institution, creates a positive image for the business sector and implements the public-private-public management model.

Complex geopolitical circumstances that have arisen in the centre of Europe require bringing the *educational environment in line with European security conditions*. The concept of "security" is quite broad in scientific circles. Security issues can include any sphere of public life, because each of the spheres is represented by its own threats and risks of functioning. In the global sense, security should be interpreted as a state of security of a person, society or state (Chekalenko, 2017: 12).

Safe conditions for obtaining education are now the first priority of higher educational institutions. In our opinion, socio-economic development and safety in the educational space of the university are tangential, since it is important to determine the state of infrastructure facilities in terms of labour protection, civil protection and fire safety. Creating a safe educational environment and supporting its functioning require educational institutions to:

- equip the appropriate premises for shelter, taking into account the available resource base;
- develop special hazard warning software for students of higher education, academic staff and management;
- create of a unified security management system;
- introduce elements of individual safety for all participants of the educational process.

It should be understood that most of the infrastructure facilities in the field of higher education were built in the 19th and 20th centuries, their construction and technical standards are not designed for emergency situations, such as natural disasters, man-made disasters or military aggression. No amount of government funding will change these realities, but the implementation of European safety norms and principles will help to increase the level of safety in the educational environment.

Special attention should be paid to the creation of safe conditions in the educational environment, as well as psychological and pedagogical support. An urgent issue is the need to determine the psychosocial properties of the educational environment of the institution of higher education, their evaluation and readiness to provide appropriate services to its students and employees.

We agree with the opinion about the importance of the problem of psychological safety in an educational institution, which is determined by practical tasks related to the development of technologies for psychological, social and pedagogical support of all participants in the educational process (Artemyev, Gura, 2017:22).

Conclusions. In educational policy, there is continuous development, which can be characterized by the development of new management models and organizational transformations that contribute to the socio-economic transformation of a higher educational institution. The socio-economic development of the educational environment should be focused on safe organization of the educational process, provision of educational services, control over the quality of education, management of various areas of activity, variability of providers of the educational process, the latest scientific and technical discoveries, etc. In today's realities, Ukrainian higher education and its institutions must be transformed in order to continue to function effectively and fulfil the social mission. Educational institutions that actively implement European educational practices of university environment management and have been able to successfully adapt to today's challenges will be in greater demand on the educational services market.

Education is a universal social institution, which has to function despite the crisis phenomena faced by humanity. The main problem in the development of the educational space of higher education in Ukraine is the unpreparedness for change, but at the same time external factors have a direct

impact, and therefore adaptation to the new conditions is only a matter of time. In the realities currently shaking humanity and the Ukrainian people, higher education is gradually shifting from the public sector to an independent sector of government. By law, they are granted the possibility to conduct entrepreneurial activities or parallel financial and economic activities, apart from the educational process. That is why the success of universities not only as centres of socio-cultural, scientific or educational activities lies in their readiness to implement innovative management models, including socio-economic ones.

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