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## The history of the formation of the system of «diploma mill» in Kazakhstan

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the history of the emergence of «diploma mill» in domestic education. The authors do not doubt the relevance of the study, since the last few years the state has been fighting against unscrupulous private educational institutions that have put the issuance of dubious diplomas on a large stream. The authors demonstrate the history of the emergence of the term diploma mill. It is impossible not to agree with the opinion of the President of the country, K. K. Tokayev, who believes that such educational institutions undermine the reputation of the education system in the country and the state itself. The president also said that even after graduating from more serious universities, young people cannot get a job in their specialty – this is a direct indicator of the quality of education.

The authors note that in Kazakhstan in the 1990s there was a sharp transition from state ownership to private ownership, more commonly known as privatization. This phenomenon has particularly affected the sphere of education, when, along with the traditional ones, non – state educational institutions began to arise and develop rapidly – kindergartens, gymnasiums, colleges, lyceums, but above all-universities. Accordingly, the competition between these two segments of the educational services market has increased.

In the pursuit of income, private universities have forgotten about the quality of education, which has caused their closure over the past few years. Despite the periodic cleaning of the educational field, not conscientious private universities still exist, but their activities are a matter of time.

It is necessary to understand that the main key to the success and improvement of the quality of Kazakhstan's higher education, regardless of the form of ownership, was and remains competition. With the only condition that competition should be healthy, devoid of protectionism on the part of state bodies. And who will ultimately stay afloat in the domestic market of educational services will be decided by such qualities as creativity, innovation, and dedication.

**Keywords:** «diploma mill», higher education, reforms in education, quality of education, private universities, competitive environment, university graduates, diplomas, accreditation institutes, university rating.

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### Introduction

For a detailed and detailed study of the task, let us turn to the history of the emergence of the term diploma mill. Diploma mill or degree mill is a company or organization that does not have the appropriate accreditation (state or from an authorized agency), declaring itself a higher educational institution, awarding, and issuing invalid academic degrees and diplomas of education for a certain fee [1].

The most notable feature of diploma factories is that they do not have accreditation from the state or a recognized national accreditation agency, although they claim to have passed full accreditation of educational programs. Such educational institutions, on their websites, post fake information about passing accreditation from national and foreign agencies.

Another usual method of diploma factories is a statement that they are recognized by international organizations such as UNESCO. Although UNESCO and organizations close to it do not

have the authority to accredit educational institutions and therefore issue warnings about this.

Very often, diploma factories take a name close to a well-known higher educational institution as their name. For example, the University of Shaftesbury, the University of Durham (the name completely coincides with the real Durham University), the University of Redding (the name almost coincides with the real University of Reading and the University of Suffield (the name almost coincides with the real University of Sheffield) appeared in the UK.

Compared to real educational institutions, the requirements for students in diploma factories are significantly reduced, if at all, and the issuance of a diploma takes place practically without training.

In diploma factories, communication with the teacher is minimized, or there is no communication at all. In other cases, teachers are involved only for marking grades.

The teachers themselves can be graduates of the same diploma factory or get a degree there. Or even if they were educated at an accredited educational institution, they teach subjects not in the field in which they specialize.

Since there is no special need for teachers in diploma factories, there is accordingly no necessary infrastructure (libraries, laboratories, etc.), there is no staff, there is no research activity and there are no scientific publications [2].

The purpose of the study. To analyze the evolution of the emergence of "diploma mill" in Kazakhstan.

### **The history of the issue**

A. J. Angulo (Professor of Education and History at Winthrop University, South Carolina) in his monograph: "Diploma Mills: How For-Profit Colleges Stiffened Students, Taxpayers, and the American Dream", analyzes the role of for-profit colleges and universities (for-profit colleges and universities / FPCU) in the United States.

In the chapter "Commerce", the author describes the origins of the formation of the commercial sector in education. Commercial colleges appeared in the middle of the XIX century along with non-profit public and private (non-profit private) 1 American universities in the context of a sharp increase in interest in entrepreneurship and the emergence of a wide demand for teaching new skills. In 1895, " more than 96 thousand students entered the FPCU...

In the same year, non-profit colleges and universities accepted 97 students to business programs" Commercial colleges initially positioned themselves as conductors of practical and professional education that is not available within the walls of traditional educational institutions. However, already in the XIX century, many of them began to be criticized for awarding false degrees, minimizing the educational process, unfair advertising, etc.

Angulo points out that the leading factor in the "spontaneous" period of development of commercial colleges was the lack of any standards in the field of higher education. The situation began to change in the second half of the XIX-early XX centuries, when the professionalization of scientists, doctors, teachers, businessmen caused a demand for common standards both in the professional activity itself and in preparation for it. As professional organizations and regulatory bodies were formed, institutes for accreditation of educational programs and universities appeared.

"Diploma mill" are a dysfunctional phenomenon in relation to the public system, the result of the weakening of state regulation of higher education while maintaining a stable flow of guaranteed state injections. At the same time, Angulo implicitly follows an institutionalist interpretation of the activities of organizations, which limits the space of possible solutions for any actor to a minimum number of options. In this regard, even the best intentions of commercial universities will be in vain, if there is a thirst for profit in combination with the existing institutional order [3].

## **Methods**

When writing a scientific article, the authors used the following methods: methods of theoretical research, where mental activity prevailed, i.e., with the understanding of empirical material and its processing. At the theoretical level, the internal structure, and laws of the development of these phenomena, their interaction and conditionality were revealed.

The historical (historical-logical) research method was also used, which was used in the construction of theoretical knowledge about the history of the "diploma mill". The historical method is based on the study of the real history of an object in its concrete diversity, zigzags and accidents, special and individual manifestations. The logical method reflects reality in its natural development, reveals the objective logic of the object's development based on the study of the higher stages of its development. The logical coincides with the historical: it is historical, purified from accidents and taken in its essential laws.

## **Discussion**

The history of the formation of the system of "diploma factories" in Kazakhstan is not so long. After gaining independence, and the penetration of market relations into the spheres of life, the privatization of real estate, the appearance of the first businessmen, it became obvious that the higher education sector is waiting for the same fate. Not only private schools, colleges and universities began to open in Kazakhstan. For a certain period, they opened, existed, expanded, opened branches of their universities in the countries of the near and far abroad.

The fight against the so-called "diploma factories" in Kazakhstan began in 2000. The sharp growth of paid departments of state universities, along with the growth of private education, has created a competitive environment for commercial education, the situation in which is getting worse. The struggle for an applicant is a struggle for income. The market of university educational services reaches 112 billion tenge, of which almost half-51.3 billion tenge is mastered by private universities.

In private universities, the indicators are about 23 billion tenge, 24.6 and 3.7 billion, respectively, and in general 51.3 billion tenge. These amounts are differentiated depending on the form of training, regional characteristics. But the ratio of income sources determines the price of the issue in the educational services market, characterizes the intensity of passions.

Unfortunately, several educational institutions, regardless of their forms of ownership, have joined in an unannounced pursuit of income, which results in competition for popular professions - legal, economic.

Currently, the total share of the two groups of specialties "economics" and " law " is more than one third, or 37.5 percent of all students. Such a large-scale training, on the one hand, indicates an increase in the mass character of these professions, on the other - their popularity, which contributes to an oversupply in the labor market on the part of young lawyers and economists.

It is quite natural that such a situation caused a negative reaction of the Head of State, who was forced to interfere in this problem repeatedly and harshly, which led to the optimization of universities. As a result, several private universities were enlarged through mergers and mergers, and some students were transferred to state universities.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan has repeatedly noted that the number of universities conducting training in these specialties is inadequate to the number of teachers available to them. The difficulties relate to the full-time part-time work adopted in accordance with the Labor and Civil Codes, with the law on education, which allows working under a contract in several universities at the same time.

The problem is not that teachers can work in a particular university. There is no need to affect their legal rights. However, their inclusion in the staff of the university is often a formal, limited act that allows unreasonably increasing the admission of students to a particular specialty.

Recent inspections, as well as serious work on compiling a rating of universities, have revealed an unsightly picture when there are teachers in certain specialties, especially legal ones, according to the standards that do not correspond to the number of students. As a result, the teaching staff of lawyers was divided into numerous universities, which led to unfair competition and the closure of virtually all specialized law schools. The pursuit of the number of students causes serious damage to the quality, is accompanied by an overload of classrooms, a shortage of textbooks, the unavailability of computers, rare meetings with professors only at special events.

The path that the Kazakh education system has been following in recent years was taken by the West at the beginning of the twentieth century. There were diploma factories in the USA when you could become a doctor in six months. In Kazakhstan, in the 1990s, "diploma khans" flourished. In the district center of Shieli, Kyzylorda region, in 1998, specialists in international law were trained in the teacher's apartment after school. The fight against fake diplomas that harmed the country's economy began, and universities were re-certified, which became a profitable business for the oligarchs from education.

Back in 2019, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev instructed to close unscrupulous universities engaged in printing diplomas, noting that the corresponding work is difficult because of the resistance of influential people involved in profitable business.

50 universities are enough for the country (at the beginning of the 2020/2021 academic year, 129 universities were operating in the Republic of Kazakhstan: 33 state, 92 private and 4 with a foreign form of ownership).

According to the authors, at the legislative level, it is necessary to prescribe a requirement for universities to increase the rate of settling of the teaching staff to 80 percent from the current 50. Give a transition period of 5-7 years. This will increase the value of scientists who can give knowledge, their salaries will increase, and those universities where teachers give lectures on Wikipedia will die out. At the same time, the expert believes that the heads of enterprises who are ready to spend time for the training and selection of future personnel should be included among the settled ones:

- Practitioners who have high performance indicators should have such a right. For example, successful lawyers, well-known expert analysts, as well as other professionals in their field who have received recognition in their industry. Moreover, in our reality, employers still retrain yesterday's university graduates.

Another problem that needs to be dealt with is the devaluation of the assessment of students' knowledge.

- A person with a red diploma can turn out to be a complete zero in our work. In the American GPA assessment system (the average score of a certificate or diploma), the knowledge of a graduate obtained in a competitive struggle is shown – in some universities there is a practice of a limit on high scores. The second function of the GPA is to give signs to the labor market about the competence of the graduate: the diploma indicates the results of industrial practices and completed courses.

The key problem of Kazakhstan's education is the formal credit system of education. Recall that this training is based on students' own choice of disciplines, where credit is a unit of measurement of the amount of academic work. It is no secret that students study within the strict framework of the trajectory set by the university, which is difficult, troublesome and expensive to change. The choice of disciplines is extremely limited, there is no de facto system of individual training. It remained a group one.

For example, in the United States, you choose the content of the educational program yourself, you can change it arbitrarily. Moreover, for the first 2 years you have a real opportunity to study the disciplines that interest you, so that after that you can decide on further specialization. Your classmates in this system are "one-time", and not permanent, as with us. With this approach, corruption risks are reduced – the student is responsible only for himself, collective "divorces" of sessions are excluded, and the teacher cannot manipulate students. By the way, in the West, 2 strict indicators are imposed on teachers themselves – scientific performance and an anonymous assessment of students.

The government should take the strictest measures against universities, including private ones, which have turned into offices, let's be honest, for printing and issuing diplomas, " Tokayev said. He

added that such educational institutions undermine the reputation of the education system in the country and the state itself. Tokayev also said that even after graduating from more serious universities, young people cannot get a job in their specialty – this is a direct indicator of the quality of education.

Many students go to work in parallel with their studies. "This means that the need for distance learning is increasing," Tokayev believes. He believes that if Nazarbayev's idea of creating one powerful higher education institution and two colleges in each region of Kazakhstan is implemented, young people will not have to migrate in search of better conditions and leave far from home [4].

Today, it is obvious that higher education, which is one of the most important driving forces of the changes taking place in the economy and at the same time reflects all the consequences of these changes, opens new prospects, and faces new problems and tasks.

What we have today:

Higher education is becoming more and more widespread.

There is a dynamic diversification of higher education by institutional forms, levels, and content.

The expansion of the scale of higher education sharply raises the problem of the quality of education and the problem of financing the growing scale of higher education.

The trend of internationalization of higher education is gaining strength.

• The range of educational services is being expanded.

Students' access to educational services and educational databases has been facilitated.

The academic mobility of both students and faculty is growing.

The process of international unification of specialties and qualifications is being activated.

The geography of training centers is expanding.

• Age restrictions for obtaining higher education are removed.

• There is an active perception of the idea of "Studying for life" by society.

There is a certain rapprochement of cultures.

At the same time, we should also note the negative aspects that are serious challenges for the global higher education system today:

Inequality of access to higher education persists in different regions of the world and social strata of society.

The outflow of highly qualified specialists and academic staff from developing countries to developed countries is increasing.

The number of pseudo-higher educational institutions, market "diploma mill" is growing.

There is a preservation in the curricula of outdated academic disciplines in terms of content.

With the growing mass character of higher education, threats to its quality are growing.

Almost everywhere, the role of the state in the formation and implementation of educational policy is weakening.

In several countries, nationalist pressure on the entire sphere of education, including higher education, is becoming noticeable.

The analysis of the state of the world system of higher education allows us to identify several notable trends in this system:

Strengthening the role of higher education as the main means and driving force for the development of the intellectual and economic potential of society, both in developed and developing countries.

The formation of higher education as an active participant in the process of globalization.

The emergence of new institutional structures of higher education:

\* network universities •

\* corporate universities,

\* multinational educational structures,

\* educational structures of media corporations.

The frank transformation of knowledge into a commodity.



The emergence of various types of commercial partnerships in the field of higher education (for example, franchising).

Reduction of direct state funding of higher education in many countries.

Intensive development of new forms of higher education, such as electronic, distance, etc.

The increasing scale and changing nature of international mobility in the higher education system.

• Disordered growth of various documents and certificates of professional qualifications and education [5, p. 14].

I am very pleased with the innovations in the system of domestic education, so «According to Article 39 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan «On Education», since 2021, higher education institutions, with the exception of the Academy of Justice, military, special educational institutions, educational organizations implementing educational programs of higher and (or) postgraduate education in the field of healthcare, have a license to engage in educational activities and have been accredited by accreditation bodies included in the register of recognized accreditation bodies, issue documents on education of their own sample. The form and requirements for filling out documents on education of their own sample are determined by universities, considering the basic requirements for the content of documents on education of their own sample, «the press service of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan reported [6].

The department clarified that the main requirements for the content of documents on education of its own sample have now been approved. «At the same time, amendments were made to the decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 1162 of December 31, 2015, which provides to produce state-issued diplomas by the Banknote Factory for the Academy of Justice, military, special and medical educational institutions. In this regard, universities independently determine the supplier of printed products and produce diplomas of education of their own sample with the use of protective signs and a QR code, «the ministry said.

The Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan has been fighting against unscrupulous universities since the first days, under his leadership, the ministry is digitalizing diplomas to prevent workers with fake documents from entering the country's labor market [7].

#### Conclusion

Based on the above, the authors concluded that the state needs to continue the fight against "diploma factories".

It is obvious that in these conditions, the ratings of universities play a special role. In many countries, their development and compilation by independent rating agencies has become a long-standing tradition. Objectively conducted by highly qualified specialists, professionals in their field, the examination allows us to determine the list of leading universities according to several indicators that consider the opinion of employers and the public. This approach is more objective than the self-promotion of individual educational institutions that give out wishful thinking. In Kazakhstan, such an experience has been used and implemented over the past few years, and the national Atameken rating can be attributed here.

Kazakhstan has actively joined the process of creating a competitive education system. Several relevant program documents were adopted, the Head of State conceptually outlined a course for creating a highly effective system of personnel training, accelerated integration into the world educational space.

#### Conclusions

The current active discussion on the problems of functioning and development of higher education in the world forming the "new economy" allows us to draw three fundamentally important conclusions:

First — the problem of the functioning and development of higher education is recognized by the world community as one of the key development problems.

The second is that there is currently not sufficiently convincingly justified and accepted by the world community system concept for the development of higher education that meets the conditions and requirements of the "new economy".

The third is the development and implementation of such a concept, a mega-task facing the world intellectual community.

All the above about the higher education system imposes new requirements for the formation of professional educational programs and requires a new approach to training specialists, especially in applied universities. Highlighting the problem of training specialists in applied universities, we proceed from the fact that it is specialists trained in applied universities that make up the main backbone of the professional community of the real economic environment, it is on them that the success of the «new economy» primarily depends. The analysis of the state of applied higher education in many countries allows us to highlight one rather general point, in our opinion, a negative one. The line between the training of specialists in applied universities and universities of the classical university profile is blurred.

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### **Қазақстандағы «диплом фабрикалары» жүйесінің қалыптасу тарихы**

**Аңдатпа.** Мақала отандық білім берудегі «диплом фабрикаларының» пайда болу тарихына арналған. Зерттеудің өзектілігі авторлардың күмәнін туғызбайды, соңғы бірнеше жылдардан бері мемлекет күмәнді дипломдардың берілуін үлкен ағымға қойған жауапсыз жеке оқу орындарымен күресуде. Авторлар «диплом фабрикасы» (ағылш. diploma mill) терминінің пайда болу тарихын ашып көрсетеді. Мұндай оқу орындарының мемлекеттегі білім беру жүйесінің беделіне және мемлекеттің өзіне нұқсан келтіреді деп есептейтін президент Қ.Қ.Тоқаевтың пікірімен келіспеуге болмайды. Президент сондай -ақ, жоғары оқу орындарын бітіргеннен кейін де жастар өз мамандығы бойынша жұмысқа тұра алмайтынын айтты - бұл білім сапасының тікелей көрсеткіші.

Авторлар Қазақстанда 1990 жылдары мемлекеттік меншіктен жеке меншікке көшу белең алғанын, басқаша айтқанда жекешелендірудің күрт өскенін атап өтеді. Бұл құбылыс білім беру

саласына қатты әсер етті, бұл кезде дәстүрлі мекемелермен қатар мемлекеттік емес білім беру мекемелері – балабақшалар, гимназиялар, колледждер, лицейлер, ең алдымен жоғары оқу орындары пайда болып, тез дами бастады. Осыған сәйкес білім беру қызметтері нарығының осы екі сегменті арасындағы бәсекелестік өсті.

Табыс көзін қуған жеке жоғары оқу орындарының білім сапасына мән бермеуі, олардың соңғы бірнеше жыл ішінде жабылуына себеп болды. Білім беру саласының мерзімді тазартылуына қарамастан, әлі де жауапсыз жоғарғы оқу орындары бар, алайда олардың белсенділігі уақыт еншісінде ғана.

Қазақстандық жоғарғы мектептің табысы мен сапасының жоғарылауының басты кепілі әрдайым бәсекелестік болғандығын және бола беретіндігін түсіну қажет. Бәсекелестік мемлекеттік органдар тарапынан протекционизмсіз, кінәратсыз болуы керек деген жалғыз шартпен ғана. Нәтижесінде, білім беру қызметтерінің ішкі нарығында кім қалатынын шығармашылық, жаңашылдық пен өз ісіне берілгендік сияқты қасиеттер анықтайды.

**Түйін сөздер:** «дипломдар фабрикалары», жоғары білім, білім беру реформалары, білім сапасы, жеке жоғары оқу орындары, бәсекелестік орта, жоғары оқу орындарының түлектері, дипломдар, аккредитация институттары, жоғары оқу орындарының рейтингі.

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### **История формирования системы «фабрик дипломов» в Казахстане**

**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена истории возникновения «фабрик дипломов» в отечественном образовании. Авторы не сомневаются в актуальности исследования, так как последние несколько лет в государстве ведется борьба с недобросовестными частными учебными заведениями, которые поставили выдачу сомнительных дипломов на большой поток. Авторы демонстрируют историю возникновения термина фабрика дипломов (англ. diploma mill). Нельзя не согласиться с мнением президента страны К.К.Токаевым, который считает, что такие учебные заведения подрывают репутацию системы образования в стране и самого государства. Также президент заявил, что даже после окончания более серьезных вузов молодежь не может устроиться на работу по специальности – это прямой показатель качества образования.

Авторы отмечают, что в Казахстане в 1990-х годах произошел резкий переход от государственной собственности к частной, больше известный как приватизация. Данный феномен особенно сильно затронул сферу образования, когда наряду с традиционными, собственно, и стали возникать и быстро развиваться негосударственные образовательные учреждения – детские сады, гимназии, колледжи, лицеи, но прежде всего – вузы. Сообразно тому возросла конкуренция между этими двумя сегментами рынка образовательных услуг.

В погоне за доходами частные вузы забыли про качество образования, это и стало причиной закрытия их в последние годы. Несмотря на периодические зачистки образовательного поля, недобросовестные частные вузы все еще существуют, но их деятельность — это вопрос времени.

Необходимо понять, что главным залогом успешности и повышения качества казахстанской высшей школы, независимо от формы собственности, была и остается конкуренция. С тем лишь условием, что конкуренция должна быть здоровой, лишенной протекционизма со стороны государственных органов. И кто в итоге останется на плаву, на отечественном рынке образовательных услуг, будут решать такие качества, как креативность,



новаторство и самоотдача.

**Ключевые слова:** «фабрики дипломов», высшее образование, реформы в образовании, качество образования, частные вузы, конкурентная среда, выпускники вузов, дипломы, институты аккредитации, рейтинг вузов.

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