



WAYS TO SATISFY THE NEEDS OF SMALL BUSINESS IN THE TERRITORIES IN INNOVATIVE AND COMPETITIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LABOR POTENTIAL OF YOUTH

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ABSTRACT: - The article deals with the issues of research on the definition of Hard skills and Soft skills of the labor potential of university graduates from the standpoint of the development of innovative and competitive skills and their compliance with the needs of the region's business.

Tasks are proposed to improve the available resources, with a focus on the needs of the labor market for small businesses, which must be solved to increase the demand for the quality of educational services.

KEYWORDS: Innovative thinking, small business, innovative interest, innovative competitive skills of university graduates, Hard skills, Soft skills, matching skills to business, modern educational models, quality of educational services.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the government of Uzbekistan considers the acceleration of innovation activity as the main engine of sustainable economic development, putting forward the development of innovative technologies and science among the most important state

priorities. The high level of competitiveness of the country's labor resources is one of its competitive advantages, which increases the investment attractiveness of the country. In turn, its transition to innovative development determines the tasks of creating conditions for work in our country for talented specialists

“WAYS TO SATISFY THE NEEDS OF SMALL BUSINESS IN THE TERRITORIES IN INNOVATIVE AND COMPETITIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LABOR POTENTIAL OF YOUTH”

who are able to think innovatively and create something new.

For the regions of Uzbekistan, the achievement of innovative and technological development is critical, since only through this path it is possible to create a modern technological base, produce competitive products, rational use of natural resources, increase the efficiency of all spheres of life and economy, as well as strengthen their competitiveness.

The Main Findings and Results

Today, the actions of the government of Uzbekistan are aimed at the formation of an innovation-oriented economy, and the main goal of the implemented Strategy for Innovative Development [1] of the Republic is the development of human capital, based on the quality of integration education, which is an integral part of the labor potential.

For the first time in 2020, Uzbekistan entered the list of the Global Innovation Index (GII)[2],

and ranked 12th among 29 countries with lower middle income and 4th among 10 countries in Central and South Asia.

In the report of the State Committee on Statistics on the demographic situation in the country since 2010, the population of Uzbekistan has been growing by an average of 1.8% annually, and in 2021 the growth was 2.1%. According to the United Nations Population Fund, the total world population in 2021 is 7.8 billion people. Uzbekistan ranks 43rd in the world in terms of population, 121st in terms of GNP per capita, and according to Forex technical analysis economists, the republic is among 13 countries with rapidly developing economies, occupying 9th position[2].

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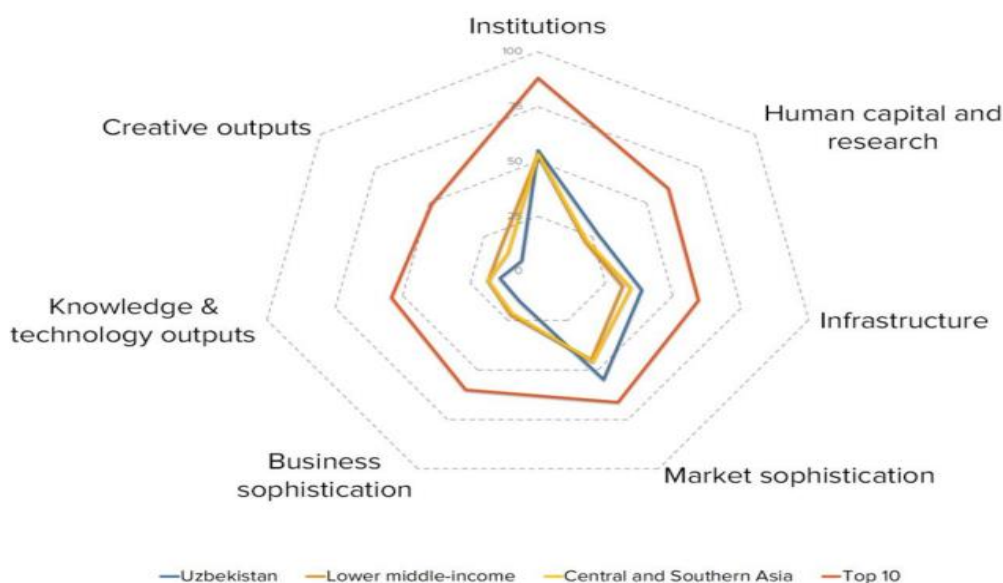


Figure 1. Uzbekistan’s GII ranking among groups of lower-middle-income countries [11]

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development is critical, since only through this path it is possible to create a modern

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technological base, produce competitive products, rational use of natural resources, increase the efficiency of all spheres of life and economy, and strengthen their competitiveness.[7]

If we consider the Bukhara region, then according to the index of innovative development of the IDI for the period 2015-2020 (3.28), it entered the top three regions with high rates of the volume of innovative products sold, innovation costs and the number of implemented technological innovations (Fergana region - 3.26 and Navoi region 3.29), and according to the index of the level of innovative development of the region IRID (2020) - 1.91, ranking 7th among the regions of the republic. The predominant sectors of innovative development were accommodation and food services, wholesale and retail trade, which are small businesses, as well as education.

Every year, 28% of all graduates of educational institutions are in higher educational institutions, most of which are employed in small businesses. Consequently, problems are brewing that determine not only the level of youth employment, but also the revision of educational programs aimed at a competent approach to training specialists, ensuring the successful use of professional knowledge and skills, based on building an educational strategy taking into account local conditions and market needs.

According to foreign analysts, small businesses are adapting to innovative trends in their industry, gaining experience in R&D development in large companies, by reducing risk. Ideas born in small businesses are developed in large ones due to the principle of cooperation.

The World Bank Group conducted a survey of small, medium and large enterprises in all regions of Uzbekistan. Over the past three

years, 10% of surveyed firms have applied external best practices, 13% have used in-house capabilities, and 7% have outsourced on a contract basis to innovate.[4]

Innovative activity affects the growth of employment. For example, in 83% of all firms that introduced product innovations, there was an increase in personnel in comparison with firms that did not implement - their growth was 75%.

The sustainable development of territories directly proportionally depends on the innovative restructuring of the activities of small enterprises - small businesses, where an important place is given to the search for ways to develop the qualification characteristics of the labor potential of the regions. At the same time, the problems of determining the role and features of the development of innovative and competitive characteristics of specialists for small businesses are not disclosed in full. In this regard, we are faced with a key task: to determine the relevance of the needs of small businesses and the orientation of educational programs in the professional and innovative skills of the regional labor potential of graduates of universities in the region with the definition of prospects for its further development.

The question of the role of innovative characteristics of human capital in ensuring sustainable economic growth of the country is again becoming relevant.

Skills and knowledge related to or affecting the innovation sphere in business have special specifics, correlate with engineering professions, scientists and active entrepreneurs, and include a wide range of qualifications and their optimal ratio. The content and usefulness of skills were divided into 2 groups: professional skills (Hard skills) and universal, organizational skills (Soft skills). Professional skills included knowledge, skills

“WAYS TO SATISFY THE NEEDS OF SMALL BUSINESS IN THE TERRITORIES IN INNOVATIVE AND COMPETITIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LABOR POTENTIAL OF YOUTH”

and competence in their special field of education and qualifications. There are opinions of researchers confirming that developed soft skills provide more than 80% of success in work.

We agree with the definition given by OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) researchers: “skills” are the totality of knowledge, attributes and abilities that enable an individual to successfully and consistently perform certain tasks, in a broad or narrow sense, and which he acquires and develops through training .[ten]

From the standpoint of assessing the content and compliance with modern requirements of innovative and competitive characteristics of the labor potential on a regional scale, we held a series of consultations with a request to answer the questions of the questionnaire blocks.

The content and usefulness of skills were divided into 2 groups: professional skills (Hard skills) and universal, organizational skills (Soft skills). Respondents were asked to give a retrospective assessment of the importance of 15 innovative and competitive soft skills in their work, self-assessment of the level of application of these skills, feedback on useful teaching methods from the standpoint of competencies in the development of knowledge, skills and abilities.

The survey involved university graduates with more than 3 years of work experience and employers-owners of small businesses in the manufacturing sector, services, catering and restaurants, private health clinics and trade. Respondents were asked to provide a retrospective assessment of the three main strengths and weaknesses in terms of skill development from the tertiary stage of the program, manifestation in the workplace, and employer expectations. The significance of the

listed Hard skills and Soft skills was assessed on a 10-point scale with increasing importance. During the consultations, the heads of small enterprises expressed their opinion that in order to establish sustainable business development based on the development of new products or a new quality of services, they need specialists: with creative thinking skills (7.8 points), organizational and business skills (6.4 points), marketing and market value management skills (6.6 points), with a scientific degree (3 points), information technology skills (10 points), product management skills (9.8 points), research skills and the development of new methods (here opinions differ for the manufacturing sector - 7.2 points and in the service sector, catering, health and trade - 8.25 points), analytical thinking skills (8 points), skills for quickly learning new knowledge, professional mobility (9.25 points), communication skills (the ability to introduce the audience to new ideas and methods) (9.25 points), skills in working with media services (7.25 points), initiative and innovation search skills (8 points), personal time management skills (9 points), communication skills with foreign partners (10 points for the manufacturing sector and 7.8 points for other service sectors). The diagram drawn up based on the results of the survey clearly shows the relevance of the formation of increased demand from small businesses for a group of skills - Soft skills.

Professionals agree with the opinion that university education programs more justify the formation of analytical thinking skills, the ability to quickly acquire new knowledge, professional literacy, and the use of information technology. At the same time, employers are not satisfied with the level of social and behavioral skills of graduates, and former students themselves often complain about the shortcomings of the studied

“WAYS TO SATISFY THE NEEDS OF SMALL BUSINESS IN THE TERRITORIES IN INNOVATIVE AND COMPETITIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LABOR POTENTIAL OF YOUTH”

university programs, which they see as the cause of weaknesses in their teamwork (collaboration, communication and leadership

qualities), in contrast to critical thinking and subject professional knowledge (Fig. 1).

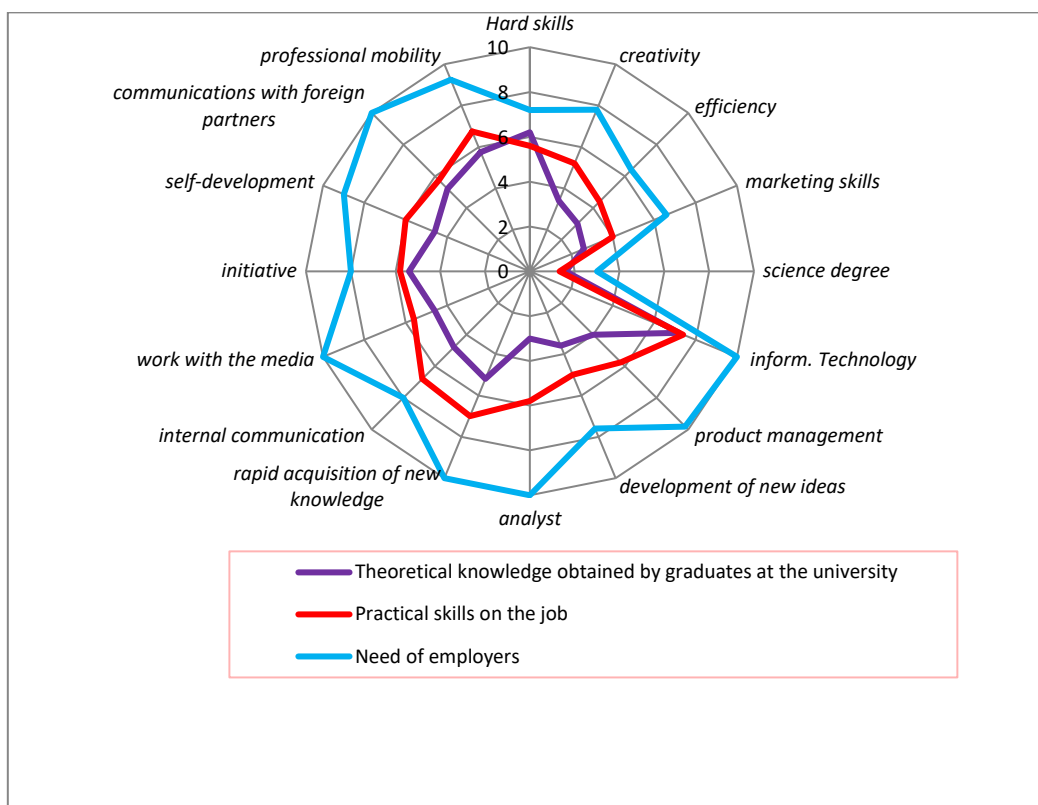


Fig 1. Assessment of the compliance of the innovative and competitive skills of university graduates shown in the work with innovatively interested small businesses from the point of view of the graduates themselves and their employers.

The innovation policy of small enterprises is oriented towards specialists with a broader disciplinary focus. Therefore, we propose that higher education institutions rethink competency-based curriculum approaches and use pedagogical methods that aim to develop skills that are important for innovation regardless of discipline. From this position, one of the modern educational models deserves attention - STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), capable of developing “flexible” skills with engineering innovative thinking in its program. [9] In addition, establishing a reasonable balance of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary skills,

especially in the field of medical entrepreneurship, helps to ensure transformative education.

Therefore, in order to increase the demand for the quality of educational services, as well as more flexible adaptation to the conditions of the knowledge economy, it is necessary to review the available pedagogical, material, informational, and financial resources, with a focus on the needs of the labor market for small businesses.

At the same time, we propose to solve the following problems:

1. Modernize the technological base of university sciences;

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2. Expand propaganda and organize the activities of small research and production clusters in the region;
3. In the context of the digitalization of the economy in the country, to establish the speed and access to the Internet for the effective use of ICT;
4. Establish targeted integration between ministries, small businesses, scientific organizations and universities in relevant areas based on the developed interaction platforms;
5. Develop conditions for revitalizing the business environment to expand opportunities and promote competition and innovation;
6. Improve university sciences, modernize their technological base;
7. Organize trips for active young IT entrepreneurs to exchange experience in successful foreign companies.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the transition to the path of development of the knowledge society is possible only as a result of targeted efforts not only of the state, but of the whole society. Advanced innovation-oriented highly professional education should be aimed at developing a person's natural predisposition to solve creative applied social, managerial, organizational, and technological problems.

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