

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

**BOLOGNA PROCESS IN ARMENIA: FROM IMPLEMENTATION TO
SATISFACTION**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASAU- Armenian State Agrarian University

ASUE- Armenian State University of Economics

ECTS- European Credit Transfer System

EHEA- European Higher Education Area

ERA- European Research Area

FG- Focus Group

HEI- Higher Education Institutions

NGO- Non-governmental Organization

RA- Republic of Armenia

RAU- Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University

RQ- Research Question

SEUA- State Engineering University of Armenia

USSR- Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

YSLU- Yerevan State Linguistic University after V. Bryusov

YSU- Yerevan State University

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to study the condition of higher education after the introduction of Bologna reforms, to examine one of the pillars of Bologna process-the credit system and, finally to find out how it has affected the quality of education and the motivation of students.

At first, the Bologna Process is described for precise understanding of the topic and the practice of the reforms in different European countries. The research is focused on the Armenian universities. The paper aims to find out whether the implementation of the Bologna Process has affected the quality of education, and if affected, whether it has affected positively or negatively. Focus groups with professors and students, and a survey among students were conducted to answer to the research questions.

In the framework of this study it was found out that both the students and professors are divided in their opinions about the reforms, and the process of implementation. Mainly, they complain about the implementation that should be carried out more seriously and should be managed more effectively.

Finally the paper comes up with conclusions and some recommendations, the fulfilment of which will contribute to the elimination of current drawbacks and will promote further development of the system.

Introduction

*The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think,
rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves,
than to load the memory with thoughts of other men.*

Bill Beattie

Education is, was and always will be the cornerstone of development, the guarantee of success and the most important investment that people may make in their lives. This statement has always been as important as it is now. If in past centuries the pace of education was not that much rapid and fast developing, today's situation differs totally. Throughout the world both the secondary and higher education has become the first question in all the families.

The education was always very developed in European countries, especially in England and Germany. These are the two countries where anyone would wish to study. Certainly besides these two countries, there are a lot of other countries throughout Europe that have high quality in higher education.

The situation in Armenia is different. From 1922 to 1991 our country was under the Soviet system. During this period the life was much easier in the sense that people graduating from one university, and getting one profession could immediately get jobs. The state had an obligation to ensure a workplace for everyone, and it did. This was not a time when career was as important as it is today, but getting jobs was definitely easier.

The picture of today's system cannot be compared with the past one. Today there are many opportunities. Most of the young generation wishes to be the leaders in their respective field, and this goal is accompanied by the fact that there is a high competition among the

professionals, and today graduating from one university cannot surprise anyone. Most of the students that want to have a high-salary job have to study well, during studies participate in voluntary works, take internships, be active in NGOs, take some extra subjects and certainly be educated abroad.

Why did this happen? The pace of the development in any sphere including economics, mathematics and especially technology is very fast, and today's student has to learn a lot besides the textbooks of universities and taking every-term exams. The growing willingness to study abroad is conditioned by the fact that many employees require it for high positions, and today, in the century of "money," where people know the value of wealth, they wish to be not just "managers" but "bosses" in their professional career. Certainly this becomes possible through better education that unfortunately today cannot be received in our country.

After independence Armenia was facing a difficult period of adapting to the changes of 21st century. The system of education still remained almost the same as it was during the Soviet era. There are still professors at the Universities who used to lecture during 1990s and even earlier.

The situation was expected to change to the better when the Bologna process was introduced in 2006. These reforms came to change the Soviet system with the new one which was going to be on the same ground with the European standards.

The Bologna Process has already been introduced in Europe in 1999 with the Bologna Declaration. It was the driving force of Higher Education reform in Europe. The impact of these reforms was phenomenal despite the fact that the Bologna Process is an intergovernmental and legally non binding. The main aim was to establish a European Area of Higher education (EHEA) by the year 2010. This had to be done through many changes in the system and through

reforms as to remove the obstacles to mobility and the creation of a readable and transparent system of degrees essentially based on 3 cycles: Undergraduate Bachelor degrees, Master's degrees and doctorates. Other areas of the reforms put emphasis on quality assurance, acceptance and transferability of qualification and credits as well as creating a European dimension in higher education and promoting life-long learning (Lane, 2008).

The process had pros and cons. Good thing about the reforms is a two-tier system that may reduce the cost of wrong choices made by students. Besides, a two-tier system promotes flexible succession into postgraduate studies by allowing students to enter the labor market earlier and to find out what competencies they should develop when going back to university for obtaining a master's degree (Cardoso et al, 2008). It was found out that in the countries where graduates enter the labor market earlier, the consequences of education tend to be more positive (Harmon et al. 2003). These are few of the factors that show the possibility of European higher education to be much more responsive to the needs of an increasingly flexible labor market and, therefore, boost graduate employability.

However, there is another view, according to which the new system is based on the programs that seem to be the pressed ones of the older programs. In this case, if we compare the students graduated from the universities where they have studied under the new system with those graduated from old ones, we will definitely see the better knowledge in the latter students. This view is based on the assumption, that in two-tier system students do not get the knowledge deeply (Cardoso et al, 2008).

The fact that the students will enter the labor market after receiving Bachelor's degree certainly is not a dogma, and a survey was held, according to which only 22% of the institutions

reported that most of their students will enter the labor market after finishing the first cycle. This brings skepticism about the success of the reforms (Crosier et al, 2007).

Above said shows that the change towards the new system was difficult even in European states, which have rich background in the sphere of education. One can say that for such countries the reforms are much more difficult because they may not wish to change what has already had firm roots.

Everything has both positive and negative implications and any kind of reforms may be understood by different people differently. Despite all the negative factors of the reforms, they have already started, and the only way in this situation is to eliminate the negative consequences and obstacles towards a better system.

The reason why this topic was chosen as an object of study is the fact that since 2006 introduction of the new system in Armenia, there has been much criticism of the system by the professors and by the students as well. The main criticism was based on several points: unexpected changes for not only students but for the professors and administrative staff of the universities, the decline of the quality of education, not systematic way of reforms, and absence of leadership in correct implementation. The main arguments of the professors were that the students became less responsible, and the aim of their learning process became not the quality but just the credits.

These and other opinions led me to examine the subject and to find out what lies behind these opinions and what should be done to make the system work.

Another reason of choosing this topic is the fact that our country is a developing country and since its independence we have adopted democratic values. So as to become a developed and democratic country equal to the European democracies, we are trying to adopt their traditions.

Sometimes, while taking examples of these countries, we fail to take into consideration the specifications of our nation. This happened with the Bologna process as well. While trying to change the system to a better one, we did not consider the fact that we cannot have as smooth change as those countries do that have stable economic, and educational systems. Before the presentation of the new system with total changes in the previous one, we ought to get closer to those changes by initiating small changes. In this way we would be more ready to larger changes, and the reforms would pass more smoothly.

The paper will be concentrated mainly on one layer of the Bologna reforms: credit system. The paper discusses the changes the credit system brought in the sphere of higher education, and how it affected the quality of education itself. The professors' and students' opinions concerning the implementation process of the reforms will be examined as well via survey and focus groups so as to find out what has changed since its introduction. Also, the motivation of the students will be examined, because it is, from my perspective, one of the most important aspects of education: a student should be motivated to study better and to set goals.

The examination of the above mentioned will help us to have a clear picture of the current developments, to come to the answer whether we needed these reforms and to suggest best changes in the system so as to correspond to the will of both professors and students not betraying the European principles.

Literature Review

Higher education is vital, because it promotes income growth: it contributes to labor productivity and quality of life, encourages political participation, strengthens civil society and promotes democratic governance. The correlation between higher education and democracy is shown in the study by Glaeser et al. as well, who states, that "...more educated people are better able to reap the benefits of social interaction themselves, perhaps because they understand better why they are participating (2007, p.88)." Economic growth is an influential determinant of poverty reduction and improvements of people's lives. Thus, higher education shapes the people's lives leading them to better living standards at all levels of each society (Peril & Promise, 2000).

According to Sjur, the author of the book "Recognition issues in the Bologna Process", "Bologna Process is the most important reform process in European higher education (2003, p.9)." The term Bologna Process has been defined by a variety of authors, but the definition of the Bologna process does not differ in essence among them. Hence, the Bologna Process may be defined as a voluntary policy by different countries towards the development of the EHEA by 2010 (Great Britain Parliament, 2007). In the framework of this study more than five countries will be examined, using them as cases to illustrate various points of Bologna process.

The initiators of these reforms were the Ministers of Education of France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom, who signed the Sorbonne Joint Declaration in 1998, giving a starting point for these reforms. However, the project was not limited among these states and was open for other EU member countries and for non European states as well (Garben, 2010).

At its foundation, the Bologna Process was intended to strengthen the competitiveness and attractiveness of European higher education and to encourage student mobility and

employability through the introduction of a system based on undergraduate and postgraduate studies with easily readable programs and degrees. According to the Report on the Development of the European Higher Education Area, “progress over the years has been uneven. Differences exist between countries, between institutions as well as between disciplines (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, 2009, p. 3).”

The detailed outcomes of these reforms that should result in at the end of the process are well underlined by the expert Dunkek in “The Bologna Process between structural convergence and institutional diversity”:

- Creation of a system of easily understandable and comparable degrees;
- Creation of a two-tier system of degrees (consecutive study programs, undergraduate/graduate);
- Introduction of a credit system, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), as well as modularization;
- Promotion of mobility by the removal of obstacles to mobility; this does not refer only to geographical mobility, but also cultural competences, mobility between higher education institutions and training programs or lifelong and lifewide learning¹;
- Qualitative development of higher education through faculty development, study program accreditation and promotion of European cooperation on quality development;
- Promotion of the European dimension in higher education;
- Lifelong and/or lifewide learning;
- Student participation (participation in all decisions and initiatives at all levels);
- Promoting the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area;

¹ Helps students to develop the life-long learning capabilities that are needed in our ever-changing society

- Dovetailing the EHEA with the European Research Area (ERA), in particular by incorporating doctoral studies in the Bologna process (2009, p.178).

Regarding the possible benefits of the reforms is considered to be the fact that it would include the provision of Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degree cycles, a national framework of qualifications in each state and an over-arching European framework. The same credit accumulation and transfer system would be used in all universities, hence facilitating increased mobility of students within Europe. This new system of education can make Europe more attractive to non-European students who up until now have been applying to Australian and the USA Universities. Other benefits from the Bologna Process will be that quality assurance will become everywhere and the international comparability of awards will be facilitated (McMahon, 2008).

So, the outcomes may be defined in another way as following: the creation of a unified system for mobility, enhanced quality of education in different Universities due to the good practices and evaluation, multiculturalism and exchange of ideas and also, in a proactive competition and an increase of the freedom of students (McMahon, 2008).

During the first period of the undertaken reforms, they were criticized both in Germany and France accordingly. The main reason for this attitude was the fact that these reforms were implemented from the top and were not asked for or discussed with people involved in the implementation process.

During the interviews with administrative staff of French and German universities, there have been mentioned different opinions concerning the reforms that were both optimistic and pessimistic. One of such pessimistic view was mentioned by a French director, who said, that "Universities are conservative. What contribution will this new reform bring to the system? It is

a new reform, coming from the top, to be applied on, like any other (Serbanescu-Lestrade, 2005, p. 2).” According to a German Dean, “If this reform is applied in its whole fullness, it will be the most important reform after Humboldt. We assist at a change of paradigm (Serbanescu-Lestrade, 2005, p. 5).” However, both countries still have steps to undertake for further development.

In respect to the shortcomings the situation in Czech Republic, Finland, Germany and Italy may be considered, where the changes were dramatic as before the reforms the system of education was based on five years first degree cycles leading to a Master’s degree. These countries were required to introduce Bachelor’s degree programs and the cost of these changes was the quality of the degree. The fact that those with Bachelor’s degree may be employed, does not occur in practice, because today the Bachelor’s diploma is not valued as a basis for the employers, and people with sole Bachelor’s diploma are mainly refused by them (McMahon, 2008).

In the case of Georgia, as a result of studies, it was found out that, despite the fact that from 1980 to 2005 there has been enrollment growth, still there is low enrollment and low education success rate in Georgia: only 45.2 percent of students actually graduate. In Georgia financing the higher education at a high rate does not give the positive results, and the state appropriations do not result in higher involvement or higher educational level and the increased level of involvement is the result of the migrants to Georgia, rather than the good system of education (Vedder and Robe, 2008).

Despite the fact that before 2004 the higher education in Georgia had such problems as corruption, diplomas that did not match the knowledge of the students, low remuneration of the university staff and other issues, the government of Georgia, after becoming a member of

Bologna process in 2005, undertook the steps toward the improvement of the educational system, which have result in much progress in that sphere (Nodia, 2011).

European Students' Union very often conducts surveys concerning the Bologna process and its implication in different European countries. The 2007 survey results included responses from 36 countries concerning the implementation of Bologna Process. According to this survey, very little progress has taken place in the sphere of financial situation of students. The positive step mentioned stated by most of the student was the introduction of student loans. The analysis of the survey revealed that there are still gaps in the system and the implementation has not been met in expected manner at the national level.

In regard to participation of students it was found out that there has been no real improvement of the overall situation since 2005. The situation was already not bad in few countries in 2005: Baltic countries, Finland, France, Norway and Sweden. Nevertheless, in Austria and Denmark the situation is getting even worse than it was before. Also, there were countries that did not show any progress but regress as well: Croatia, Hungary, Italy or Spain (The National Unions of Students in Europe, 2007).

The 2009 survey however, showed again, small changes in the participation level of the students; the progress seems to be very slow. This time 46 countries were involved in the survey. Despite the fact that Bologna Process should be a driving force for student participation, in general, a significant number of countries' respondents feel that the Bologna Process has, in reality, had little effect. In respect to employability, the progress was very small in 2009 as well (The National Unions of Students in Europe, 2009).

Another survey was conducted in Portugal in 2006 by a Commission appointed by the Ministry to follow the implementation of Bologna process. As a sample of study 30 public

universities, 38 private universities, 46 public polytechnics and 26 private polytechnics were chosen. The respondents were the deans and the program directors of these universities. Respondents had to rank statements in a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree), and to specify from a list of items which were the major changes in a number of aspects of the education processes. The results of the survey were very positive because the administrative staff of higher education institutions was the supporters of the reforms. One of the most important finding of this survey was the fact that the leadership of the universities expected the professors to adhere to initiatives in order to improve their pedagogic skills: 81.6% in universities and 72.4% in polytechnics (Veiga and Amaral, 2007).

After examining the situation in European countries and in Georgia, the next section will discuss the situation in Armenia, which will help the reader to have a picture of the situation in Armenia.

Higher Education in Armenia

The Article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia states that every citizen has a right to education. Every citizen is entitled to receive higher education for free and on a competitive basis in state educational institutions (Constitution of RA, 1995). The Ministry of Education and Science, as the responsible body for education, has several tasks in the sphere, which include the implementation of the educational policy, the preparation of the legislative bills, drafting the regulations for State decision-making, also, the design of the programs in order to solve the problems occurring in the system of education (UNESCO International Bureau of Education, 2006).

After the collapse of the USSR, the system of education, as in all other post-Soviet countries had to adapt itself with the global changes and face the transition process. Hence, the process of Bologna reforms is doubly difficult in these countries than in any European one. In reconsidering and changing the whole nature of higher education system in Armenia, Armenian government embarked on many steps, one of which was the decision to join the Bologna process in 2005, committing her to change the structure of education in a way to correspond the European standards and become a member of the European Higher Education Area. The starting point of the reforms was the decree of Ministry of Education and Science in 2004 on the three-tier system with the bachelor, master and doctoral levels of study which became obligatory for all the universities from the year 2006 to 2007 (Karakhanyan, 2011).

The higher education system in Armenia is overfull by the variety of state and private higher education institutions. State higher education institutions operate under the accountability of several ministries but most of them are under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science. According to the study by the European Union's program called TEMPUS which supports the renovation of higher education, the system of higher education in Armenia is not ready yet for the radical structural, programmatic, and organizational changes necessary for an effective and full implementation of the required reforms. There is a need of substantial information and methodical support, also legislative amendments as well as revision and updating of the referred Strategy on Higher Education Reforms are needed (EACEA, 2010).

According to their study, attention should be given to the following points:

- Insufficient state financing of higher education;
- A sharp drop in the university research financing and outdated and unclear mode of selection practices;

- The need to improve the integration of the overall education system;
- Corruption;
- An organizational culture based on administrative prescriptions and total control;
- The inflexible approach to the education process;
- The need for a formal approach towards educational reforms;
- The deficiency of accountability and transparency in decision-making processes;
- The marginal participation of students in the management of institutions;
- Superficial structural changes;
- The lack of incentives for quality enhancement among academic staff and traditional orientation towards getting directives from “uppers”;
- The low level of university autonomy and infringement of academic freedoms;
- The lack of understanding among students of their own role in the education process and the absence of independent student bodies (EACEA, 2010, p. 7).

There are many state and private universities in Armenia. However, in the last decade there has been much growth in the number of students who apply to state rather than to private institutions in Armenia. Also, there is a tendency for paying for higher education. Gender distribution is more or less equal: however, females prefer the spheres of education and law rather than other programs offered. However, still there are shortcomings, because the percentage of unemployed female is twice higher than those of males (Aslanyan, 2005).

Previous Studies on the Topic in Armenia

The perceptions of professors and students have been discussed previously by different authors who examined the Bologna reforms in our country.

Karakhanyan and Van Veen have studied the Bologna reforms in Armenia and their aim was to find out the teachers' perception about the quality of the implementation of the 2006 reforms. The method of the study used by the authors was interviews with teachers and a survey, during which eight leading universities of Armenia were chosen with a sample of 300 teachers. Based on the results of the survey three different groups of four teachers were interviewed. According to their results there is a group of the respondents that are positively oriented towards the reforms, and think that the new method would offer new opportunities. Also, there are people, whose responses showed that they do not think this system is a wonderful one, but are more prone to the fact that it has both positive and negative factors, and the system may even be considered as the older one but in a different way: in sense of some modifications brought by the reforms. An interesting result was the opinion that “the soviet approaches provided for broader learning and the new approaches provide for deeper one (Karakhanyan & Van Veen, 2010, p. 22).”

There were professors who considered the reform a very negative one, and for them the Soviet system of education was more of a beneficial type of system for the students, than the new one. An important observation among these professors was their opinion concerning the integration of Armenia to the European culture: “Armenian culture has peculiarities and values that should be preserved and prevented from the Western influence (Karakhanyan & Van Veen, 2010, p. 22).”

In 2010 a survey was conducted among the academic and administrative staff of the Yerevan State University in Armenia that showed much more optimistic attitude toward the reforms. The reason of this view was the fact that the respondents considered the reforms to be a step towards European integration, which would be the way towards development and higher standards (Hunanyan, 2010).

The problem of corruption in higher education system exists as well, which is an important obstacle to overcome so as to have more fruitful reforms. In respect to corruption, a survey was conducted in Yerevan and Gyumri with the population of individual students and a sample of 1200 students. The respondents were the 1st and 3rd year students. Almost 40% of those students find that corruption at university level is of systemic nature inherent to the imperfection of the education system. Almost 14% of the respondents found the reason for the corruption economic condition of the staff of the Universities. However, the most essential finding of this survey was that the largest group of respondents found themselves guilty for the corruption as well, as they found that this was because of their laziness (Aslanyan, Grigoryan, et al. 2010).

In respect to the types of changes established after the introduction of the Bologna process, a survey has been conducted in order to understand the main characteristics of the implementation process of the reforms. The main findings showed that the steps mainly aimed at first-order changes that are structural changes, the precise implementation of which, in fact, creates hopeful prospects for second-order changes. The missing and necessary component in the case of Armenia is inadequate attention paid to second order changes that is “changes in educational dimension aiming at the manner in which teachers really act, which stem from their sense making from and about reforms (Karakhanyan & Van Veen, 2010, p. 20).”

Another survey was conducted in Germany and Armenia among the academic and administrative staff of the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena in Germany and Yerevan State University in Armenia. In contrast to the previous researcher's survey, this one showed much more optimistic attitude toward the reforms. The reason of this view was the fact that the respondents considered the reforms to be a step towards European integration, which would be the way toward development and higher standards (Hunanyan, 2010).

A study was initiated about the life-long learning, three-cycle system of higher education and its popularization as well. Life-long learning still remains vague concept in Armenia and three-cycle education system is also absent in Armenia, because there does not exist any distinction between second and third cycle, and the Master's program does not seem to respond to the needs of labor market. Concerning the third issue, popularization of higher education, a conclusion is made emphasizing the fact of the institutions' funds based on the payments of the students, and the evidence, that the students with low grades receive the same diploma as the better ones do which result in the decrease of the quality of the graduates (Hakobyan, 2009).

The way that reforms are being carried out in Armenia is vertical, rather than horizontal, because the signals of changes are sent by Ministry of Education and Science. The changes taking place in Armenia are more of structural character that is they are first-order changes. The opposing attitude towards reforms mainly depends on the lack of knowledge and mentality. In case of the attitude of leaders, it is realized, that they oppose the reforms because of their opinion reforms are against the Soviet "classical" nature of education (Karakhanyan, 2011).

In 2008 several researchers from different Universities of Armenia studied the changes following the introduction of Bologna reforms. According to their studies, in recent years, the number of outgoing students has increased: mainly, students leave for European countries for

their further education. The main obstacles in the way of success of the mobility of students were considered to be lack of financial means and rigid international mobility programs for RA higher education institutions. Also, it was found out that there are no joint programs among the HEIs of Armenia, which will result in mobilizing of the students. Such programs are absent not only among Armenian Universities but also between Armenian and foreign institutions as well (Manasyan et al. 2008).

A survey was conducted in ASAU in 2008 to find out the perceptions of the students concerning the Bologna reforms. Six departments of the university participated in the survey, including both undergraduate and post-graduate students. According to the survey results it was found out that the half of the respondents were not even aware about Bologna process. 89% of the students wished to study abroad. The main reason of this willingness was the opportunity to advance their professional career (51%). 31% of the respondents had already planned their studying abroad and were looking forward for their graduation (Shinn et al. 2008).

As one can see, the surveys were conducted on quite broad topics trying to find out not only students' perception about the system, but also to know their plans for future, whether they want to study here or go abroad, explore the existing problems in our HEIs from students' perspective.

Armenia has made a progress toward the reforms, especially in the fields of three-tier system, quality assurance and mutual recognition of qualifications. However, Armenia still needs time and efforts to achieve the expected level of the reforms (Sargsyan & Budaghyan, 2007).

The purpose of this research project is to build on the existing data and to add an additional element, by exploring what has changed since the last studies, specifically in the

sphere of student motivation with the credit system and the quality of education. The reviewed literature leads to formulation of the following Hypothesis and Research Questions:

Hypothesis: Professors/students will be more satisfied with the higher education system in Armenia in case of sufficient implementation of the Bologna reforms.

RQ1: How do professors/students evaluate the Bologna process implementation in Armenia?

RQ2: How do the students feel about the credit system as a whole in Armenia?

RQ3: How did the credit system affect self-reported motivation of the students?

Methodology

In order to answer to the first and second research questions a survey was conducted among students of different universities. The third research question will be answered to via the focus groups. One focus group was conducted among professors of the universities that had adopted the Bologna process, and another among the students of these universities was conducted to find out their opinions. The aim of conducting a focus group among professors was to see the differences among them and the students, with whom, as in the methodology part was mentioned, a focus group was conducted as well. There was an expectation that the opinions of the professors and students should differ.

To find out the change in the opinions of students and professors over the years of implementation of the reforms, secondary data will be used as well. It will contribute to having a clearer picture of the situation in past and in present so as to make a comparison and have imagination about future developments.

Survey Methodology

The survey was conducted in May 2012 among the students of five universities that have adapted the credit system: Yerevan State University, Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University, Armenian State University of Economics, Yerevan State Linguistic University after V.Bryusov and State Engineering University of Armenia. The study was implemented by convenience sampling targeting 125 students: we walked into universities and gave the questionnaire to people who were there at that time.

The questions were developed so as to find out the perceptions of students concerning the credit system and the consequences of the system on the motivation of the students. Questionnaire included six closed-ended questions, one of which was a demographic question of sex of the respondent, and the other five measuring the satisfaction with the credit system and the perception about the credit generally.

Data analysis is based on descriptive statistics for each of the variables collected, as well as on some statistical tests.

The Focus Group with the Professors

Eight professors involved in the discussion were from the Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University (RAU), Yerevan State University (YSU), Yerevan State University of Economics (ASUE), and Armenian State Agrarian University (ASAU). The professors varied between the ages of 35-65. It was considered important to have both younger and older professors, because they younger ones are assumed to be more liberal in the way of their thinking and also, among those there are professors who have been educated abroad, and know more about the reforms and are more adaptive to changes in the system.

In contrast, the older professors are assumed to be more conservative in their thinking because they are used to the old way of teaching at the universities which comes from the Soviet times. However, the discussion among these different individuals of different ages and spheres, showed that the opinion above mentioned is not a certain one, and the opinion can vary based not only on the education received by the following teacher but also on the individual practice and the ability to compare two different systems objectively.

The presentation of the interesting parts of our discussion will be the basis later to make analysis about the situation and make assumptions about the future.

Professors Criticizing the Method of Implementation of the Reforms

The focus group participants shared their ideas and feelings about a number of shortcomings that the implementation of the new system had. One of the participants thought that the reform was not well prepared and those affected by the reform were not properly informed in advance.

“I think that the decision to adopt these reforms was made in a hurry: neither the professors, nor the students were ready at the time of the implementation of the reforms. The reason of this may be the fact that even we- the ones, who should know about the changes in advance, were not informed in advance and were very surprised about the changes in the whole system of higher education.” (Male professor of 40 from YSU)

Besides the opinions that the students and professors were not ready for these reforms, opinions were announced by the professors about the guilt of mal-implementation of the reforms. The interesting finding in the opinions of the professors was that they did not find themselves guilty in the shortcomings of the results of the reforms.

“The system aims to make the student be more independent. How far this goal is met, is still a question, because still I see many gaps in the system. However, the opinion that the lecturing staff is not active in implementing duties and adapting to the changes, is not right, because as students, we also want to work in convenient way, and our aim is to give the students the knowledge that they have come to get from us. We are trying to do the best to meet their expectations.” (Male professor of 47 from ASUE)

“There are still lecturers that do not have any imagination about the system and still lecture in an old way. But I do not criticize them, because I am one of those and do this because from my perspective, my first duty is to educate the students, and I see that if I change my method, the students will become robots. Maybe I’m wrong, but this is the fault of those responsible for the implementation of the reforms: if there are professors that today prefer the old method of lecturing, this means that they are not convinced that the new system is a good one. That is why I think a better management and carrying out of these reforms should take place” (Female professor of 49 from ASAU)

Most of the lecturers expressing their negative attitude towards the way of implementation of Bologna reforms pointed out the main drawbacks in the new system, that were the way of getting credits: most of the students can be absent from classes and get their credits via papers. One of the gaps in the system is considered to be the subjective grading system because professors point out that there are no criteria about grading the papers.

Professors Supporting the New Higher-education System

During the discussion it was very interesting to follow the debate of mainly those professors who expressed critically opposite opinions. These professors had an argument and were able to justify their point of view by different factors. So, there were also those who were very supportive to the new system.

“I like the system because it made the professors work harder so as to adapt to the changes. Despite my years of practice in the previous system, I found it very interesting to adapt to the new one. I don’t think that the system is ineffective, but just have an opinion that the changes in the system may not give immediate results, because education is a sphere that has to be developed during the years certainly with the help of professors, students and the whole administrative staff of the universities. I would like the new system maintain the good traditions of the previous system and to make new ones that will affect the system only in the positive manner.” (Male professor of 63 from ASUE)

The interesting fact in the opinion above was the age of the lecturer. Judging from the reaction of the focus group discussion participants, there was some feeling of surprise at that moment. This was an opinion that showed that the expected conservative opinion by older generation to be only a prejudice.

“Certainly we needed these reforms. How long could we continue with the previous one? If we want to be equal to the European standards, we must adopt the system of their countries. Certainly the changes are easily accepted by the younger generation. They easily change the manner of their lecturing, many of them have chance to go abroad, practice their skills, while older generation seem to be out of game. One of the positive things in today’s education is that the subjective way of grading the students seems to end, because now the students are graded via

computer. Also, students get more practical knowledge than theoretical, which was leading in the previous system.” (Female professor of 35 from YSU)

One of the most unexpected opinions was expressed by the lecturer from Yerevan State University of Agriculture: *“I love the credit system. I love the changes in the system, because any change is progressive and is a chance to make the system more perfect. Years ago there were some negative factors that affected the quality of education negatively, but during these years these negative factors have been discussed for several times, and now everything is better, and the system works effectively both for students and for us as well. Nothing can be better than to work individually, to make own contribution to the work done that is provided by the current system. Students now make deeper research in the subjects and get more information than they did before.” (Female professor of 52 from ASAU)*

Professors Supporting the Old System of Higher Education

Some professors expressed their negative attitude towards the reforms and their results ignoring the way of implementation. These professors do not think that the matter is in the way of carrying out the reforms, but the fact is that these reforms cannot make the system a good one, and they just have exchanged the old successful and effective system with a new system that does not have any aim to increase the quality of higher education.

“The previous system was more effective in the sense that despite the behavior of the students during the term, s/he had to be present at the exam. Now, the students do not have to, because they collect their minimum credits during the term. Doesn't it mean that studying at the universities is easier now? ” (Female professor of 50 from RAU)

“I didn’t like the reforms years ago and I do not like them now as well. They are not implemented correctly in the country. The professors needed to practice for the new system not during the years of implementation, but in advance, because the students paying money for getting higher education do not have to be kind of an “experiment” for the professors that are new in the system. Certainly the pain about the current situation in Armenia is the fact that students in our universities think about getting credits more than getting knowledge, they seem to count days to graduate from the universities. A lot should be done in making the situation better. The most important thing, from my perspective, is to invest more in the development of the education, to hire lectures that are not prone to “old lectures”, to give chance to the younger generation educated abroad to lecture in the universities.” (Male professor of 44 from RAU)

This is a system that makes students work less. This was an opinion of those who were not against the system but the way the system exists in our country. According to them, students plagiarize their papers, and mark questions of tests by chance.

Focus Group with the Students

There were ten students in the focus group who were from the same universities, as the professors. The goal was to find out whether the students had high expectations from the new system, whether they were content with the implementation of the reforms and whether they were motivated by them.

There were students among the participants who were very well informed both about the aim of the reforms, were informed about the start of the reforms and it was very interesting to listen to those students, because the good knowledge about the initial reforms could be a firm ground for comparing the aimed outcomes with those that we have in Armenia.

Students Criticizing the Method of Implementation of the Reforms

Most of the students stressed that the implementation process was wrong, because the lecturers were not ready for such rapid reforms and that nobody has taken into consideration students' opinion.

“When the system was first introduced, we were very happy, because we had many expectations from it, but soon we realized that the changes did not lead to a better system, but just changed it. The system will be much more effective if the professor work harder, but in reality they are very defiant about our results. I wish them to be more student-oriented, not the ones who come to the universities only for money or filling their Resumes.” (Female student from YSU)

“The professors do not want to adapt to the changes, they do not think about us. Very few of them are student-oriented. The main problem is that there are professors who are too old to lecture in an appropriate way. There are even those who come to classes drunk, or are sclerotic and thus unable to lecture adequately. What can such lecturers give us?” (Male student from Yerevan State University)

An opinion of a male student was quite interesting because he stressed the way of the classes being held at ASAU. *“We do not have a chance to answer to the questions during the seminars because the time frame is not enough, and always are willing to know how do the professors grade our activity, if, for example I am inactive the whole term.”*(Male student from ASAU)

There was an opinion expressed by one of the students that I think is really important to take into consideration: *“The reforms are not implemented in a correct manner, because nobody listens to anyone, our students are afraid to express their opinion, because they know that it will*

never be heard. We don't have even democracy, how we can have democratic reforms, reforms that are directed towards the brighter future of the students!" This opinion was expressed by a student from Political Science of YSU.

An important factor that was expected to be touched upon was the institutions responsible for the introduction of the reforms, the implementation process and the management of problems rising during this stage. *"I wish there would be an adequate and responsible institution that is able to carry out the implementation of any kind on reform, including the Bologna reforms. The Ministry of Education does not seem to be very interested in the quality of our education."* (Male student from Yerevan State University)

Students Supporting the New System

The discussion among the students was much more tensed, because mostly the male students were not against the system and expressed the opinions which were much more convenient for them but not good for our future "professionals."

"I like to study via new system because I don't have to be present at all the classes but still I receive my minimal credits and am not dismissed from the University." (Male student from ASUE)

"I would like to have tests rather than other formats of exams that our professors use. There are some who use tests, but sometimes we have to write long answers to broad questions. The second method is not my favorite one, because in this case the professor can be very subjective, which is impossible in case of tests." (Female student from YSU)

The latter opinion makes evident that there is not a unique system concerning the method of exams: they vary not only among the universities but even among the departments of a university.

There was a student who stressed quite an important factor about the Bologna process that was touched neither by the professor nor by other students. *“For me, the system is a good one. There are lots of students who criticize it but in fact these are the students that criticized the older one as well. Maybe there are still steps to be undertaken so as to have the far-reaching aim of the reforms, but still, the credit system does not function bad in Armenia. The most important shortcoming here is that Bologna process includes many more areas, but in our country, only few of them are taken into consideration and are subject to changing.”* (Female student from RAU)

Students Supporting the Old System

There were students complaining of the new system and stressing the fact of the lower quality of higher education that should definitely not be the result of these reforms.

“Everything became complicated with the new system. Even the most stupid students still learn. Maybe it sounds very egoistic, but I don’t think that the student that does his best and the one that does nothing should get the same diploma. But now this is the case. Getting the required credits is not difficult, because most of the students even do not write the paper themselves but just buy them .Why not, if the announcements about selling the papers are posted on the walls of our university?” (Female student from ASUE)

“Test format that is used in this system makes us stupid, because we are able to write our exams via visual memory.” (Male student from YSU)

According to the students thinking negatively about test format, tests make professors to be objective, at the same time making exams easier, because even helping each other during the tests is more easily: one needs to say the other only “a”, “b” or “c.”

“I don’t like the new system, because studying became too machinery. I don’t have to do much work in order to get credits; I even don’t have to be always present, because I can refill the credits by writing just a paper that can be copy-pasted from the Internet. It’s a pity that I have to pay for such education.” (Female student from ASUE)

Findings of the survey

The survey showed that 40% of the respondents think the credit system is somewhat effective, other 24.8% mentioned that it is very effective. The rest 35.2 % of the respondents did not consider it being effective. Referring to the level of satisfaction with the credit system it was found out that from 125 respondents almost 66% of the respondents were satisfied with the system, 27.2% of which were very satisfied with it. Only 32.8% of the respondents were somewhat unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with it (See Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: The effectiveness of the credit system				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very effective	31	24.8	24.8	24.8
Somewhat effective	50	40.0	40.0	64.8
Somewhat ineffective	27	21.6	21.6	86.4
Very ineffective	17	13.6	13.6	100.0
Total	125	100.0		
Mean=2.8 (4=very effective and 1=very ineffective)				

Table 2: Satisfaction with the effectiveness of the credit system				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very satisfied	34	27.2	27.2	27.2
Somewhat satisfied	48	38.4	38.4	65.6
Somewhat unsatisfied	27	21.6	21.6	87.2
Very unsatisfied	14	11.2	11.2	100.0
Don't know/Can't say	2	1.6	100.0	
Total	125	100.0		
Mean=2.9 (4=very satisfied and 1=very unsatisfied, don't know can't say excluded)				

Survey results showed that the respondents evaluated the credit system rather high (the mean=3.5). Only 23.4% of the students think that the system affects negatively on the quality of education, and 12% think that it has no effect (See Table 3).

Table 3: The effect of the credit system on the quality of education				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very positive	27	21.6	21.8	21.8
Somewhat positive	51	40.8	41.1	62.9
No effect	15	12.0	12.1	75.0
Somewhat negative	17	13.6	13.7	88.7
Very negative	14	11.2	11.3	100.0
Don't know/Can't say	1	0.8	100.0	
Total	125	100.0		
Mean=3.5 (5=very positive and 1=very negative, don't know can't say excluded)				

To the question how the system affects the motivation of the students again, nearly 60% of the respondents answered that it affects it positively, 20% of who think that its affect is very positive. 19% of the students find that the credit system has no effect on the motivation while the rest of the respondents mentioned about the negative impact (See Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4: The effect of the credit system on the motivation of the students				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very positive	26	20.8	21.3	21.3
Somewhat positive	44	35.2	36.1	57.4
No effect	24	19.2	19.7	77.1
Somewhat negative	12	9.6	9.8	86.9
Very negative	16	12.8	13.1	100.0
Don't know/Can't say	3	02.4	100.0	
Total	125	100.0		
Mean=3.5 (5=very positive and 1=very negative, don't know can't say excluded)				

Table 5: The effect of the credit system on the studying quality of the students

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very positive	23	18.4	19.2	19.2
Somewhat positive	50	40.0	41.7	60.9
No effect	19	15.2	15.8	76.7
Somewhat negative	19	15.2	15.8	92.5
Very negative	9	7.2	7.5	100.0
Don't know/Can't say	5	4.0	100.0	
Total	125	100.0		
Mean=3.5 (5=very positive and 1=very negative, don't know can't say excluded)				

A Pearson's correlation test was run in order to find a relationship between the responses of the students. A statistically significant strong positive relationship was found between the opinion that the credit system positively affects the motivation of the students and the quality of their studying ($p=0.000$, $r=0.882$). That means that students who tend to think that the credit system positively affects the motivation to study also tend to think that it affects positively the quality of education. And vice versa, those who think that it has a negative effect on motivation also tend to think that it has a negative effect on quality of education.

A statistically significant moderate positive relationship was found between the opinion that the credit system is effective and the expression that it positively affects the motivation of the students ($p=0.000$, $r=0.636$). This in its turn means that students thinking that the credit system is effective are prone to think that it positively affects their motivation. And, vice versa, students thinking that the credit system is ineffective tend to think that it has a negative impact on their motivation.

T-test was run to find difference in evaluation of the system based on gender. However, no statistically significant difference was found.

To find difference in the level of satisfaction between students of different universities ANOVA test was run and statistically significant differences were found between universities. As we can see from Table 6, the students of YSU consider the system most ineffective (mean=2.08), after which comes ASUE with the mean 2.28. Table 7 shows that from the 5 universities most of all the students of YSLU find the effect of the credit system on the quality of education positive with a rather high mean of 4.48. After YSLU, RAU follows with its positive responses with the mean of 3.71.

So, as we can see, the credit system is more attractive to the students of YSLU and RAU, while the students of YSU and ASUE are the most discontent students among other universities.

Table 6: The effectiveness of the credit system		
	N	Mean
RAU	25	2.8400
ASUE	25	2.2800
YSU	25	2.0800
YSLU	25	3.5600
SEUA	25	3.0400
Total	125	2.7600

Table 7: The effect of the credit system on the quality of education		
	N	Mean
RAU	25	3.7083
ASUE	25	2.6000
YSU	25	3.0000
YSLU	25	4.4800
SEUA	25	3.6400
Total	125	3.4839

Analysis

Analysis of the Focus Groups

The aim of conducting focus groups was to find the answer to one of the RQs (How professors/students evaluate the Bologna process implementation in Armenia?). At the end of the discussion the participants were disappointed, because even those who were the supporters of the system and considered the current problems only temporary, realized, that the problems cannot be resolved only by time, but much should be done to overcome the obstacles that exist on the way of successful educational system.

From the opinions one can see that many of the professors are Bologna-oriented. Even those who criticized it heavily did not mention that they would like to work in the previous system, but just wanted to see the changes that have positive implications, that lead the students to work hard and get more knowledge. The perception that professors are not well informed about the aim of the reforms and the requirements is not right, as the focus group showed.

It was very interesting to see that the professors and the students were actually sometimes speaking about very similar problems. There were some similarities in the opinions expressed by the professors and students: the lack of readiness of the professors for the reforms, the new system being very machinery and an opinion that it got easier to study because class attendance is not mandatory.

However, as the results of the discussion showed, that the students put a great emphasis on the guilt of professors that are not much interested in the quality of education that students receive. In contrast, professors mentioned that they are doing their best, and they were quite silent about those who are responsible for the gaps and drawbacks in the system.

The main thing that made happy all of the participants of the discussion in the students' group was the fact of rotation, because all of them stressed that it was unjust for many students who studied hard to still pay the whole fee of their education. With the new system, all the students with high credits had chance to study for free or pay less.

Concerning the group of professors, it was very interesting to find out that none of the professors said anything about corruption that exist in the system, while some of the students without going deep into the subject, mentioned that still, professors think about getting money from them more that giving any knowledge. Also, after the discussions I have found out that the students seem to be very uninterested in the quality of our education, or more correctly in future developments. Many of them look forward to study abroad which is very good, because education is always good, but is very bad in sense that the aim of the reforms was to make the education of Armenia equal to the European standards, but the willingness of the students say the opposite: nothing has changed.

Besides all the opinions that are certainly very important for further steps to be undertaken to make the system work more accurately, there was an opinion by a male student from ASUA that was surprising for me: *"The system should not affect the results, because a good student studies well in every system."* It was a very encouraging opinion, and from my perspective, in some sense it is not a wrong opinion. The only thing that I think should be added to this opinion was that, *"This does not mean that the system should be destroyed."*

During the discussions there were opinions that could not be written in the paper. These opinions illustrated the opinions of the students towards specific individuals, expressing their attitude toward the professors who are corrupted.

Certainly, there are positive points in the reforms but negative aspects are too many and the most important problem is, that according to the opinions of both the professors and the students, this problem is not of a state concern, “...*Nobody thinks about education, about good education. Nobody wants to do anything with plagiarism, corruption, programs of the universities.*” (Female student from ASUA)

The discussions made it clear that that the opinions do not differ drastically. In both groups there were people who supported the system in the way it is operating today, and those who did not like it and even do not want to make efforts to make it better. However, both the professors and the students stressed the fact of bad implementation of the reforms. This was the leading opinion in both groups. All of the participants see current problems in the system, and both among the professors and the students as well, there are ones who consider the reforms very promising with a good perspective and implemented in a correct manner. If we look at these optimistic opinions more thoroughly, we may see in fact that those who do not consider problems that much dangerous for our future, just do not care that much and are just prone to study easy just for getting a diploma, and in case of professors, just earning money at the Universities without caring for their students. This does not refer to those who realize the problems but are optimistic and offer ways to improve the situation.

Analysis of the Survey

As mentioned in the methodology part of the paper the first research question (How do the students feel about the credit system as a whole in Armenia?) is going to be answered via survey results. The illustration of the results in the Findings part shows that today students are quite content with the credit system. If several years ago most of the students were very discontent with it and seemed not ready for the new changes, today the picture is quite different.

Because of the limitations of time, it was impossible to conduct a survey with larger sample, which would help us to have a much clearer picture of the situation. The interesting fact is that among five universities Slavonic and Linguistic Universities differ much in sense that students studying there are really happy with the system, and only a few of them expressed their negative attitude towards it. These results lead us to think that the process is better implemented in these universities. The most important reason of a good structure of a system in these universities is a “united” system of exams, requirements, credits, which we cannot see in ASUE, because as it was mentioned above, the format of exams differs among the professors.

The answer to the second research question (How did the credit system affect self-reported motivation of the students?) was found out to be closely related with the first one: students thinking that the credit system is quite a good one are prone to think that it affects the motivation of the students in a positive manner. This result creates a ground for further examination of the motivations of the student: it will be very interesting to find out the way the system affects the motivation.

During the study, a very interesting fact was found. Answering to the questions of the survey, most students seemed too content with the system. This may be the result of a point that the questions were closed-ended and they did not go deep into details. Certainly, the survey was much more concrete. It was expected to find out the different answers based on sex difference, but as the results revealed, there was no difference at all.

The very important finding, from my perspective, was the fact of the level of knowledge of the participants of the focus groups. Almost all of the participants knew quite well the details about the reforms and its aims.

From all of the analysis mentioned above we can derive an answer for the hypothesis. We can see that the hypothesis has found a support, because both the students and the professors mentioned in their answers that overall the new system is not a bad one, while it still lacks an efficient implementation.

So, we can summarize that if several years ago both the students and the administrative staff were very pessimistic about the reforms, today the students are more optimistic. Past criticism was based on poor knowledge about the reforms, while today most of the criticizing individuals base their opinion on evidence of bad implementation, and issues that should be solved in order to reach the goal.

Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations

In the framework of this study it was found out that both the students and professors are divided in their opinions about the reforms, and the process of implementation. Mainly, they complain about the implementation that should be carried out more seriously and should be managed more effectively. There are students that are content with the new system of credits, while there are those who do not like it, and prefer the older one. However, the results of the survey showed that the level of satisfaction with the credit system is rather high. Based again on the results of the survey, it should be mentioned that the students reported about their rather high motivation with the introduction of the credit system.

We live in the age of globalization, which is characterized by an expansion of economic activities across national boundaries with the flows of services, technology, information and ideas across national boundaries. There has been a great change in the sphere of technology, communication, the internet and large-scale computerized information systems, which have

resulted in the compression of time and space. It became possible to conduct business on a planetary level and today, there are a few limits for a human (Nayyar, 2008).

The role of higher education as a major driver of economic development is already a well established fact, and this role will increase as further changes in technology, globalization, and demographics continue to develop and affect each country of the planet. To remain competitive in light of these changes, regions will need to improve productivity and adopt an innovative spirit (Sampson, 2003).

Higher education offers a capacity, knowledge, and research necessary to help achieving these goals. Higher education has historically included economic development as part of its core mission. The colleges and universities serving the region have allocated fiscal, physical, and human resources and created entrepreneurship systems within the institutions to advance economic development (Sampson 2004).

While speaking about the role of higher education it is impossible to neglect the fact of its main contribution to the society: producing knowledge. The production of knowledge gives a base for each individual to find his or her area of interest in which one can develop his/her knowledge resulting in the development of qualified professionals.

The purpose of higher education should not change because of reforms, but the result should be interpreted only in the sense of development and progress. After signing the Bologna declaration in 1999 European states, accepting it have committed themselves to implement the provisions of the declaration and achieve the final goal: the creation of EHEA.

In the democratic European countries these reforms were much more easily to implement because these countries have had a long and stable system of education, civil society, democratic values, that are very important when initiating reforms. Armenia cannot be considered a country

where reforms are easily implemented. The system of education was not stable one before these reforms, but it was just the one taken from the Soviet Union. It was and still is very unusual for our students to demand good standards of education, and that is why the change towards European standards is not smooth in our country. However, our students have changed as well and now understanding the fact of paying for education, already realize that this education should be a guarantee for becoming qualified professionals.

Entering the universities students are only 16-17 years old. And the only way to learn to be a good professional, to work hard to reach the top of their careers is to learn from their **Professors**. This means that the staff of professors should be comprised of qualified individuals, who are willing to share their knowledge with the students and feel responsible for their future achievements.

After the discussion about the implementation processes in Armenia and the effects of the reforms on motivation of the students, it was found out that today the picture is much more optimistic than it was few years ago. Both the professors and the students have complains, realize the existing gaps that should be filled via steps towards development. It was very interesting to find out that the professors realize that they have to do much work so as to adapt to the new system which is new not only for the students.

However, there were findings, that are not that much positive. The discussions during the focus group showed that the students seem to be very uninterested in the quality of our education, or more correctly in future developments. It was mentioned by them the unwillingness of professors, despite the fact that professors were telling about their hard work. Students pointing out the problem concerning the professors made me think that this is one of the reasons

they are willing to study abroad, where the professors seem to be more student-oriented and liberal.

Another important problem that was neglected both by the students and the professors was the corruption: most of them did not say anything about it. There were students who seemed willing to mention that problem, but it did not go deeper into discussion.

The most interesting fact, however, were the results of the survey that showed, that students are motivated with the system and they are not much discontent with it. It was a very surprising result, because it was not the same as with the focus group results. This may lead us to thinking that the students while answering to the short questions do not consider the existing problems as much as they do it while discussing the issue.

It is worth to mention about the limitations of the research: it would be better for further studies to include more students so as to have a representative sample; also, it would be more productive to conduct more focus groups, because the discussions in the focus groups give deeper understanding about the perceptions of the students and professors, than the surveys, during which the students may “just mark” an answer, without going deep to the question.

After examining Bologna reforms in Armenia, I have come to some recommendations that would probably increase the quality of education and make the reforms turn into a more stable system of education:

- Provide a good and efficient management of the higher education system (new institutions should operate besides the Ministry of Education, so as they control the operations of the universities and their staffs).
- While letting the universities create a unique system of their own, create some criteria so as the universities, despite their differences, become homogeneous;

- 40% passing percentage that has today's quite easy system of credits make higher so as students work harder;
- Arrange meetings with different professors and administrative staffs of the universities during which discuss the Bologna system thoroughly so as make them know the real aim of the system;
- Change the format of lecturing via introduction of presentations and on-line lectures which will make the system more flexible and give opportunity to students listen to foreign professors as well;
- Introduce student loans, which will motivate more applicants to the universities;
- Introduce joint programs by different universities, so as to improve the mobility of students;
- Organize summer schools in Armenia which will contribute to the communication of Armenian students with students of different nationalities and cultures that will contribute to their exchange of knowledge;
- Finance universities so as they are able to send the professors abroad for training with professors of those universities, that have successfully implemented the Bologna process;
- Introduce more programs by Armenian universities, which will help the students to have more broad alternatives while making their choice;
- Increase the salaries of the professors so as they are more motivated and less prone to corruption.

When introducing changes in the system many factors were neglected and the most important one was the unstable previous system. However, since 2006 much was introduced

from Bologna process, and despite the fact that many problems continue existing, the reforms are not an example of a failure. In the case of well implemented reforms in the sphere, taking into consideration different factors including opinions of both professors and the students, the system will be a more effective one. Certainly this may lead to less complaint, and less outgoing students, than there are today. Moreover, these reforms should be well monitored and the difficulty of implementation should not be carried out by the universities only.

When discussing the problems of the system, most students, as it was mentioned above, pointed out the factor of professors. However, this does not include their responsibility. The way towards a better educational system does not depend only on the professors, the role of the students is very important as well. The students should see that the professors are initiative-taking, that they do their best for them and the professors should be more student-oriented and interested in their lectures. And the students should be more responsible for their studies and should stop learning for grades: they should be more organized and respectful towards their education. These little changes can be the basis for the larger changes in the system.

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Appendix A: Focus Groups Guideline

Բարև ձեզ, իմ անունը Սոնա է: Շատ շնորհակալություն մասնակցության և պատրաստակամության համար: Ձեր թույլտվությամբ քննարկումը կձայնագրվի, քանի որ ուզում եմ վստահ լինել, որ ոչինչ բաց չեմ թողնի ձեր ասածներից: Խոստանում եմ, որ ձայնագրությունը կլսեմ բացառապես ես, և այն կոչնչացվի աշխատանքս ավարտելուն պես: Նաև, չեմ նշվի ոչ մի անուն, ինչպես նաև որևիցե բան որը մատնացույց կանի ձեզ՝ որպես այս քննարկման մասնակցի:

Կցանկանայի, որպեսզի բոլորս լսենք իրար, և մեզնից յուրաքանչյուրն ունենա խոսելու հնարավորություն: Եկեք համաձայնվենք, որ մեկը միայն պետք է խոսի և բոլորս պետք է հարգենք մյուսի կարծիքը: Ձեզանից յուրաքանչյուրի կարծիքն ինձ համար շատ կարևոր է:

Այսօր քննարկման թեման է բարձրագույն կրթության ռեֆորմները Հայաստանում և ձեր կարծիքը ռեֆորմների իրականացման վերաբերյալ: Որպես դասախոսներ (ուսանողներ), կարծում եմ թեման ձեզ համար կարևոր է, և ես կցանկանայի լսել ձեր մտքերն ու տպավորությունները թեմայի շուրջ:

1. Ի՞նչ եք մտածում 2006թ.-ի բարձրագույն կրթական համակարգում փոփոխությունների վերաբերյալ (կրեդիտային համակարգ, և առհասարակ ինչի մասին որ տեղյակ եք):
2. Ձեր կարծիքով, ինչու՞ իրականացվեցին բարձրագույն կրթության ռեֆորմները Հայաստանում և ի՞նչ նպատակով:
3. Ի՞նչ եք կարծում, արդյոք ռեֆորմները ճիշտ եղանակով են իրականացվել Հայաստանում, ինչպիսի թերություններ եք ինքներդ նկատել/ում:
4. Ի՞նչ եք կարծում, ի՞նչպիսի ազդեցություն են ունեցել ռեֆորմները ուսանողների մոտիվացիայի վրա սովորելու նկատմամբ:
5. Մինչ այժմ ռեֆորմները իրականացվել են ուղղահայաց կերպով՝ Կրթության նախարարության կողմից: Ի՞նչ եք կարծում, սա նորմալ, թե խնդրահարույց աշխատանքային ոճ է: Ինչու՞:
6. Ինչպե՞ս կգնահատեք նախկին բարձրագույն կրթական համակարգի արդյունավետությունը այսօրվա համակարգի հետ համեմատած:
7. Որո՞նք եք համարում նախկին կրթական համակարգի հիմնական առավելությունները և թերությունները:
8. Ինչպիսի՞ քայլեր կձեռնարկեիք բարձրագույն կրթության ոլորտում, եթե ունենաիք Կրթության Նախարար լինելու հնարավորություն:

Appendix B: Questionnaire of the survey²

1. Երբևիցե համալսարանում դասախոսների կողմից տեղեկացվե՞լ էք, թե ինչ է գրագողությունը:

_____այո

_____ոչ

_____չեմ կարող ասել

2. Արդյոք Ձեր բուհում անցկացվում են տեղեկատվական դասընտացներ, որի ընթացքում ուսանողները տեղեկություն են ստանում գրագողության մասին:

_____այո

_____ոչ

_____չեմ կարող ասել

3. Արդյոք տեղյակ եք, թե ինչպիսի հեղինակային մեջբերումը կարող է համարվել գրագողություն:

_____այո

_____ոչ

_____չեմ կարող ասել

4. Ըստ Ձեզ հետևյալ գործողությունները կարո՞ղ են համարվել գրագողություն:

Այո Ոչ Չգիտեմ

Ինտերնետից ամբողջական աշխատանք վերցնել և դասախոսին ներկայացնել իբրև սեփական աշխատանք

Ինտերնետից կամ այլ աղբյուրից տեքստի կտորներ բառ-առ-բառ վերարտադրել (copy-paste) առանց աղբյուրը նշելու

Այլ հեղինակների նյութը և մտքերը սեփական բառերով վերարտադրելը առանց աղբյուրը նշելու

5. Համարո՞ւմ եք, որ գրագողությունը անազնիվ արարք է:

_____այո

_____ոչ

_____չեմ կարող ասել

² It was a joint survey. The questions of this study included from 14 to 20.

6. Կուրսային աշխատանք գրելու ժամանակ որքա՜ն հաճախ եք ինտերնետից ամբողջական պարագրաֆներ copy-paste անում առանց աղբյուրը նշելու:

- Երբեք
- Աշխատանքի 10% ոչ ավել
- Աշխատանքի 10-30%
- Աշխատանքի 30-50%
- Աշխատանքի 50-80%
- Աշխատանքի 80% ավել
- Աշխատանքը ամբողջությամբ վերցնում եմ ինտերնետից

7. Ձեր ուսանողական փորձից ելնելով, որքանով է ձեր կարծիքով հավանական, որ ուսանողի աշխատանքը ցածր գնահատվի գրագողության պատճառով:

- Շատ հավանական է
- Հավանական է
- Հավանական չէ
- Բոլորովին հավանական չէ

8. Գրագողություն կատարելիս որոյոք մտածում եք, որ Ձեր աշխատանքը կարող է գրագողության պատճառով ցածր գնահատվի:

- այո
- ոչ
- չեմ կարող ասել
- Գրագողությամբ չեմ զբաղվում

9. Գրավոր աշխատանքներում գրագողություն կատարելիս երբևե ստացե՜լ եք նկատողություն դասախոսի կողմից:

- այո
- ոչ
- չեմ կարող ասել
- Գրագողություն չեմ կատարել

10. Ավելի շատ n+ր ֆորմատի հանձնարարություններում էք գրագողություն կատարում (ընտրել միայն մեկ տարբերակ):

- Ռեֆերատներ
- Կուրսային աշխատանքներ
- Դիպլոմային աշխատանքներ
- Մագիստրոսական թեզ
- Չեմ կարող ասել
- Գրագողություն չեմ անում

11. Արդյոք համարում էք, որ հանձնարարված առաջադրանքները համապատասխանում են Ձեր ակադեմիական հետաքրքրություններին:

- այո
- ոչ
- չեմ կարող ասել

12. Ո՞րն է Ձեր կարծիքով ուսանողների կողմից գրագողության հիմնական, ամենակարևոր պատճառը (ընտրել միայն մեկ տարբերակ):

- Ժամանակի պակաս ինքնուրույն աշխատանք կատարելու համար
- Գիտական հմտությունների պակաս ինքնուրույն աշխատանք կատարելու համար
- Հանձնարարվող առաջադրանքի թվացող անհիմաստությունը
- Ծուլություն
- Բոլորի օրինակին հետևելը
- Դասախոսների անտարբերությունը կատարած աշխատանքի վերաբերյալ
- Գրագողության համար պատժի բացակայությունը
- Այլ պատճառ (նշել)

13. Իսկ անձամբ Ձեզ համար, եթե երբևիցե արել էք գրագողություն, ո՞րն է եղել հիմնական պատճառը (Նշել մեկ պատասխան):

- Ժամանակի պակաս ինքնուրույն աշխատանք կատարելու համար
- Գիտական հմտությունների պակաս ինքնուրույն աշխատանք կատարելու համար
- Հանձնարարվող առաջադրանքի թվացող անհիմաստությունը
- Ծուլություն
- Բոլորի օրինակին հետևելը

- Դասախոսների անտարբերությունը կատարած աշխատանքի վերաբերյալ
- Գրագոհության համար պատժի բացակայությունը
- Այլ (նշել)

14. Կարող ե՞ք ասել, Դուք լիովին համաձայն եք, համաձայն եք, համաձայն չեք թե բոլորովին համաձայն չեք, այն մտքին, որ հանձնարարվող առաջանդրանքների անհետաքրքիր լինելն է Ձեզ դրդում գրագոհություն կատարել:

- Լիովին համաձայն եմ
- համաձայն եմ
- համաձայն չեմ
- Բոլորովին համաձայն չեմ

15. Ինչքանո՞վ եք բավարարված կրեդիտային համակարգի արդյունավետությամբ:

- Շատ բավարարված եմ
- Որոշակի չափով եմ բավարարված
- Այնքան էլ բավարարված չեմ
- Ընդհանրապես բավարարված չեմ
- Չգիտեմ/չեմ կարող ասել

16. Ի՞նչ եք կարծում, արդյո՞ք կրեդիտային համակարգը արդյունավետ է:

- Շատ արդյունավետ համակարգ է
- Որոշակիորեն արդյունավետ համակարգ է
- Այնքան էլ արդյունավետ համակարգ չէ
- Ընդհանրապես արդյունավետ համակարգ չէ
- Չգիտեմ/չեմ կարող ասել

17. Ինչպե՞ս եք գնահատում կրեդիտային հակարգի ազդեցությունը կրթության որակի վրա:

- Շատ դրական
- Որոշ չափով դրական
- Ոչ մի ազդեցություն
- Որոշ չափով բացասական
- Շատ բացասական
- Չգիտեմ/չեմ կարող ասել

18. Ինչպե՞ս է կրեդիտային համակարգը անդրադառնում ուսանողների՝ սովորելու նկատմամբ շահագրգռվածության վրա, ըստ Ձեզ:

- ___ Շատ դրական
- ___ Որոշ չափով դրական
- ___ Չի անդրադառնում
- ___ Որոշ չափով բացասական
- ___ Շատ բացասական
- ___ Չգիտեմ/չեմ կարող ասել

19. Ինչպե՞ս է կրեդիտային համակարգը անդրադառնում ուսանողների առաջադիմության վրա:

- ___ Շատ դրական
- ___ Որոշ չափով դրական
- ___ Չի անդրադառնում
- ___ Որոշ չափով բացասական
- ___ Շատ բացասական
- ___ Չգիտեմ/չեմ կարող ասել

20. Խնդրում եմ, նշեք Ձեր սեռը:

- ___ Արական
- ___ Իգական