

Educational Quality Standards and Their Uninterrupted Monitoring as a Condition for Ensuring Sustainable Development of Education .

Kuzmak Olena

kuzmakolena3007@gmail.com

Doctor of Economics, Lutsk National Technical University

(Lutsk, Ukraine)

ABSTRACT

In the conditions of globalization and sustainable development, there is an acute need to improve and restructure the educational sector of Ukraine. The key issue is the development of internal and external quality assurance systems for higher education, improving the quality of educational services, forming an effective management system that takes into account the specifics of ensuring, taking into account, and satisfying interests between stakeholders and universities. The process of measuring and improving the quality of educational services is researched. An algorithm for continuous measurement of the quality of provided educational services by the university is proposed. Based on the analysis of indicators of quality of provided educational services and profitability of relationships with students, we proposed a matrix of relationships between universities and students, which allows the university to choose a customer-oriented strategy of behavior in the market of educational services.

KEYWORDS: quality of education, European ESG standards, quality of educational services, sustainable development of education, European Higher Education Area, education quality monitoring, system of internal assurance of university education quality.

Received: 09/02/2022

Revised : 15/02/2022

Accepted: 07/03/2022

1. Introduction. In the context of globalization and sustainable development, there is an acute need to improve and restructure all sectors of the economy and in particular the education sector. For almost two decades, ensuring the quality of higher education based on European standards and ESG recommendations has been considered the basis for the development of the European higher education space [1[p.18], 2]. In Ukraine, this issue has only recently begun to receive considerable attention. Enshrined in the Bologna Declaration in 1999., it has become, in essence, the mission of the Bologna Process and the main goal of structural reforms. With each subsequent communique, the issue of quality assurance not only remains one of the key ones, but it is also established, expanded, and detailed. Quality assurance by the ESG Standards further remains one of the three main tasks, confirmed at the Paris Ministerial Conference in May 2018 [1, 2]. Some aspects of the problem of quality assurance management in higher education are covered in the works of domestic and foreign scientists, in particular C. Sattler, K. Sonntag [2], George Kwadwo Anane, Michael Addaney [3], Finnikov T.V., Tereshchuk V.I. [4], etc. These scientists have made a great contribution to the development of theoretical and practical aspects of quality management in higher education.

The purpose of the research: scientific and methodological substantiation of the organizational and economic mechanism of integration of the quality of higher education into the European educational space. To achieve this goal the following tasks are solved: the state of the internal system of assurance of higher education quality in the universities of Ukraine is researched.

2. Proposed Techniques / Algorithms . In the process of research we used general scientific methods, in particular: monographic – with the theoretical justification of the topic, the principles of diversification and decentralization, measures and tools of the mechanism of integration of higher education system in Ukraine; graphic – to visualize the proposed algorithm for continuous quality measurement, scientific generalization – in the development of proposals for improving the system of internal quality assurance of education in Ukrainian universities. The information base of the study was static data, scientific works of domestic and foreign authors, electronic resources presented on the Internet, etc.

3. Results. Since the education sector is a key element of the existence of any state, then systematic and high-quality management is a component of socio-economic policy as a driving force. Accordingly, the key issue is the development of internal and external systems of assurance of higher education quality, improving the quality of educational services, the formation of an effective management system that takes into account the specifics of ensuring consideration and satisfaction of interests between stakeholders and universities.

Ensuring high-quality educational services has become a direction of socio-economic development of most countries of the world. For Ukraine, the desire for European and global integration of educational space is relevant, which requires the development of new regulations, directions, and institutional framework based on the latest educational technologies, which improves the quality of educational services focused on the interests of higher education seekers. Quality is one of the most economic categories, which is used in the case of choosing a mechanism to satisfy different needs, in assessing the final results or their separate operations, in providing services and development strategies, reserves of efficiency increasing [5, p. 89].

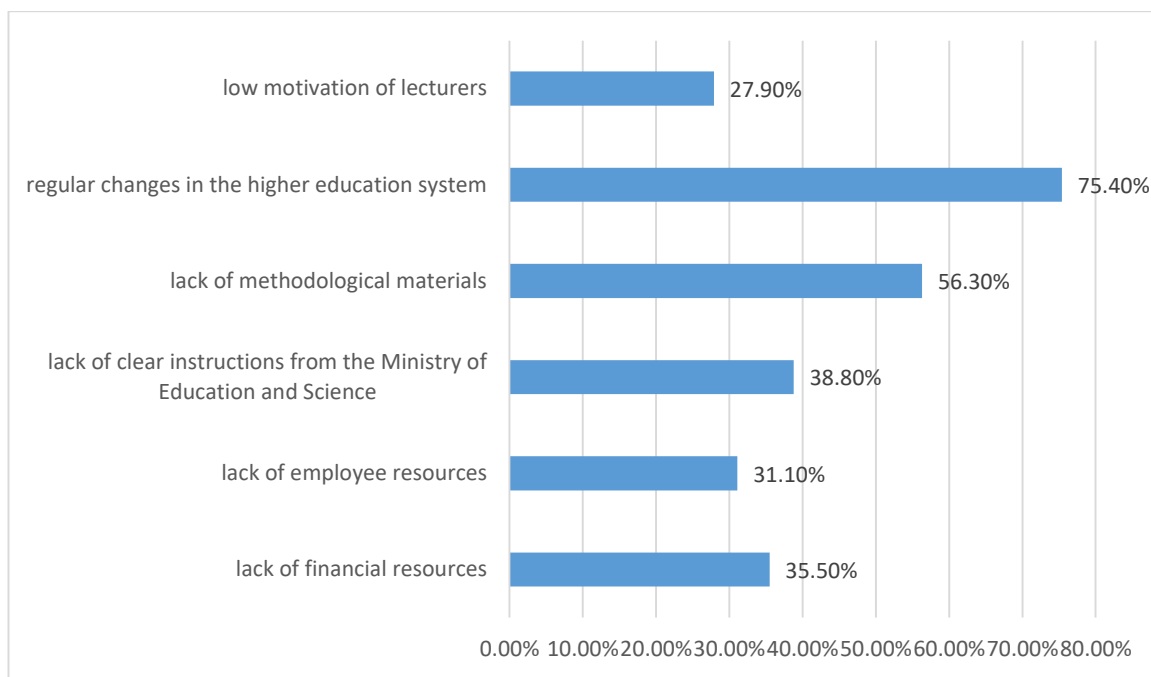
For many centuries, the problem of quality is the subject of research by scientists in various fields, including philosophers and economists, designers and engineers, sociologists and political scientists, biologists and ecologists, and educators. Currently, quality is the main factor in the structure of the education system. If all the variety of problems researched and solved by mankind can be divided into global (those that affect the interests of all mankind) and local (those that affect the interests of individual regions, states, organizations and relevant at a given time), the problem of quality must be attributed to rank global.

From the point of view of philosophy, quality is interpreted as an essential definiteness, due to which the considered object (in our research – educational service) is this and not another object, and its constituent elements (quality of educational services) characterize the specifics that allows to distinguish one object among others (in the presence of certain qualities, the level of their formation). So, the quality is commonly called the property of the object, which composes its stable, constant characteristic – one that reveals its essence.

Quality assurance is a control tool that requires planning, namely the definition of goals. A key element of this is the paramount factors such as budget allocation, teaching, and research management. However, quality cannot be determined without goals. Accelerators of increasing interest in quality and standards, which is manifested in the rapid development of higher education area, increasing its value to the public and private investors, are the need to protect consumers in the conditions of changing quality of higher education; taking into account the interests of students, as well as employers and society; facilitating access to quality education; the paramount importance of institutional autonomy, which is restrained by the recognition that it leads to additional responsibilities.

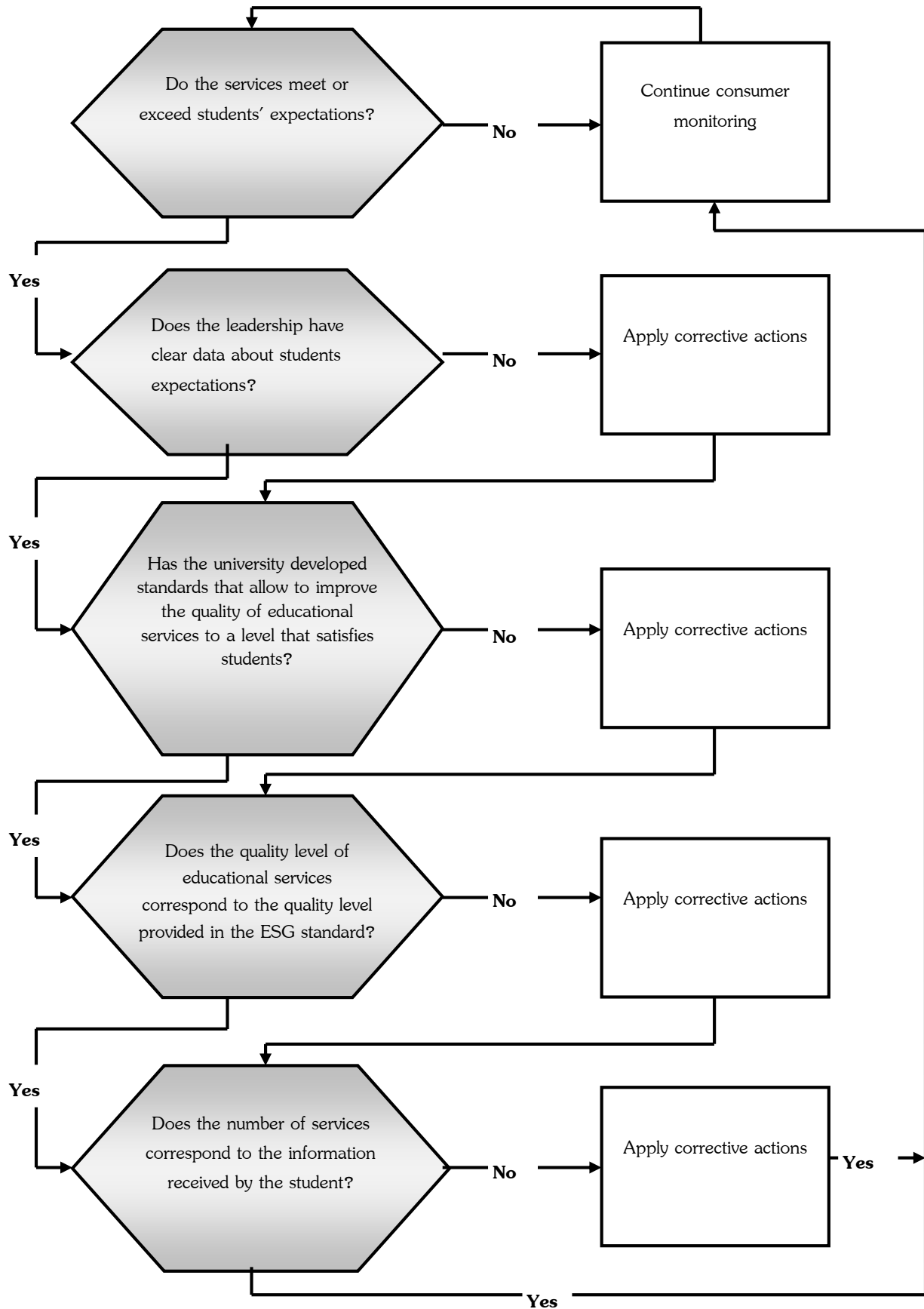
In the most general form, theoretical and methodological requirements for the quality of educational services are presented in the quality management system ISO 9000: 2000. According to international standards, the quality of educational services is considered as an integral characteristic, a generalized set of opportunities to meet the requirements (to realize needs) of customers and other stakeholders. According to this concept, the basis for the quality of the functioning of the communal sphere should compose a system of contracts at all stages of the reproduction cycle between producers and consumers of services for the effective functioning of the market mechanism in the industry.

It should be noted that out of 50 Ukrainian universities, 183 respondents have quality certificates, 46 states, 3 private, and 1 municipal. If we analyze the situation in terms of specialization of Higher Education Institutions, the most active are medical and technical institutions (50% and 45.2% of institutions in the relevant categories are certified). On the other hand, only 14.3% of classical universities can "boast" of passing the certification [6]. Most universities that do not have certificates explain this by the lack of government or departmental requirements for the obligation of such actions. Twice less part refers to the lack of necessary funds. Unfortunately, the possibility of pointing one's own reason, which was used by 44 institutions, did not demonstrate any rational explanations or reasons (except for one institution, which referred to its status as temporarily displaced) [6].



Pic. 1 Difficulties faced by Ukrainian universities in the process of implementing an internal quality assurance system [6].

At the same time, it should be noted that in the research of B. Mittal was found that satisfaction affects consumer loyalty to the company that providing services: the lowest dissatisfaction guarantees disloyalty, and only maximum satisfaction ensures loyalty. Full customer satisfaction is a determining factor in the formation of a loyal attitude, but it requires regular research to track the dynamics of customer satisfaction and rapid elimination of inconsistencies [7, p. 56]. The process of measuring and improving the level of quality of educational services involves the regular diagnosis of the discrepancy between expectations and perceptions of services received by the consumer. Feedback allows the university administration to quickly respond to the assessments of higher education seekers about the consumed services, improve them, make services as attractive as possible for consumers (pic. 2.). If expectations of the perception of educational services provided by the university turn out lower than expected, it is necessary to consider inconsistencies, identify the causes of their occurrence and carry out the corrective action to eliminate the identified causes.



Pic. 2. Algorithm for continuous measurement of the quality of educational services provided by the university

New research (coordination) conducted at the next stage of the process determines the degree of success of corrective actions to eliminate the identified inconsistencies. Finally, the processes of measuring the level of quality of educational services and their improvement should be organized as a continuous process. Remembering the gaps described above and striving to provide high-quality educational services, university leadership must regularly improve the quality of provided educational services, guided by high ESG Standards, create a system of control over providing of the educational services, a system of complaint satisfaction, and pay special attention to the professional development of lecturers.

Conducted research of student satisfaction will help to improve the characteristics of services and to improve the quality of service, will help strengthen the university's competitive position in the market and lead to the establishment of a long-term partnership between the university and the student beneficial for both sides, even after graduation from university, as an employer or other stakeholder.

During the research of satisfaction with educational services, as already mentioned, it is necessary to take into account the interests of the universities themselves. The interests of universities can be represented as follows:

$$Q_{fact} = P_i / C_i , \quad (1)$$

where P_i – the price that the student is ready to pay for educational services;

C_i – the actual cost of educational services for the consumer;

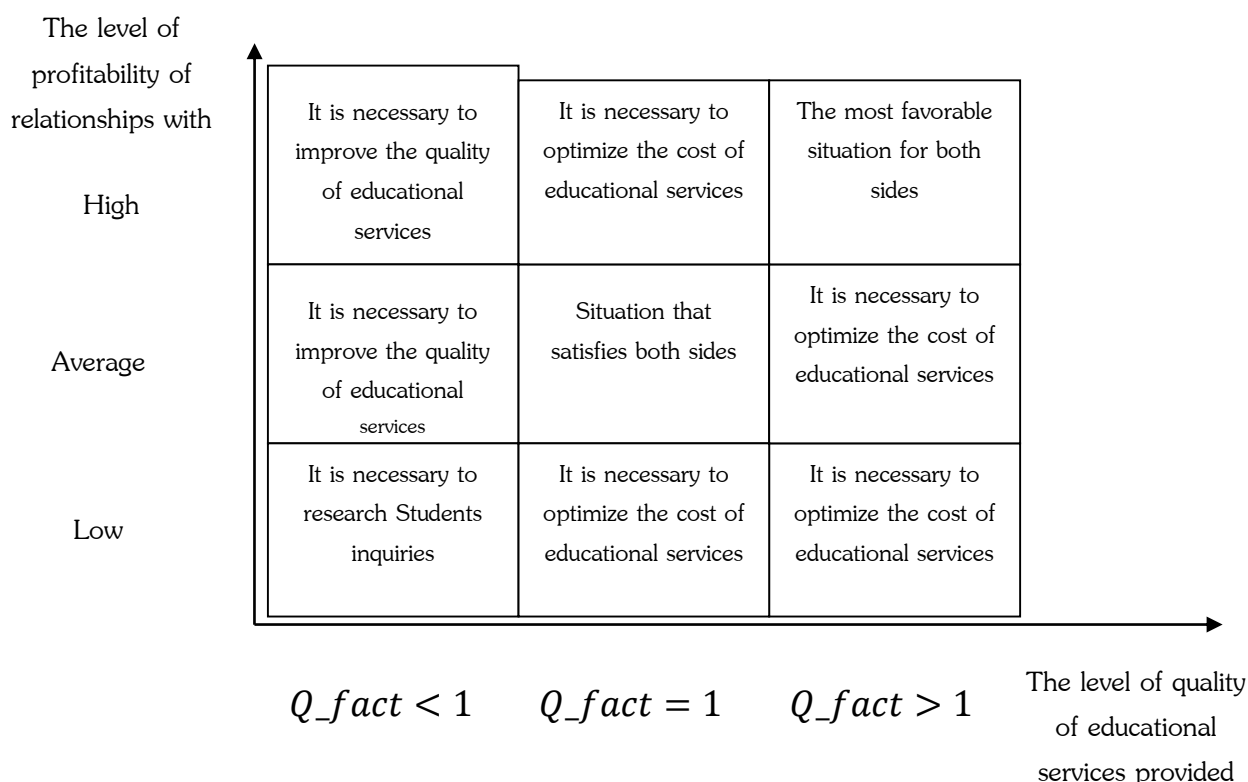
Q_{fact} – the quality of provided educational services, the following condition must be fulfilled:

$$Q_{fact} = P_i / C_i , \quad (2)$$

where N – the normative cost of educational services, the parameters of which are fixed by the Ministry of Education and Science.

Based on the analysis of indicators of quality of provided educational services and profitability of relationships with students, we can build a matrix of relationships between the university and students, which allows the university to choose a customer-oriented strategy of behavior in the market of educational services (pic.3.).

An important point when choosing a strategy to reduce the cost of services is to maintain a given level of quality. This is possible based on improving the productivity and quality of teaching, the implementation of an effective system of material stimulation. The strategy of improving the quality of educational services should be implemented while maintaining the cost of provided services and based on compliance with labor discipline, improving the efficiency of organizational and managerial activities. In general, the growth rate of the quality of educational services should be higher than the growth rate of the cost provided of services.



Pic. 3. Matrix of university relations in the context of providing educational services[Compiled by the author]

The third gap that arises in the process of providing educational services is the gap between the developed regulations, ESG standards, rules, and the process of their implementation in practice. This gap arises because the developed documents in the field of education are often not communicated to the staff of universities in Ukraine. Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the university, including the quality management system, is possible only through the involvement of all university staff and their support. This process consists of the following stages [8, p.325].

At the first stage, the policy in the field of quality of educational services is developed and represents the goals, objectives, and principles of this policy.

In the second stage, the developed policy is implemented in the processes of the internal quality management system, and the quality management system continuously interacts with the strategic management of the university and the life cycle of educational services.

At the third stage, the policy of quality management of the university in the form of norms, standards, rules, realization mechanisms is communicated to all lecturers without exception.

At the fourth stage, the competence of university lecturers is determined, as to perform quality assurance tasks, each lecturer must have certain knowledge, skills, and abilities, respectively, should be created a system to improve the professional quality of staff.

In the fifth stage, it is necessary to create a system of the interrelation of organizational goals and staff goals to lecturers understand what goals they need to achieve so that eventually the university can achieve its goals in the direction of management of educational services quality.

At the sixth stage, it is necessary to develop and implement a system of teacher motivation, which

will encourage lecturers to achieve their goals based on the developed key efficiency indicators.

To eliminate the fourth gap, it is necessary to build a science-substantiated information policy regarding consumers of educational services.

So, elimination of the gaps will definitely facilitate the improvement of the educational services quality. At the same time, as already mentioned, the nature of the quality of educational services is different from the quality of material products and the quality of most other services. For products, quality is represented in comparison with a reference sample, and for service, it is often associated with staff qualifications, and in both cases, with consumer expectations. The consumer, at least currently, often have not a clear idea of quality expectations. At the same time, the quality of educational services has not a normatively established value.

4. Discussion and Conclusion. So, the implementation of quality assurance standards and recommendations in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) determines the necessity of reforms in the strategic and operational management of education. Overcoming resistance, implementing new priorities, attracting stakeholders, and implementing student-centered learning occurs due to increasing the attractiveness of study programs in higher education, studying feedback regarding the quality of learning from students, analyzing the demand for learning, predictions, and planning competencies and learning results.

It should be noted that Higher Education Institutions have one of the main missions – to create appropriate conditions for the realization by participants of the educational process, their abilities, and talents. In order to achieve these goals, it is necessary to ensure a qualitative update of the regulatory base in the higher education sphere, in particular, regarding basic regulatory documents that define and regulate the formation and improvement of the internal system of assurance of the educational process quality. Unfortunately, despite significant efforts, at the present stage, significant progress in the formation of modern systems for ensuring the quality of higher education in Ukraine has not yet been achieved.

References

- [1] European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, The European Higher Education Area in 2018: Bologna Process Implementation Report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. – 2018.[Online].Available:
https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/nationalpolicies/eurydice/sites/eurydice/files/bologna_internet_0.pdf
[Accessed Dec. 29, 2021].
- [2] C.Sattler, and K .Sonntag, “Quality Cultures in Higher Education Institutions–Development of the Quality Culture Inventory,”In *Geographies of the University. Knowledge and Space* ,P .Meusburger, M.Heffernan, and L.Suarsana, Eds., vol 12. Springer, Cham.,2018
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-75593-9_9[Accessed :Dec. 29, 2021].
- [3] George Kwadwo Anane, and Michael Addaney, “Managing Quality Assurance in Higher Education: The Case of the University of Energy and Natural Resources,” *Journal of Education and Practice*. Vol.7, no.22, 2016 URL: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1112941.pdf> [Accessed: Dec. 29, 2021].

- [4] Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Brussels, Belgium, 2015 [Online]. Available: https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf [Accessed Dec. 29, 2021].
- [5] A.Maslow, "Motivation and personality," (in Ukrainian) 3 ed, (in Russian), 2008 .
- [6] T.V. Finnikov, and V.I. Tereshchuk, *Development of internal quality assurance systems in Ukrainian higher education institutions. Analytical report*. Kyiv: Waite, 2020. (in Ukrainian).
- [7] A.V. Babenkova, "Estimation of consumer satisfaction as an indicator of the efficiency of an industrial enterprise," (in Ukrainian), *Scientific Bulletin: Political Science, Economics, Sociology, Law*, no 12, pp. 54-62, 2010.
- [8] A. Nikiforov, *Quality Management*. M.: Student, 2011 (in Russian).
- [9] Eales-Reynolds, L-J. , and Rugg, E. Engendering a culture of quality in teaching and learning. 2021 [Online]. Available: <https://www.oecd.org/education/imhe/43977642.pdf> [Accessed Dec. 29, 2021].
- [10] Creating a Quality Culture in Higher Education. 2021 [Online]. Available: <https://peregrineglobal.com/quality-culture/> [Accessed Dec. 29, 2021].