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THE ESSENCE AND CONDITIONS FOR DEVELOPING RESEARCH SKILLS IN FUTURE ECONOMISTS

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Abstract:
This article theoretically analyzes the content and pedagogical conditions for the development of research skills of future economists. Based on the lexical, legal and scientific interpretations of the concept of "research", a definition adapted to the field of economics is developed and the structural structure of the competence is revealed. Based on a comparative study of international experience, the role of institutional, pedagogical, cultural and political conditions in the formation of research skills is determined. The article also proposes a system of criteria for assessing the level of formation of research skills

Keywords: research skills, economist, pedagogical conditions, international experience, competency-based approach.

INTRODUCTION

Today, the world economy has entered a new stage - the "knowledge economy". At this stage, the main wealth is not natural resources or production capacity, but the ability to create, analyze and apply innovation in practice. Therefore, the higher education system faces a fundamentally new task: to train specialists who are not only knowledgeable, but also conduct independent research and solve problems on a scientific basis [1]. However, practice shows that today, many students of economics studying in higher education institutions are taught to passively accept ready-made knowledge. They do not have the skills to work with statistical data, build economic models, make forecasts and defend their conclusions on a scientific basis. As a result, a deep gap is emerging between theoretical knowledge and practical research. After receiving a diploma, graduates are faced with a lack of ability to solve real economic problems (for example, evaluating an investment project, forecasting inflation, analyzing market conditions) [2].

This problem is not only pedagogical, but also strategic for Uzbekistan. Because economic reforms in our country, in particular, the "New Uzbekistan" development strategy [3] and the long-term plans until 2030, require economists with a research mindset who can make scientifically based decisions. If the higher education system cannot meet this requirement, the effectiveness of reforms will decrease, and the risk of making wrong decisions in the economy will increase.

The situation is also serious at the international level. In developed countries such as the European Union, the United States, Singapore, and South Korea, the early and systematic involvement of students in research activities has become a national policy [4]. In these countries, research-oriented education has significantly increased the competitiveness of graduates in the labor market. Conversely, in countries that are lagging behind in this regard, youth unemployment rates are high and economic growth rates are low.

In Uzbekistan, this problem has also begun to be recognized in recent years. Presidential decrees and laws have set the development of research activities as a priority task. However, in practice, the implementation of this task is slow. Because:

- curricula are based mainly on theoretical knowledge;
- professors and teachers themselves do not have sufficient knowledge of research methodology;
- the necessary conditions for independent research by students (laboratories, databases, scientific environment) have not been created;
- there are no clear criteria for assessing research skills.

As a result, students are afraid of research activities and avoid them. This may lead to a shortage of personnel in the field of economics in the future in issues requiring in-depth analysis and a scientific approach.

Therefore, the issue of developing research skills in future economists is no longer a purely theoretical problem, but is becoming a direct factor in the country's economic development. If this problem is not resolved immediately, Uzbekistan will face serious obstacles on the path to building a competitive economy.

Before clarifying the content and scientific nature of the problem under study within the framework of the topic, it is important to clarify the meaning of the concepts of "research" and "research", which form the basis of the research process. The scientific interpretation of these concepts is necessary for the logical substantiation of subsequent theoretical analyses and the formation of the author's approach.

In the "Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language", the term "research" is interpreted as a concept that

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expresses the results of investigation, study activities and scientific investigation [5]. "Research" means the process of engaging in research activities and conducting scientific research.

Researcher L.N. Martyushov (2017) considers scientific research to be the process of humanity's search for new knowledge, and its results – discoveries and inventions – to be the main driving force of civilizational progress [6]. It is especially important that the results of research have a direct impact on all spheres of society – from the economy to culture. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), research is the process of systematically collecting and analyzing data in order to deepen understanding of a particular problem or issue [7]. The main goal of research activity is to create new knowledge and expand existing knowledge.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Science and Scientific Activity" defines research as a type of intellectual activity that involves the search, collection, analysis, systematization, testing and creation of new knowledge, as well as the implementation of scientific and technical results in practice [8]. This definition reflects the systematic nature of research activities and their connection with practice.

Applied to the field of economics, a research economist collects market or macroeconomic data, analyzes them using statistical and econometric methods, develops economic models or forecasts, and implements the results in the form of investment projects or practical recommendations. Thus, research is a systematic activity that ensures an inextricable link between theoretical knowledge and practical application.

Uzbek scientist N.A. Shermukhamedova (2020) emphasizes that the purpose of scientific research is a complex process related to determining the essence of the object under study, its in-depth analysis, and forecasting its practical effectiveness [9]. In her opinion, research is aimed not only at explaining the problem, but also at assessing in advance what results its solutions will give.

Another Uzbek scientist I. Saidnazarov and his colleagues (2019) note that a dissertation is a fundamental scientific work that systematically summarizes the results of independent scientific research and justifies a comprehensive solution to a specific scientific problem [10]. In their opinion, it should include the formulation of the problem, a clear definition of the goals and objectives of the research, an analysis of theoretical sources, a choice of methodological approach, reliable processing of empirical results, and logical justification of scientific conclusions.

A.V. Vakhobov (2016) emphasizes that modeling is an important methodological tool in the scientific study of economic processes. The interrelationships of macroeconomic indicators, the dynamics of their change over time, and structural shifts are analyzed using economic models. This approach allows assessing the effectiveness of economic policy, identifying current trends, and forecasting future development directions [11].

In the methodological manual of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, research competence is defined as the ability of a specialist to identify scientific problems in his field, develop a research program, collect and analyze data, summarize the results and present them in the form of scientific works. For a future economist, this competence includes the ability to identify macroeconomic problems, develop a research program, collect statistical data and conduct econometric analysis, and present the results in the form of a scientific article or report.

Thus, the concept of "research" has a wide range of meanings, from the dictionary meaning to the legal definition and scientific views of foreign and Uzbek scientists. The development of research skills in future economists is understood as the formation of their abilities to identify macroeconomic problems, apply statistical and econometric analysis methods, create economic models, make forecasts, and present results on a scientific basis.

The issue of directing students to research activities is one of the priorities in the world's higher education systems. In developed countries, the educational process is gradually being transferred from the traditional model of knowledge transfer to a research-based model. In this case, the student is no longer a passive listener, but becomes an active participant in the process of independent search, analysis and creation of new knowledge.

International experience shows that several main models of developing research skills have been formed. In some countries, research activities are established from the early stages of undergraduate studies, and students are involved in scientific projects based on their individual interests. In this case, universities develop special programs, students participate in real research projects, and their scientific worldview is formed. Research is developed not only in connection with knowledge and skills, but also with personal qualities such as responsibility, initiative and critical thinking.

Another group of countries uses the "research university" model. In this case, some leading universities are tasked with developing scientific research and innovation activities as a priority. In these universities, education and scientific research are organized in a coordinated manner. Students master the basics of scientific methodology, work with empirical data, and are actively involved in the process of

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analyzing research results. This approach allows for a gradual introduction of research activities and flexibility. In some countries, a laboratory system and a mentoring-based model are widespread. In this case, students work closely with scientific supervisors, actively participate in the processes of working with empirical data and analyzing research results. Research activities, along with deepening students' academic knowledge, develop their methodological literacy and scientific communication skills. In this model, research skills are formed in a long-term and systematic manner. In some developed countries, research activities are closely linked to the state's innovation and economic development strategy. In this case, universities act as the main institutions carrying out scientific research. Research activities are supported by state grants and targeted programs. Scientific publications, grants and patents are considered the main indicators of efficiency. This approach ensures the rapid growth of scientific production.

In the European education system, research activities are considered a central element of the educational process. In this case, the university is interpreted not as an institution that transfers knowledge in a ready-made form, but as an academic space where scientific research is conducted and new knowledge is created. The inextricable link between education and scientific research has become a basic principle. Students have a certain freedom in choosing the topic of scientific research and have the opportunity to independently determine the direction of their research. In this model, research competence is developed not as a random activity, but as an academic process that is gradually formed.

The general conclusion of international experience shows that there is no single and universal model for the development of research skills. Each country forms a model that is appropriate for its socio-economic, cultural and institutional conditions. An effective model depends on the combination of the following factors: institutional factors (financial independence of universities, material and technical base, the presence of scientific schools), pedagogical factors (the role of the teacher, the flexibility of the curriculum, the assessment system), cultural factors (attitude to student independence, the ratio of collectivism and individualism) and political factors (state educational policy, level of funding).

Based on the study of international experience, it can be said that when developing a model aimed at developing students' research skills in the higher education system of Uzbekistan, it is advisable not to directly copy foreign experiences, but to adapt their positive aspects to local conditions. This can be achieved through the use of a phased approach, fundamental training traditions, early engagement elements, and some aspects of mentoring systems.

The effective development of research skills requires the creation of specific pedagogical conditions. These conditions can be divided into four main groups: institutional, pedagogical, cultural, and political conditions.

Institutional conditions. First, the material and technical base of a higher education institution is one of the main factors of research activity. Modern laboratories, computer equipment, Internet access, statistical and econometric software (Eviews, Stata, SPSS, Python, etc.) play an important role in developing students' skills in working with empirical data. Second, access to information resources - databases of scientific articles (Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar), electronic libraries, free access by students to statistical databases (State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, etc.) increases the quality of research work. Third, the presence of scientific schools and traditions - the scientific potential of professors and teachers, their focus on research activities, regular organization of scientific seminars, conferences and round tables help students to enter the scientific environment.

Pedagogical conditions. First, the role of the teacher - in modern higher education, the teacher should not only be a provider of knowledge, but also a methodologist and consultant who guides students' scientific research and helps them develop their research skills. The teacher performs guiding, advisory and motivating tasks at the stages of choosing a research topic for the student, determining methods, analyzing data and formalizing results. Second, the flexibility of the curriculum - incorporating research elements into the content of the subjects, introducing special subjects such as "Scientific Research Methodology", "Econometrics", "Economic Analysis", and supporting students' scientific interests through elective subjects is important. Third, the assessment system - when assessing students' research activities, not only the final result should be taken into account, but also the process itself (posing a problem, choosing a method, collecting and analyzing data, drawing conclusions). Coursework, final theses, scientific articles, and conference abstracts can be the main forms of assessment.

Cultural conditions. First, the attitude to student independence - the student should be encouraged to think independently, express and defend his views in the educational process. The student should become an active subject who does not simply agree with the teacher's opinion, but critically analyzes it and, if necessary, puts forward his own well-founded views. Second, the ratio of collectivism and individualism - group research projects develop students' skills in cooperation, exchange of ideas and finding solutions

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together, while individual research assignments form independent thinking and personal responsibility. The combination of both approaches is appropriate. Third, the attitude to mistakes - mistakes are inevitable in research activities. The student should not be afraid of making mistakes, but, on the contrary, be taught to analyze mistakes and learn from them. The teacher's tolerant and supportive position is important in this regard.

Political conditions. First, the state's educational policy - the development of research activities should be defined as a priority task at the state level, and appropriate laws, decrees and concepts should be adopted in this regard. Although some work has been done in the Republic of Uzbekistan in this regard, sufficient results have not yet been achieved in practice. Second, the funding system - it is necessary to create grants, scholarships, research projects and other financial support mechanisms for students' scientific research. Third, cooperation between the state and universities - it is necessary to create conditions for the implementation of research results by state bodies in practice, and to establish contacts between universities and sectors of the real economy.

The above conditions are closely related to each other, and the development of research skills will be effective only when all of them are provided together. Otherwise, the absence of some conditions will reduce the effectiveness of the entire process. For example, even if there is a good material and technical base, if the teacher cannot direct students to research or the assessment system is poorly organized, it is difficult to achieve the expected result. Therefore, it is important to take an integrated approach to the development of research skills, to create all the conditions together and ensure their mutual harmony.

CONCLUSION

The issue of developing research skills of future economists is one of the important pedagogical problems of modern higher education. Based on the analysis conducted in this article, the following conclusions were drawn.

The concept of "research" has a wide range of meanings, from the dictionary meaning to the legal definition, to the scientific views of foreign and Uzbek scientists. The development of research skills in future economists is understood as the formation of their abilities to identify macroeconomic problems, apply statistical and econometric analysis methods, create economic models, make forecasts and present results on a scientific basis.

International experience shows that there is no single and universal model for developing research skills. Each country forms a model that is appropriate for its socio-economic, cultural and institutional conditions. An effective model depends on the combination of the following factors: institutional factors (material and technical base, information resources, scientific schools), pedagogical factors (the role of the teacher, the flexibility of the curriculum, the assessment system), cultural factors (attitude to independence, the ratio of collectivism and individualism, the attitude to making mistakes) and political factors (state policy, the level of funding).

The effective development of research skills requires the creation of certain pedagogical conditions. Institutional conditions - material and technical base, access to information resources, the presence of scientific schools and traditions. Pedagogical conditions - the role of the teacher as a consultant and guide, the flexibility of the curriculum, the process orientation of the assessment system. Cultural conditions - encouraging student independence, the combination of group and individual work, tolerance for mistakes. Political conditions - support at the state level, the financing system, cooperation between the university and the real economy.

The issue of developing research skills of future economists should be recognized as an independent pedagogical problem, and in solving it, it is necessary to critically and adaptively apply foreign experience, develop a methodological system based on a competency-based and step-by-step approach. Future research should be focused on empirically verifying this methodological system, conducting pilot tests, and implementing the results into educational practice.

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