

ESSENCE AND FEATURES OF THE MARKET FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses approaches to defining the concept of “market of educational services”. The essence of the educational services market is determined. The structure is revealed and characteristics of the educational services market are given.

Keywords: market, educational services, producers of educational services, consumers of educational services, contract, resource.

The market for educational services can be characterized as a system of direct and indirect socio-economic relations regarding the purchase and sale of goods “educational services”, which have a use value, a market price determined by supply and demand [10, p. 54]. This system assumes that the consumer can choose the form and methods of satisfying the need for education.

Currently, the following approaches to defining the concept of “market for educational services” have been formed in economic theory (Table 1).

Table 1. Main approaches to defining the “market of educational services”

Author	Definition
Xashirov O.A.	The market in the field of education is an inseparable component of the market economy, performing the functions of supply and demand for educational services. The content of the regulation is that at each moment of time it is necessary to coordinate the timing, quality and volume of offers of educational services by educational institutions or individual producers in accordance with the structure of individual needs and forms of ownership [11, p. 34]
Berezin I.S.	The market for educational services - material interactions between participants in the educational process: students, organizations providing educational services, individuals and organizations paying for these services[1]
Shumov Yu.A., Kedrovskaya L.G.	The market for educational services is a system of economic life of society, related to the sphere of circulation and characterized by the mutual independence of subjects who make general decisions on the assignment of educational services [13, p. 24]
Ostapchenko V.D.	The market in the field of education is a set of economic relations that develop in the commodity educational production between its subjects regarding the production, exchange and consumption of goods “educational services” [4, p. 85]
Burdenko E.V.	The market for educational services is a competitive relationship that arises on the basis of proximate interaction between subjects as a result of the purchase and sale of educational services and operates within the framework of state regulation [2, p. 14]
Polyanskix T.A.	The market for educational services should be considered as economic relations arising on the basis of sustainable interaction between producers and consumers of these services, the key factors of which are demand, supply, price, costs and profit [5, p. 11]
Fokina O.I	The market for educational services represents a set of economic relations that develop between producers (sellers) and consumers (buyers) regarding the purchase and sale of the product “educational service” in the exchange process [10, p. 9]

We will consider the market for educational services as contractual relationships entered into by consumers and producers of educational services for the purpose of purchasing or selling a given educational service.

The essence of the educational services market is most fully manifested in its following functions:

- the function of self-regulation of the provision of educational services, manifested in the expansion of the scope of provision of services and an increase in prices for them as demand grows;
- a stimulating function, expressed in the introduction of new educational technologies that help reduce costs and lower prices for training specialists;
- functions of social significance of educational services in conditions of their absence;
- a regulatory function that establishes certain proportions in the provision of educational services and the exchange of them;
- the function of democratization, manifested in the differentiation of educational institutions and the liberation of education from non-viable elements [9, p. 255–256].

The main subjects of market relations in the educational services market are: producers of educational services (educational institutions and individuals providing educational services on an individual basis); consumers of educational services (individuals, firms, enterprises, organizations, governing bodies, etc.); intermediaries (including employment services, labor exchanges, public institutions and structures that promote the promotion of educational services on the market, etc.) [2; 4; 9; 10].

Producers of educational services form the supply of these services on the market. The most active subject of market relations among these producers are educational institutions, which have a decisive influence on the structure of the services offered, and, consequently, market segmentation [9; 10].

Consumers of educational services create demand for them. At the same time, society, firms, enterprises, organizations, etc. act, in essence, as intermediate consumers of educational services (customers, in a way).

Being interested in the most complete and effective satisfaction of their needs for educational services, they stimulate this consumption, including paying for these services in full or in part, creating various kinds of scholarship funds, etc.

The final consumer of educational services is a specific individual who serves as a material carrier of educational, professional, cultural and spiritual potential and uses it not only for the subsequent creation of public goods and improvement of his financial situation, but also to satisfy his non-material needs (cultural, spiritual, cognitive and etc.) [3; 12].

Intermediary structures facilitate the effective promotion of educational services on the market and perform functions such as information, consulting, organizing the sale of educational services, resource support for education, etc. [4; 5].

The interaction of subjects of market relations in the educational services market is determined by the mechanism of its functioning. This mechanism is based on a set of general principles for organizing market relations that determine the strategy and tactics of behavior in the market of producers, intermediaries and consumers of educational services [2].

The objects of the educational services market are: educational services offered for exchange, which are in certain demand; the nature of the market exchange of these services (specific objects of exchange and economic relations between subjects of the educational services market); quantitative parameters of demand and supply of educational services (boundaries of the educational services market and its segments); environmental (marketing) environment of the educational services market; trends in changes in the conditions of these services in a separate segment and in the market as a whole; competitiveness of educational services [3; 9; 12].

The range of educational services should also be included in the list of educational market objects, since along with the main criterion of content, thematic focus (profile) and specialization of education, the criteria of depth, thoroughness, duration of provision of educational services, their breadth, degree of fundamentality, as well as the degree of practicality are taken into account here. orientation towards solving problems of specific consumers [9].

Structuring the educational services market involves identifying its main structure-forming elements according to certain characteristics. The largest structure-forming elements of the educational services market, identified according to its essential characteristics, are producers of educational services and end consumers of these services with a complex and multidimensional set of their needs and interests [10, p. 48–49].

There is a division of producers of educational services according to the organizational and legal forms of educational organizations. On this basis, state, municipal and non-state educational organizations are distinguished. This classification causes a lot of controversy [2–5; 7; 9; 12; 13]. Firstly, in relation to producers of educational services, it is too conditional, since both those and other and third educational organizations, by the nature of their activities, are focused on solving the same government problems in the field of education. Secondly, in practice, such a classification led to an unjustified opposition of non-state educational organizations to state ones, which provoked unfair competition between them in the educational services market.

In this regard, it is more correct, in our opinion, to structure the market into groups of educational service providers based on the following characteristics: the composition of the founders, forms of education, educational programs being implemented, type of educational organization, status of the educational organization (Fig. 1).

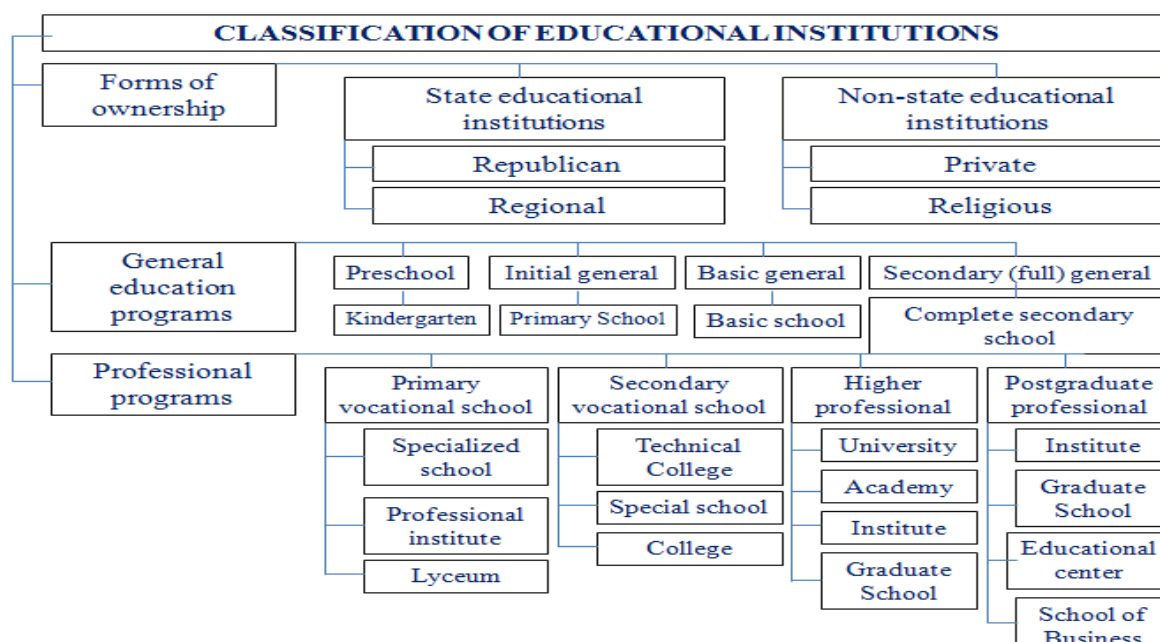


Fig. 1. Classification of educational institutions [13, p. 37].

The structuring of the market for educational services in terms of their supply can be carried out according to the same criteria by which groups of producers of educational services were distinguished. But in addition to such structuring, it is of interest to divide the market into groups of educational services according to parameters that reflect the specifics of their production. Based on these parameters, the educational services market can be divided into the following parts: educational services, the production of which is paid for from the federal and local budgets, from extra-budgetary sources, directly by the consumer or his sponsor; educational services, prices for which are regulated by the state, and educational services, prices for which are formed purely by market mechanisms; educational services intended for a group of consumers and for an individual consumer [13, p. 40–42].

This division is necessary to assess the supply of educational services on the market, track trends in its changes, and determine the behavior strategy of subjects of market relations. This is important for producers of educational services in order to make the right management decisions, strengthen positions in the market, identify potential competitors, increase demand for their educational services, etc.

The educational services market is characterized by the following features:

1. Mismatch between the labor market and the educational services market. The disproportion between the structure and volumes of specialist training and the professional and qualification structure of labor demand is one of the significant factors that sets the quantitative and qualitative parameters of the imbalance [9, p. 260–262].
2. A large time lag between the emergence of demand for specialists of a particular profile and the period when this demand can be satisfied.
3. Demand in the educational services market has a pronounced regional localization, i.e. most applicants are consumers in the regional educational services market and most graduates are in demand in the regional labor market [3, p. 80–81].
4. Reduced demand for the services of primary vocational education institutions and, as a consequence, a reduction in their number. The demand for primary vocational education services is extremely low [2, p. 14–15].
5. One of the features characterizing the situation in the educational services market is the massification of higher education [3, p. 82–83].

The goal of obtaining higher education has become a generally accepted norm, demonstrated by all age, professional, regional and income groups. The need for a higher education diploma is mainly dictated by employers. Higher education is one of the main criteria by which an applicant is considered for a particular position. In 95% of cases, the employer requires a higher education diploma. The educational system has acquired the features of a market one: demand from applicants is growing every year, universities are in a hurry to respond with offers [12].

6. Decrease in the number of potential consumers of educational services due to negative demographic processes in the country. The demographic situation in the country contributes to improving the quality of educational services. As a result, we should expect increased competition between universities.

7. The dominant feature of the modern market of educational services is the rapprochement and integration of national education systems.

A reflection of the integration process is the cooperation of educational organizations and national educational systems in the development of uniform quality standards and units of measurement of teaching load.

8. The main qualitative feature of demand parameters in the educational services market is the formation of a qualitatively new demand for a system of continuous specialized secondary (lyceum), pre-university secondary specialized (college), university, as well as additional, postgraduate education on the basis of a single university complex [3, p. 84].

9. A significant feature shaping the modern market of educational services is the recently emerged direction of distance learning [10, p. 29–31]. It seems to be one of the most promising forms of development of educational services, which makes it possible to get the desired education without leaving home. Distance learning makes quality education more accessible and opens up new prospects for both consumers and sellers.

In general, the view of the education system as a market for educational services, where seller and buyer meet, is still in its formation stage.

The consumer cannot yet take full advantage of the rights granted, and the seller is not ready to fully respond mobile and adequately to the educational demands of society.

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