





A.N. Abidin^{1*} , A.I. Mambetova² , B.Zh. Smagambet¹ , A.M. Kulbayeva² 

¹L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University
Astana, Kazakhstan.

²Caspian University of Technology and Engineering named after Sh. Yessenov
Aktau, Kazakhstan

*e-mail: abidinabubakir@gmail.com

SOCIOLOGICAL INDICATORS FOR MEASURING STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION (EXPERIENCE OF KAZAKHSTAN)

Abstract

This article critically revisits the concept of measuring student satisfaction with higher education quality through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu's habitus theory. As global agendas for quality assurance increasingly emphasize student-centered learning and experiential engagement, the «student satisfaction» metric has become a widely employed indicator of educational quality. However, this measure is not socially neutral: its level is contingent upon students' cultural capital, linguistic practices, social networks, and conformity to legitimate norms within the university field. In response, we propose a multi-level set of indicators tailored to the Kazakh context, encompassing pedagogical practices, the hidden curriculum, language regime, infrastructure, social integration, symbolic recognition and fairness, the conversion of capitals, and outcome trajectories.

Our model suggests that student satisfaction should not be interpreted solely as a proxy for service quality but also as a sociological measure capable of revealing the potential mechanisms of social inequality reproduction within higher education. This framework aligns with paradigms of quality assessment proposed by Harvey and Green (1993) and ENQA (2015), providing both theoretical foundations to inform targeted policy interventions in educational practice. This approach allows not only the descriptive documentation of outcomes but also a critical interpretation of the effects of structural adaptations and symbolic violence on student experience. Overall, this study provides a theoretically informed sociological perspective on the measurement of higher education quality in Kazakhstan, emphasizing the intersection between student experience and institutional structures.

Keywords: student satisfaction, higher education quality, habitus, cultural capital, social capital, symbolic violence, quality assurance.

Ә.Н. Әбидин^{1*}, А.И. Мамбетова², Б.Ж. Смағамбет¹, А.М. Кульбаева²

¹Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университеті
Астана қ., Қазақстан.

²Ш. Есенев атындағы Каспий мемлекеттік технологиялар және инжиниринг университеті
Ақтау қ., Қазақстан

*e-mail: abidinabubakir@gmail.com

ЖОҒАРЫ БІЛІМ САПАСЫНА СТУДЕНТТЕРДІҢ ҚАНАҒАТТАНУЫН ӨЛШЕУДІҢ ӘЛЕУМЕТТАНУЛЫҚ ИНДИКАТОРЛАРЫ (ҚАЗАҚСТАН ТӘЖІРИБЕСІ)

Аңдатпа

Бұл мақала жоғары білім сапасын бағалауда студенттердің қанағаттануы көрсеткішін Пьер Бурдьеннің габитус теориясы аясында қайта қарастырады. Қазіргі халықаралық сапаны қамтамасыз ету күн тәртібінде студент тәжірибесі мен студентке бағдарланған оқу-оқыту

практикаларын басым ету тенденциясы артқан сайын, «студенттердің қанағаттануы» индикаторы оқу процесінің сапасын өлшеудегі негізгі көрсеткішке айналды. Алайда бұл көрсеткіш әлеуметтік тұрғыдан бейтарап емес: оның деңгейі студенттердің мәдени капиталы, тілдік тәжірибесі, әлеуметтік желілері және университет өрісіндегі легитимді нормаларға сәйкестігі сияқты құрылымдық факторларға тәуелді. Осы тұрғыдан, біз Қазақстан контекстіне бейімделген көпдеңгейлі индикаторлар жүйесін ұсынамыз, оған педагогикалық тәжірибе, «жасырын оқу бағдарламасы», тілдік режим, инфрақұрылым, әлеуметтік интеграция, символдық танылу және әділеттілік, капиталдардың конверсиясы, сондай-ақ нәтижелік траекториялар кіреді.

Біздің талдауымыз көрсеткендей, ұсынылған модель студент қанағаттануын тек қызмет сапасының индикаторы ретінде емес, университеттік ортадағы әлеуметтік теңсіздіктің ықтимал қайта өндірілу механизмдерін айқындайтын әлеуметтанулық өлшем ретінде бағалауға мүмкіндік береді. Бұл тәсіл Harvey және Green (1993) мен ENQA (2015) ұсынған сапаны бағалау парадигмасымен үйлестіріліп, білім беру саясаты мен практикасында нақты интервенциялық шараларды жобалау үшін теориялық негіз құруға жол ашады. Бұл тәсіл тек нәтижелерді сипаттап қана қоймай, әлеуметтік құрылымдық бейімделулер мен символдық зорлықтың студент тәжірибесіне ықпалын сындарлы түрде интерпретациялауға бағытталған. Осылайша, мақала Қазақстандағы жоғары білім сапасын өлшеудің әлеуметтанулық өлшемдерін концептуалды және теориялық тұрғыдан қайта қарастырады, студенттердің тәжірибесі мен университеттік құрылымдар арасындағы өзара әсерді талдауға мүмкіндік береді.

Түйін сөздер: студент қанағаттануы, жоғары білім сапасы, габитус, мәдени капитал, әлеуметтік капитал, символдық зорлық, сапаны қамтамасыз ету.

Абидин А.Н.^{1}, Мамбетова А.И.², Смагамбет Б.Ж.¹, Кульбаева А.М.²*

*¹Евразийский национальный университет им. Н. Гумилева,
г. Астана, Казахстан.*

*²Каспийский государственный университет технологий и инжиниринга им. Есенова,
г. Актау, Казахстан.*

**e-mail: abidinabubakir@gmail.com*

СОЦИОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ ИНДИКАТОРЫ ИЗМЕРЕНИЯ УДОВЛЕТВОРЕННОСТИ СТУДЕНТОВ КАЧЕСТВОМ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ (ОПЫТ КАЗАХСТАНА)

Аннотация

Статья переосмысливает показатель удовлетворённости студентов как критерий оценки качества высшего образования в рамках теории габитуса Пьера Бурдьё. По мере усиления в современной международной повестке обеспечения качества тенденции к приоритизации студенческого опыта и студенто-ориентированных практик преподавания и обучения, индикатор «удовлетворённость студентов» становится одним из ключевых измерителей качества образовательного процесса. Однако данный показатель не является социально нейтральным: его уровень зависит от структурных факторов культурного капитала студентов, их языкового опыта, социальных сетей и степени соответствия легитимным нормам университетского поля. Исходя из этого, мы предлагаем систему многоуровневых индикаторов, адаптированную к казахстанскому контексту, включающую педагогические практики, «скрытую учебную программу», языковой режим, инфраструктуру, социальную интеграцию, символическое признание и справедливость, конверсию капиталов, а также результативные траектории.

Наш анализ показывает, что предложенная модель позволяет рассматривать удовлетворённость студентов не только как индикатор качества услуг, но и как социологическое измерение, выявляющее возможные механизмы воспроизводства социального неравенства в университет-

ской среде. Данный подход соотносится с парадигмой оценки качества, предложенной Harvey и Green (1993) и ENQA (2015), и открывает возможность формирования теоретико-эмпирической основы для проектирования конкретных интервенционных мер в образовательной политике и практике.

Смешанный дизайн эмпирического исследования – анкетирование, когнитивное интервью, фокус-группы и глубинные интервью – позволяет оценивать студенческий опыт в различных контекстах. Такой подход не ограничивается описанием результатов, но направлен на критическую интерпретацию того, как социально-структурные адаптации и символическое насилие влияют на студенческий опыт. Таким образом, статья концептуально и теоретически пересматривает социологические измерения оценки качества высшего образования в Казахстане, позволяя анализировать взаимовлияние студенческого опыта и университетских структур.

Ключевые слова: удовлетворённость студентов, качество высшего образования, габитус, культурный капитал, социальный капитал, символическое насилие, обеспечение качества.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary higher education, student satisfaction has become one of the most frequently used indicators of educational quality. Universities, accreditation agencies, and policymakers increasingly rely on student feedback to evaluate teaching effectiveness, learning environments, academic support services, and institutional performance. This trend reflects the growing influence of student-centered learning and quality assurance frameworks within the European Higher Education Area [1, p.97], where institutional accountability and the enhancement of student experience have become central priorities. However, although student satisfaction is often treated as a straightforward measure of educational quality, it is not a socially neutral category.

The concept of quality in higher education is itself multidimensional and contested. As Harvey and Green have shown, quality may be understood as excellence, fitness for purpose, value for money, or transformation [2, p.249]. Each of these perspectives emphasizes different institutional goals and produces different evaluative logics. As a result, the use of student satisfaction as a quality indicator inevitably reflects assumptions about what higher education is expected to provide and for whom. Satisfaction does not emerge in a vacuum; it is shaped by expectations, prior experiences, access to resources, and the degree to which students feel recognized and supported within the university environment [3, p.368]. Therefore, interpreting satisfaction as a service-related outcome risks overlooking the structural and symbolic dimensions of student experience [4, p.127].

This issue is especially important in the context of Kazakhstan, where the higher education system has undergone transformation since joining the Bologna Process and integrating into the European Higher Education Area [5, p.10]. Over the past decade, universities in Kazakhstan have adopted accreditation procedures, internal and external quality assurance mechanisms, and student feedback surveys as tools of evaluation. These changes have strengthened the role of student voice in educational governance. At the same time, the Kazakhstani context is marked by social, linguistic, and regional inequalities that influence how students enter, navigate, and interpret the academic field [6, p.197]. Differences in cultural background, language competence, social networks, and familiarity with institutional norms in everyday practice may shape students' educational opportunities and their judgments of satisfaction [7, p.94].

To address these issues, this article approaches student satisfaction through the theoretical lens of Pierre Bourdieu's sociology [8, p.135], particularly the concepts of habitus, capital, field, and symbolic power. From this perspective, satisfaction can be understood not simply as an individual opinion about educational services, but as an outcome of the relationship between students' dispositions and the norms of the university field [9, p.162]. When student habitus aligns with dominant institutional expectations, academic practices may appear natural, accessible, and legitimate [10, p.277]. When such alignment is weak, students may experience uncertainty, alienation, or symbolic exclusion. In this sense, student satisfaction may reveal not only perceptions of quality, but

also mechanisms through which higher education reproduces or mitigates social inequality [11, p.374].

Accordingly, this article develops a sociologically grounded framework of indicators for measuring student satisfaction with the quality of higher education in Kazakhstan. By integrating pedagogy, academic language, infrastructure, social integration, fairness, symbolic recognition, and capital conversion, the study seeks to expand existing approaches to quality measurement and offer a more critical understanding of student experience [12, p.568].

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a theoretical–methodological design to reconceptualize student satisfaction in higher education through Pierre Bourdieu’s framework. Instead of treating satisfaction as a simple reaction to educational services, the study interprets it as a socially conditioned outcome shaped by the relationship between habitus, field, and forms of capital. The methodology combines conceptual analysis with a proposed mixed-methods strategy for empirical validation. This approach enables the construction of sociological indicators and outlines how these indicators can be tested effectively in Kazakhstan’s higher education system.

At the theoretical level, the research is based on Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, field, cultural capital, social capital, symbolic power, and doxa. These concepts were used as analytical tools for identifying the structural dimensions that shape student satisfaction. Conceptual-logical analysis was applied to clarify the meanings of central categories such as student satisfaction, higher education quality, hidden curriculum, symbolic recognition, and capital conversion. This stage was necessary because dominant service-oriented literature usually measures satisfaction through expectations, perceived quality, and institutional performance, whereas a habitus-based approach shifts attention toward social adaptation, familiarity with academic culture, and unequal access to resources. Comparative-theoretical analysis was used to contrast managerial approaches with a critical sociological perspective, while interpretive analysis examined how international quality assurance paradigms are translated into Kazakhstan’s institutional realities.

The source base consisted of literature on higher education quality, student experience, educational inequality, and quality assurance, together with institutional and regulatory documents relevant to Kazakhstan. These materials were selected because they connect macro-level policy frameworks with the micro-level experience of students. The units of analysis were the structural dimensions of satisfaction: teaching, assessment and feedback; academic language and the hidden curriculum; infrastructure and access to learning resources; social integration and advisory support; symbolic recognition and fairness; and the mechanisms through which cultural, social, and economic capital are converted into educational opportunities. Through theoretical synthesis, these dimensions were reorganized into a multi-level indicator model adapted to the Kazakhstani context.

To strengthen the usefulness of the model, the study outlines a mixed-methods empirical design for subsequent validation. Quantitative survey research is proposed as the first component, since it can reveal patterns of satisfaction and allow comparisons across linguistic, regional, and social groups. The questionnaire should include both conventional domains of student experience and habitus-sensitive items that capture implicit curriculum expectations, comfort with academic language, access to information, and experiences of symbolic inclusion or exclusion. A Likert-type response format can be used for most items.

The second component involves qualitative methods: cognitive interviewing, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. Cognitive interviewing is important as it helps identify whether survey questions are interpreted consistently by students from different social and linguistic backgrounds. This is crucial in a multilingual context such as Kazakhstan, where neutral academic terms may carry unequal symbolic meanings. In-depth interviews and focus groups are proposed to explore the lived experience behind survey responses, including feelings of belonging, linguistic insecurity, adaptation to academic norms, and access to supportive networks. Qualitative evidence complements statistical

measurement by revealing dimensions that are difficult to capture through closed-ended questions alone.

The analytical strategy for validation includes several stages. First, pilot testing should be conducted with students from different universities to refine wording, eliminate ambiguous items, and assess internal consistency. Second, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis can be used to determine the latent structure of the proposed indicators. Third, measurement invariance testing is necessary before comparing satisfaction across social or linguistic groups. Without such testing, group differences may reflect the cultural proximity of the instrument to dominant students rather than genuine variation in educational experience. After psychometric validation, regression analysis may be applied to examine how habitus–field alignment, forms of capital, and perceived fairness influence overall satisfaction.

The methodology also incorporates ethical and reflexive considerations. Because the study addresses inequality and possible experiences of exclusion, respondents in future empirical phases should participate voluntarily and anonymously, with informed consent and the right to withdraw at any stage. The study recognizes that measurement instruments may reproduce institutional doxa if they are designed only from the standpoint of dominant academic culture. For this reason, the proposed methodology seeks not merely to measure satisfaction, but to examine how satisfaction is socially produced. In this sense, the framework provides a basis for a just and context-sensitive system for evaluating the quality of higher education in Kazakhstan.

RESULTS

Since 2010, as a full member of the European Higher Education Area, Kazakhstan has committed to implementing the core parameters of the Bologna Process, including the three-cycle degree structure, credit accumulation and transfer systems, academic mobility, quality assurance mechanisms, and related instruments at both national and institutional levels [13, p.205]. These reforms were not introduced as isolated administrative measures; rather, they signaled a broader reorientation of higher education toward comparability, accountability, and student-centered governance. Within this framework, Kazakhstan's national quality assurance model has gradually come to reflect a three-tiered logic similar to that of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG): internal quality assurance at the institutional level, external quality assurance through accreditation, and regulatory oversight through state-recognized procedures and registers [14, p.77]. This architecture has created a formal environment in which student satisfaction is increasingly treated as a legitimate source of evaluative evidence.

In the sphere of external quality assurance, independent accreditation agencies have assumed a particularly important role. The Independent Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and the Independent Agency for Accreditation and Rating (IAAR) are among the most prominent actors in Kazakhstan's accreditation landscape. Their activities demonstrate how international quality assurance norms are adapted to national conditions while maintaining alignment with ESG-based expectations. Data from the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) further indicate that IAAR's procedures, reporting mechanisms, and evaluation criteria are presented as consistent with European quality principles. As a result, student feedback is no longer a peripheral element of institutional review, but part of an increasingly standardized governance mechanism through which universities demonstrate responsiveness, transparency, and performance.

An additional dimension of this institutionalization is the national regulation of accrediting bodies and the creation of formal registries. Decree No. 629 of 2016 established procedures for recognizing accreditation agencies and registering accredited institutions and educational programs, while also clarifying requirements for external evaluation [15, p.84]. This regulatory move strengthened the operational legitimacy of accreditation and formalized the place of external review in the higher education system. At the same time, official university communications frequently emphasize the voluntary character of accreditation and the institutional right to choose an accrediting agency. This combination of regulation and institutional choice increases the strategic importance of student

feedback, because satisfaction data become both a marker of internal quality culture and a resource for external legitimation.

However, the findings also show that the student experience in Kazakhstan cannot be adequately interpreted through administrative quality frameworks alone. It is stratified by broader social conditions, particularly language policy, regional inequality, and uneven access to academic resources. Kazakhstan's trilingual policy, together with evidence that approximately 90% of the population is bilingual and around 20% trilingual, reflects a complex linguistic environment in which educational participation is shaped by differentiated language competencies [16, p.227]. The 2011–2020 State Program for Education Development also drew attention to continuing disparities in comprehension, infrastructure, and access to quality learning conditions [16, p.228]. These inequalities are especially visible in the experiences of students from rural areas, whose pathways into higher education are often constrained by limited informational resources, weaker preparatory opportunities, and narrower support networks [17, p.93]. In this sense, social capital continues to structure differentiated educational trajectories even within formally standardized systems.

These contextual features have significant implications for the measurement of student satisfaction. The results suggest that any valid satisfaction metric in Kazakhstan must include not only conventional service-quality variables, but also socio-origin, linguistic competence, access to information, and network connectivity as analytically important dimensions [17, p.94]. Without these elements, measurements risk overstating institutional effectiveness by treating unequal starting positions as if they were irrelevant to educational experience. Thus, student satisfaction should not be conceptualized as a neutral or universally transparent indicator. Rather, it reflects the interaction between students' resources and dispositions and the normative expectations embedded in the higher education field.

This interpretation is reinforced by empirical studies showing that student satisfaction is strongly associated with student-centered learning, campus climate, and instructional effectiveness [18, p.122]. In Kazakhstan, several case-based studies have likewise relied on service-oriented scales to examine the relationship between perceived service quality and student satisfaction [19, p.56]. These studies are useful in demonstrating that factors such as teaching organization, support services, and responsiveness affect students' judgments of institutional quality. Yet, from a habitus-informed perspective, such findings require theoretical expansion. Student expectations themselves are socially structured, and the definitions of «good teaching», «effective support», or «successful participation» often function as doxa within the field. Consequently, high satisfaction scores may not necessarily indicate inclusive educational practices; they may also reflect a situation in which dominant institutional norms align smoothly with the dispositions of already advantaged students [20, p.143].

From this standpoint, satisfaction measures operate not only as proxies for service quality, but also as indirect indicators of structural adaptation. Students whose habitus corresponds more closely to institutional expectations may find academic language more accessible, understand implicit rules more easily, and interpret university practices as fair and legitimate. By contrast, students with less aligned dispositions may experience confusion, symbolic pressure, or exclusion even when formal quality standards appear to be met. This makes it necessary to move beyond narrow managerial interpretations of satisfaction and toward a multidimensional framework capable of capturing both experiential quality and social positioning.

The indicator matrix presented in Table 1 reflects this broader analytical move. It integrates Kazakhstan's existing quality assurance practices with ESG-aligned first-layer measurements, while extending them through habitus-sensitive second-layer dimensions such as implicit curriculum expectations, linguistic capital, and risks of symbolic domination [21, p.38]. The matrix therefore links formal quality domains teaching, assessment, infrastructure, and student voice with deeper sociological categories such as cultural capital, social capital, symbolic recognition, and capital conversion. This design makes it possible to operationalize student satisfaction in a way that is empirically useful and theoretically grounded.

Overall, the results indicate that a habitus-based model offers a more adequate framework for understanding student satisfaction in Kazakhstan’s higher education system. It reveals that satisfaction is not merely a reflection of service delivery, but an outcome shaped by inequality, adaptation, and symbolic legitimacy within the educational field. In practical terms, this means that policy interventions aimed at improving quality should address not only teaching performance and institutional services, but also unequal access to academic language, support networks, procedural justice, and opportunities for converting educational experience into valued outcomes.

Table 1. - Habitus-based indicator model (Kazakhstan context)

Dimension	Theoretical Basis	Specific Indicators (Operationalization Example)
Teaching, Assessment, and Feedback	Student-centered pedagogy; fairness in evaluation	Organization of teaching; clarity of objectives and requirements; timeliness of feedback; pre-publication of grading criteria; accessibility of grievance procedures
Academic Language and Implicit Curriculum	Embodied form of cultural capital; habitus alignment	Difficulty of academic writing; confidence in participating in debates; experiences of embarrassment/alienation; access to academic support services
Infrastructure and Learning Resources	Resource accessibility – conversion of economic capital into educational opportunities	Satisfaction with library/laboratory/IT infrastructure; dormitory/transport factors; accessibility of digital platforms
Social Integration and Student Voice	Social capital and engagement	Sense of belonging to the university; peer support; quality of academic advising; participation in student self-governance; effectiveness of feedback channels
Equity, Recognition, and Symbolic Pressure	Doxa and symbolic power/domination	Experiences of discrimination by language, social background, or region; respect in communication; trust in procedural justice
Outcomes and Capital Conversion	Conversion of cultural/social capital into symbolic capital	Relevance of courses to labor market; access to internships/practicum; career guidance; barriers to academic mobility

DISCUSSION

The proposed matrix is conceptually compatible with internationally established instruments used to evaluate student experience in higher education. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), for example, measures engagement through multidimensional indicators and demonstrates the value of focus groups and cognitive interviews in data collection (NSSE, n.d.). Likewise, the National Student Survey (NSS) includes domains such as learning opportunities, academic support, student voice, and wellbeing resources [22, p.28]. These instruments suggest that student experience cannot be understood through service indicators alone, because evaluation is shaped by institutional practice, social context, and the meanings students assign to academic life.

From a Bourdieusian perspective, satisfaction emerges from the interaction between institutional norms and students’ dispositions within the academic field. Existing quality assurance tools may indirectly register this alignment, even when they do not theorize habitus explicitly. For this reason, integrating habitus-sensitive indicators into satisfaction frameworks is analytically important. It enables researchers to identify structural dimensions of educational experience that remain hidden in managerial models focused only on efficiency, service delivery, or consumer choice. In the Kazakhstani context, such an approach is especially relevant because formal standardization coexists with linguistic inequality, regional disparity, and unequal access to academic resources.

The proposed framework also allows several empirical hypotheses to be examined. First, when satisfaction with infrastructure and learning resources decreases, overall student satisfaction is also likely to decline. Yet this effect will not be identical for all students. For those facing financial constraints or combining employment with study, dormitories, transport, internet access, digital platforms, libraries, and laboratories may have a much stronger impact on daily academic participation [23, p.252]. Infrastructure should therefore be treated not merely as a technical asset, but as a structural condition that can either reduce or reproduce inequality within the university environment.

Second, students who are better adapted to academic language and the implicit curriculum tend to report higher satisfaction with learning. This reflects the influence of cultural capital on educational experience [24, p.9]. Students who understand legitimate communication styles, participation norms, and expectations surrounding independent work are more likely to experience the university as clear and fair. By contrast, those whose previous socialization differs from dominant academic norms may perceive the same environment as confusing or alienating. Satisfaction, in this sense, reflects not only the quality of teaching, but also the degree of fit between student habitus and institutional expectations.

Third, social capital expressed through relationships with advisors, peers, and information networks strengthens the link between satisfaction and academic success. For students from rural areas in particular, informal networks often function as essential mechanisms of adaptation [25, p.67]. Advice about course selection, internships, deadlines, and university procedures can compensate for weak formal support systems. This indicates that student experience is shaped by both official institutional structures and unequal access to networks of guidance. If universities overlook this dimension, they risk underestimating the importance of belonging and connectedness in shaping satisfaction and persistence.

Fourth, the linguistic regime plays a major role in students' perceptions of fairness. When multilingual academic environments are not supported by adequate institutional resources, language requirements may be experienced as symbolic pressure. When support systems are well organized, however, they can facilitate adaptation and strengthen inclusion [26, p.35]. This is particularly important in Kazakhstan, where Kazakh, Russian, and English coexist in a hierarchy of academic legitimacy. Language is therefore not only a medium of instruction, but also a mechanism through which competence, recognition, and symbolic capital are distributed.

A further implication of the matrix is that student satisfaction should be interpreted as a differentiated rather than universal indicator. Average satisfaction scores may conceal important group-level inequalities linked to social origin, linguistic repertoire, prior schooling, or access to support [27, p.633]. A university may appear successful in aggregate survey results while still reproducing exclusionary norms for first-generation, rural, or linguistically marginalized students. Disaggregated analysis is therefore necessary if student feedback is to function as an instrument of quality enhancement rather than a symbolic exercise in institutional self-legitimation. This also strengthens the argument for comparing satisfaction not only across institutions, but also across categories of students within the same institution [28, p.182].

The discussion also carries practical implications for policy and university governance. If satisfaction is shaped by the relationship between habitus and field, then improving quality requires more than refining service delivery. Universities should invest in academic writing support, multilingual tutoring, transparent assessment, inclusive advising, and safe channels for student voice. At the same time, the framework has limitations: habitus, symbolic pressure, and implicit curriculum are not always easily captured through surveys alone. For this reason, quantitative tools should ideally be complemented by qualitative methods. Overall, the findings suggest that a habitus-based approach provides a stronger foundation for interpreting student experience in Kazakhstan because it links educational quality to adaptation, recognition, and inequality. Such an approach is especially valuable for policymakers seeking not only higher satisfaction scores, but also more equitable participation, retention, and graduate outcomes [29, p.60].

CONCLUSION

This study sought to reconsider the problem of measuring student satisfaction with the quality of higher education through the theoretical lens of habitus. Our central argument is that student satisfaction should not be understood merely as a service-based indicator reflecting the quality of educational provision, but rather as a complex social phenomenon shaped by social relations and symbolic structures within the university field.

In the Kazakhstani context, the system of higher education quality assurance has undergone significant institutional transformation over the past decade. Following Kazakhstan's integration into the European Higher Education Area, ESG-based quality assurance principles have been implemented at both national and institutional levels, and accreditation agencies alongside institutional surveys have become established tools for measuring student experience. Although these changes have strengthened the institutional role of student voice, existing measurement tools largely remain confined to service-oriented domains such as teaching quality, infrastructure, and academic staff performance [30, p.42].

Instruments for measuring student satisfaction should be based on multi-level indicator systems that account for the experiences of diverse social groups. This includes systematic analysis of differences across linguistic groups, rural and urban students, first-generation students, and working students. Second, the interpretation of satisfaction data requires testing for measurement invariance and situating empirical results within broader social contexts. Third, universities should treat the evaluation of student experience not merely as a managerial or ranking instrument but as an analytical mechanism for identifying risks of structural inequality.

Because the proposed model is primarily oriented toward the Kazakhstani context, its applicability to other national higher education systems requires comparative investigation. Future studies should compare habitus-based indicators with existing international student survey frameworks in order to evaluate their validity across different educational systems. Comparative analyses involving instruments such as the National Student Survey and the National Survey of Student Engagement may help reveal cultural and institutional differences in the measurement of student experience.

Research in these directions will contribute not only to the theoretical refinement of higher education quality assessment instruments but also to the reconsideration of student experience from the perspective of social justice.

References:

- 1 Bourdieu P. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. — Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977. — 349 p.
- 2 Bourdieu P. *The forms of capital*. In: Richardson J, editor. *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood; 1986. p. 258.
- 3 Bourdieu P. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 1991. — 423 p.
- 4 Bourdieu P, Passeron J-C. *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: Sage; 1990. — 436 p.
- 5 Harvey L, Green D. *Defining quality*. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*. 1993;18(1) P. 9–34.
- 6 European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. Brussels: ENQA; 2015. — 271 p.
- 7 Willis G.B. *Cognitive Interviewing: A Tool for Improving Questionnaire Design*. — Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2005. — 352 p.
- 8 Dillman D.A., Smyth J.D., Christian, L.M. *Internet, Phone, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys: The Tailored Design Method*. — Hoboken: Wiley, 2014. — 509 p.
- 9 Gravett K., Ajjawi R. *Belonging as situated practice // Studies in Higher Education*. — 2022. — Vol.47. — №7. — P. 138–149.

10 Lovakov A., Yudkevich, M. *The post-Soviet publication landscape for higher education research // Higher Education*. — 2021. — Vol.81. — №2. — P.273–299.

11 Smolentseva A., Platonova D. *The transformations of higher education in 15 Post-Soviet countries: the state, the market and institutional diversification // Higher Education Policy*. — 2023. — Vol.36. — №2. — P.370–393.

12 Matthews K.E., Dollinger M. *Student voice in higher education: the importance of distinguishing student representation and student partnership // Higher Education*. — 2023. — Vol. 85. — №3. — P.555–570.

13 Lodhi I., Ilyassova-Schoenfeld, A. *The Bologna process and its impact on the higher education reforms in Kazakhstan: a case of policy transfer and translations // Studies in Higher Education*. — 2023. — Vol.48. — №1. — P.204–219.

14 Hwami M. *A geopolitics of knowledge analysis of higher education internationalisation in Kazakhstan // British Educational Research Journal*. — 2023. — Vol.76. — №3. — P.76–93

15 Ajjawi R., Gravett, K., O’Shea, S. *The politics of student belonging: identity and purpose // Teaching in Higher Education*. — 2023. — Vol.49. — №2. — P.83–103.

16 Weinreb Y, Yemini M. *Navigating academic habitus in a higher education system that prioritises external funding: the case of Israel. Studies in Higher Education*. 2023;48(7): P. 995–1006.

17 Resch K.R. *Student voice in higher education diversity policies: A systematic review // Frontiers in Education*. — 2023. — Vol.8. — P. 93–110.

18 Bedeker M, Ospanbek A, Simons M, Zhalgaspayev M, Yessenbekova A. *“I can easily switch to the Kazakh language, also to the Russian language” : reimagining Kazakhstani CLIL implementation as a third space. Language, Culture and Curriculum*. 2024;37(2): P.121–138.

19 Hajar, A., Yeboah Owusu, E. *African international students’ challenges, investment and identity development at a highly selective EMI university in Kazakhstan // Language and Education*. — 2025. — Vol. 39. — №1. — P. 54–71.

20 Dias-Broens A.S., Meeuwisse, M., Severiens, S.E. *The definition and measurement of sense of belonging in higher education: a systematic literature review with a special focus on students’ ethnicity and generation status in higher education // Educational Research Review*. — 2024. — Vol.45. — P.102–186.

21 De-Juan-Vigaray M.D., Ledesma-Chaves, P., González-Gascón, E., Gil-Cordero, E. *Student satisfaction: examining capacity development and environmental factors in higher education institutions // Heliyon*. — 2024. — Vol.10. — №17. — P.36–51.

22 Seitova M., Temirbekova Z., Kazykhankyzy L., Khalmatova Z., Çelik H.E. *Perceived service quality and student satisfaction: a case study at Khoja Akhmet Yassawi University, Kazakhstan // Frontiers in Education*. — 2024. — Vol.9. — P.27–41.

23 Kessel G., Ryan C., Paras L., Johnson N., Zariff R.Z., Stallman H.M. *Relationship between university belonging and student outcomes: a systematic review and meta-analysis // The Australian Educational Researcher*. — 2025. — Vol.52. — P.251–264.

24 Stensaker B, Matear S. *Student involvement in quality assurance: perspectives and practices towards persistent partnerships. Quality in Higher Education*. 2025;31(1): P.8–22.

25 Abnassyrova R., Zhunussova, G. *«They will love you, if you learn Kazakh»: international students’ experiences at an EMI university in Central Asia // International Journal of Educational Research*. — 2025. — Vol.134. — P. 60–76.

26 Narbaev T, Amirbekova D. *A decade of transformation in higher education and science in Kazakhstan: a literature and scientometric review of national projects and research trends. Publications*. 2025;13(3): P. 35–50.

27 Serrano M.E., Miranda González, F.J., Mourato J.A.B., Lourenço R.T. *Student contributions to quality assurance in higher education: a systematic literature review // Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*. — 2025. — Vol.50. — №4. — P.632–648.

28 Mustafa B.M., Gruda Z.G., Sarris J.S. *From spectators to decision-makers: redefining student roles as co-designers of curriculum // Frontiers in Education.* – 2025. – Vol.10. – P.180-196.

29 Ngo T.A., Bui C.T., Chau H.K.L., Tran P.N., Nguyen P.T., Tran N.K.T. *Influence of university service quality on student experiences, academic performance and institutional loyalty: A case study in Vietnam // Acta Psychologica.* – 2025. – Vol.260. – P.59-82.

30 Jeong S.H., Chung J.Y. *University students' satisfaction and evaluations of synchronous online learning for physical education courses // Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies.* – 2023. – Vol.12, №3. – P.33-47.

FTAMP 04.51.43

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51889/2959-6270.2026.93.1.004>

К.Е. Юсупов^{1*} , Н.А. Байбахов¹ , Қ.Ж. Каныбекова¹ 

¹Қожа Ахмет Ясауи атындағы Халықаралық қазақ-түрік университеті
Түркістан, Қазақстан

* e-mail: kuanyshbek.yussupov@ayu.edu.kz

ЖАСТАРДЫҢ САЯСИ ӘЛЕУМЕТТЕНУІНІҢ ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛДЫҚ ЖӘНЕ ЦИФРЛЫҚ ФАКТОРЛАРЫ: ҚҰРЫЛЫМДЫҚ ТАЛДАУ

Аңдатпа

Мақалада қазіргі саяси режимдердің трансформациясы және цифрлық орта жағдайында жастардың саяси әлеуметтену тетіктері қарастырылады. Зерттеудің теориялық негізін Э.Гидденстің құрылымдану теориясы, Х. Ортега-и-Гассеттің «бұқара көтерілісі» концепциясы, сондай-ақ К. Шмитттің саясиды «өзге-бөгде» ара жігін ажырату саласы ретінде түсінуі құрайды. Жұмыста Ф.И. Долгих зерттеулеріне сүйене отырып, саяси партиялардың жастар бірлестіктерінің қызмет етуінің институционалдық аспектілері және олардың қызметінің құқықтық тетіктері де талданады. Қатысу формаларын, идентификацияны және жастардың саяси жұмылдырылуын өзгертетін саяси әлеуметтенудің жаңа агенті ретінде әлеуметтік желілердің ықпалына ерекше назар аударылады.

Мақаланың мақсаты - өңірлік контексте жас ұрпақтың саяси әлеуметтену ерекшеліктерін айқындайтын құрылымдық және институционалдық факторларды анықтау, сондай-ақ саяси сананы қалыптастырудың дәстүрлі және цифрлық арналарының арақатынасын талдау. Зерттеу аясында құрылымдық-функционалдық және институционалдық тәсілдер, сондай-ақ дискурсивті талдау элементтері қолданылады. Нәтижелер цифрландыру жағдайында дәстүрлі саяси институттарға сенімнің бір мезгілде төмендеуімен қатар, саяси ұстанымдарды қалыптастыруда желілік коммуникациялардың рөлі күшейетінін көрсетеді. Саяси партиялар мен жастар ұйымдары өзара іс-қимылдың жаңа форматтарына бейімделуде, алайда жастардың саяси белсенділік дәрежесіне әсер ететін институционалдық шектеулер сақталуда. Қазіргі саяси әлеуметтену билікті қайта өндірудің институционалдық тетіктері мен қатысудың жаңа цифрлық формаларын үйлестіре отырып, гибридіті сипатқа ие деген қорытынды жасалды, бұл жас ұрпақтың саяси субъективтілігінің қайшылықты, бірақ динамикалық моделін қалыптастырады.

Түйін сөздер: саяси әлеуметтену, жастар, институционалдық факторлар, цифрлық факторлар, әлеуметтік желілер, саяси идентификация.