THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSITY IN KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

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**Purpose.** The article traces the dynamics of the “evolution” of the idea of university over several centuries and analyzes the sociocultural transformations taking place with the university in the modern digital society.

**Methodology.** The basis of the research are methods of theoretical generalizations, methods of classification, comparative and systemic methods.

**Results.** The generalization of views on university made it possible to distinguish two stages in the dynamics of the sociocultural role of it as a social institution: the stage of cultural orientation of the idea of university education and the stage of professional orientation. The sociocultural foundations of the first stage were the understanding of university as a social institution, the main mission of which is the formation of ideological attitudes that would be focused on humanistic and universal principles of life. University, in this case, acts as a translator of culture, its attitudes and values. The stage of vocational orientation is characterized by the understanding of the university as a professional educational institution that does not form the worldview foundations of a person. The university is a communication platform, a network organization, providing educational services - knowledge free from any philosophical, moral and ideological burdens. At this stage, the university provides private utilitarian knowledge, does not lead to a common understanding and experience of the unity of knowledge. A new economic model of the university comes, based on the transfer of pragmatic, narrowly professional, in-demand knowledge, which is assigned the status of goods and services.

**Practical implications.** The results of the research can be applied in the field of socio-economic forecasting in the field of higher education.

**Keywords:** idea of a university; digital society; classical university; university mission; knowledge economy.
ИДЕЯ УНИВЕРСИТЕТА В ЦИФРОВОМ ОБЩЕСТВЕ

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Цель. В статье прослежена динамика «эволюционирования» идеи университета на протяжении нескольких столетий его развития и проанализированы происходящие с университетом в современном цифровом обществе социокультурные трансформации.

Метод или методология проведения работы. Основу исследования составляют методы теоретических обобщений, приемы классификации, компаративистский и системный методы.

Результаты. Обобщение взглядов на университет позволило выделить два этапа в динамике социокультурной роли университета как социального института: этап культурной ориентации идеи университетского образования и этап профессиональной ориентации идеи университета. Социокультурными основаниями первого этапа стало понимание университета как социального института, основной миссией которого становится формирование мировоззренческих установок, которые были бы ориентированы на гуманистические и общечеловеческие принципы бытия. Университет, в этом случае выступает в качестве транслятора культуры, ее установок и ценностей. Этап профессиональной ориентации характеризуется пониманием университета как профессионального образовательного учреждения, не формирующего мировоззренческие основания человека. Университет представляет собой коммуникативную площадку, сеть организацию, предоставляя образовательные услуги — знания, свободные от каких-либо философских, моральных и идеологических нагрузок. Университет на данном этапе дает частные утилитарные знания, не приводит к общему пониманию и переживанию единства знания. Приходит новая экономическая модель университета, основанная на передаче прагматичных, узкопрофессиональных, востребованных знаний, которым присваивается статус товара и услуги.

Область применения результатов. Результаты исследования могут быть применены в сфере социально-экономического прогнозирования в области высшего образования.
**Ключевые слова:** идея университета; цифровое общество; классический университет; миссия университета; экономика знаний.

The sociocultural transformation of modern society, taking place through the processes of globalization, informatization, universal digitalization and virtual communications, is changing the traditional educational model in the higher education system. New socio-cultural conditions create the preconditions for a radical transformation of not only the content, but also the ideological orientation of education. The humanistic component of education is being leveled, which was based on the idea of a comprehensive disclosure and formation of the spirit of the individual, upbringing of a person [5]. This idea is being replaced by a new economic model of the university, based on the transfer of pragmatic, narrowly professional, in-demand knowledge, which is assigned the status of goods and services.

How is the university changing today, what is happening with its status in the modern world? Is the model of «education» that the university has been reproducing for a long time changing? The university as a leading social institution responsible for the production and reproduction of knowledge is changing in response to the socio-cultural challenges of a transforming society. In order to understand how the idea of the university has changed throughout its existence, it is necessary to trace the historical and cultural dynamics of its development as a social institution.

The formation of the university as an institution of socialization, based on a humanistic goal and orientation, took place in the context of the process of intellectual assimilation of sociocultural experience, and the principle of humanism as a universal basis for the educational paradigm of the university took the form of reflexive anthropocentrism [14, p. 11].

The history of the creation of the university dates back to the Middle Ages. The search for truth becomes the subject of the university’s activity: at the heart of its development is the classical type of philosophical thinking, which implies the presence of two opposite categories - truth and opinion. The University, as an institution of intellectual socializa-
tion, took on the function of seeking truth and scientific knowledge, which would be focused on humanistic values and attitudes – on an integral Universe [14, p.18].

It is this orientation of the university towards the cognition of the categories of the universal, lawful and general that has become its characteristic feature. It is within the framework of the European tradition that the university, with its specific orientation towards educational universality, has developed as a leading social institution responsible for the transmission of knowledge. Through the university, universalization through the «containment» of the entire completeness of collective experience into the individual was the first turned into the main condition for the reproduction of culture and the existence of society [17]. Such a cultural attitude had the main goal of forming a person not as a narrow professional, but as a generalist who owns the main body of theoretical and practical knowledge and, due to this, is capable of retaining the entire completeness of collective experience in the course of its further build-up [14].

The main goal of creating a medieval university was education, which was understood as an erection to the models of knowledge. It was knowledge and its transmission that underlay the idea of the university. Having arisen through the unification of various groups of people cultivating knowledge, connected by common interests, the university saw as its goal the pursuit of truth, which would exactly correspond to reality.

However, only in modern times the university begins to be considered from the point of view of the «usefulness» of the social function that it carries in itself. It is this period that is considered to be the time of the formation of the classical university. The main prerequisite and foundation for its formation was the development of the classical type of scientific rationality, which laid the foundations of classical university education. The main characteristics of the model of classical university education include such as confidence in the presence of absolute and unchanging foundations of knowledge, understanding the process of cognition as an endless building on knowledge, the perception of each object of cognition as strictly outlined and not related to other objects and the consideration of truth as the basis of knowledge [17].
It was the classic type of scientific thinking that contributed to the formation of a general, universal picture of the world, which would obey the fundamental principles and laws of being, which also had one common foundation. Therefore, the university was entrenched with a stable view as a social institution, transmitting only true knowledge, cleared of subjective attitudes. The classical type of scientific rationality raised scientific knowledge to a special rank, a special way of organizing knowledge, which became the epistemological basis of classical university education.

Throughout the history of the development of the classical model of the university, the idea of transmitting true knowledge has been closely linked with the idea of transmitting cultural patterns. This relationship was most clearly reflected in the Humboldt model of the university. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Friedrich Wilhelm University was founded in Berlin, and it was on its basis that this university model was first implemented.

The following provisions were put forward as the fundamental criteria of the Humboldt model of the university [8]:

1. The view on higher education as a simple form of transferring pragmatic knowledge, which can be assessed only by its usefulness and practical application, was rejected.

2. Priority was given to both theoretical and empirical knowledge, as opposed to the prevalence of practical knowledge earlier.

3. The humanities direction in education was positioned as a necessary element of any university. Only the humanitarian component, according to Humboldt, could contribute to the development of a harmonious personality.

The Humboldt University model implied the mandatory autonomy of the university, which found expression in the freedom of teaching and learning. But the main distinguishing feature of this model is the integration of educational and research functions within the university. Thus, already in the 19th century, the university model proposed by Humboldt became the prototype of the model of the modern research university.

Humboldt saw a special mission for higher education, clearly distinguishing the university from other professional educational institutions.
In his opinion, only university graduates have a sufficiently developed, deep thinking, which could be called «innovative» today.

The vision of the university model was proposed in 1852 by the English cardinal John Henry Newman. In his work “The Idea of a University” he defined the university as self-valuable and autonomous from the church or the state. In his opinion, the idea of a university is to perform three main functions [12]:

- production of knowledge as an intellectual product;
- learning or reproduction of this knowledge;
- educational or spiritual impact on students. University education, according to J. Newman, must first of all be a way of transmitting and educating the spiritual through the transmission of intelligence.

The university should not only provide an increment and transfer of theoretical and empirical knowledge, but also form a holistic, universal, comprehensive picture of the world and a real view of the events in students. Newman considered the main disadvantage of narrowly professional higher educational institutions their too limited specialization, adherence to a narrow circle of principles and methods of scientific research. Only an interdisciplinary approach in the interrelation of sciences, in his opinion, is able to create a model of «holistic, true and universal» [15] knowledge.

Carl Jaspers sees the idea of a university as consonant with the model of a research university, in whose opinion researchers and students complement each other perfectly, pursuing a common goal – the search for objective knowledge. The university, as noted by Jaspers, is an important social institution, where «the identity of the era is cultivated» [19]. Its goal is the search for true knowledge that can only be discovered as a result of incessant scientific research.

Thus, the idea of the classical K. Jaspers University is based on the fact that it should be based not only on the leading achievements in the field of fundamental natural and engineering sciences, but also from the field of humanitarian knowledge. The views we have considered above on the idea of a university, its functions and missions performed in soci-
etry allow us to trace the specifics of the university as a cognitive social institution. First of all, the categories of knowledge and truth form the basis of classical university education, which have created a general idea of the so-called «idea of the university».

Naturally, the idea of a university is not formed by itself, its formation was facilitated by special sociocultural characteristics and patterns. In order to identify the main criteria of the classical model of the university, it is necessary to consider the sociocultural foundations of its activities, which had a significant impact on the development of the university.

The following provisions can be considered the main socio-cultural foundations of the development of a classical university [17]:

- The educational and research activities of the university are based on the principle of classical scientific rationality, which is based on the laws of logic, universal, universal and objective laws of nature and society.
- The university develops disciplinarity as the analytical foundation of classical science.
- The search for objective and absolute truth, self-valuable in itself, is a direct measurement of the educational and research activities of the university.
- The University is autonomous and independent, independently determines the criteria of true knowledge and transmits it to the society.
- The high level of basic research does not negate the interest in empirical research.
- Knowledge is viewed as an intrinsic value, as a spiritual and cultural category, and not only as a practical tool for professional use.
- Understanding of the idea of the university as the production and reproduction of not only established knowledge, but also cultural patterns.

Taking the principles of the organization of classical science as a basis, the classical university is interpreted through such categories as stability, stability, homogeneity, and non-dynamism.

Along with a positive assessment of these categories, which speak of the stability and immutability of such a social institution as a university,
we can say that such characteristics as stability and non-dynamism, in turn, rather indicate the «sluggishness» of the system to sociocultural changes. In addition, «non-developing» and «inflexible» become synonyms of «bureaucratic» as inherent in traditional university management [3].

The onset of the post-industrial state of the social order with its economic dominant and market relations raised the issue of the place and role of the university in the social structure. In the new economic conditions, when everything becomes a service and a commodity, the university can no longer exist autonomously and have its own special inviolable status of a separate «state within a state». The university, like any other social institution, now needs to meet the requirements of financial efficiency.

This idea was already outlined in his works by the American economist Thorstein Veblen at the beginning of the 20th century. It was in the ability to easily adapt and adapt to changing sociocultural conditions that Veblen saw the main meaning of higher education.

According to T. Veblen’s theory, the university, as a social institution, responsive to any sociocultural changes, must necessarily be built into the existing socio-economic system and meet its requirements. Scientific and technological progress, active development of science, demand for practical narrow professional skills - all this created the preconditions for the gradual transformation of the university into a narrow professional higher educational institution, the main priority of which is mastering a narrow set of specialized practice-oriented knowledge and skills, and the formation of education and cultural values is reduced to no. The knowledge produced and reproduced at the university now began to act as a product and service, and scientific research – as a by-product of production activities [4].

Thus, since the twentieth century, the role and functions of the leading educational social institution have been rethought and transformed into the so-called «utilitarian» idea of the university.

Representatives of utilitarianism associated the development of the research potential of the university with the progress of scientific knowl-
edge and the subsequent introduction of research results into production processes [18]. From now on, the university began to be considered as an economic entity that is directly interwoven into the system of market relations. Classical education came to be seen as a wasteful and archaic property of the idle classes, which contains a complex of fantastic uselessness.

The original concept of understanding the idea of a university was put forward by the American researcher Abraham Flexner. In his works, he undertook a kind of attempt to re-comprehend the idea of the university, but already in the era of the formation of a post-industrial society.

Unlike other researchers who were concerned with understanding the role and place of the university in society, Flexner paid special attention to the social mission of the university. It was at the university that he saw that social force that would be able to solve serious social problems, find a way out of the critical situations that had developed in society and take responsibility for further social transformations. At the university, Flexner sees a reflection of his era and therefore gives him such a characteristic as «modern», explaining that the university always belongs to a certain time and is inside, but not outside the social structure of society at various stages of its development [20].

J. Ortega y Gasset paid particular attention to the consideration of the university as a special social institution. He, like previous researchers, turns his attention to the problem of transforming higher education into highly specialized education, which inevitably leads to the emergence of a huge number of «a kind of knowledgeable ignoramus». These «communicating ignoramuses» possess a certain set of professional skills, but do not possess the sum of ideas about the nature of phenomena, which allows us to call them «the mass inhabitant» [13].

The German philosopher Karl Jaspers holds a special place among the researchers involved in understanding the idea of the university. His ideas that the university should first of all be seen as a phenomenon of spiritual culture are consonant with the ideas of Ortega y Gasset. The most important influence of the university on the personality is educational and spiritual.
The idea of a university, according to Jaspers, should not have a national or state character, but should be expressed in «the search for the ideals of truth, freedom and justice in this unfree, unjust world» [19]. The social mission of the university as a leading cognitive social institution, according to Jaspers, should be to select the most capable and talented individuals. An educated person after graduation will be able to apply their deep knowledge to a wider range of activities than a narrow specialist can.

Summarizing all of the above, it is possible to trace the dynamics of the evolution of the idea of a university by analyzing the sociocultural transformations, due to which the university becomes a leading social institution responsible for the integration of education and science and the creation of new sociocultural forms. In our opinion, the evolution of the idea of a university contains an unchanging and stable core of ideas about it, which is expressed in understanding the educational value of the content of university knowledge, as well as the idea of an indirect or direct influence of the university on the development of society. Until modern times, the influence of the university on social development was considered insignificant. Only after, with the development of scientific knowledge and the active development of technology, the idea of the need for the reproduction of professional personnel by the university received recognition. At the same time, more and more calls were heard from social philosophers to warn universities against too narrow a specialization and the need to preserve cultural function.

Generalization of views on the university, its sociocultural foundations and functions made it possible to distinguish two stages in the dynamics of the sociocultural role of the university as a social institution: the stage of cultural orientation of the idea of university education and the stage of professional orientation of the idea of the university. The sociocultural foundations of the first stage were the understanding of the university as a social institution, the main mission of which is the formation of ideological attitudes, focused on humanistic and universal principles of being. The university, in this case, acts as a translator of culture, its attitudes and values.
The stage of vocational guidance is characterized by the understanding of the university as a professional educational institution that does not aim at influencing a person’s worldview. The university is a communication platform, a network organization, providing educational «services» – knowledge free of any philosophical, moral and ideological burdens [16]. At this stage, the university provides private utilitarian knowledge.

Thus, there is a transformation of the traditional ideas of education: the leveling of the humanistic component, which was based on the idea of «comprehensive disclosure and formation of the spirit of the individual, education of a person». This idea is being replaced by a new economic model of the university, based on the transfer of pragmatic, narrowly professional, utilitarian knowledge that is assigned the status of goods and services [21].

We are dealing with ever growing technological processes that have an impact on almost all spheres of society. In the conditions of a technogenic civilization, not only high professional qualities of specialists, but also their humanitarian training are in demand. Because only the humanitarian, human component will make it possible to avoid excessive fetishization of various technical means created for life, and through their possession to solve problems caused by the inept use of technical means [6].

In modern conditions, the problem of a person’s responsibility for the formation of his own personality becomes more urgent than ever: the place and role of a person is no longer determined by his prescribed status, but this status is formed and achieved by him independently, and it is directly related to the level of education received by the individual. Therefore, it is necessary to preserve the general cultural component at the university, without reducing higher education to the level of a highly specialized professional educational institution [9].

We believe that only the movement of the university towards the predominance of its cultural component in its idea is capable of creating a dialogue between engineering, technical, natural science and humanitarian cultures. The university should be a kind of cognitive space in which
the synthesis of natural and humanitarian knowledge takes place, which will allow to form a universal, universal type of thinking. Knowledge should not only provide the filling of the necessary professional competencies, but also be focused on moral and spiritual meanings, be the basis for building humanistic worldview principles aimed at overcoming technocratic thinking. The fundamental nature of university education should create the preconditions for the formation of project and predictive thinking among specialists [2, p. 23].

If education is interpreted as the disclosure of the human personality, his individuality and originality, then the principle of humanism, which defines a person as the highest value, should form the basis of the educational model of higher education. The university as a social institution, performing primarily a cognitive mission, needs to contribute to the implementation through the educational process of the axiological interpretation of the relationship between nature, man and society, which has the status of a necessary condition for the implementation of the cultural and humanistic function of university education.

Only such an approach will allow solving the problem of education and its responsibility to society. If the renewal of the education system, in fact, will allow achieving a correct understanding of issues of ethnic, religious, gender and social nature, then, obviously, in a knowledge-based society all social relations and institutions will change, most problems will be resolved, which seem insoluble within the framework of modern society [7].

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