

## REGULATION OF PROFESSIONAL AND LABOR RELATIONS OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS: INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE AND NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

## REGULAMENTAÇÃO DAS RELAÇÕES PROFISSIONAIS E DE TRABALHO DE PROFESSORES UNIVERSITÁRIOS: PRÁTICA INTERNACIONAL E CARACTERÍSTICAS NACIONAIS

## REGULACIÓN DE LAS RELACIONES PROFESIONALES Y LABORALES DE LOS DOCENTES UNIVERSITARIOS: PRÁCTICA INTERNACIONAL Y CARACTERÍSTICAS NACIONALES

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### ABSTRACT

The present article is focused on a general analysis of labor relations in a modern university, as well as on the study of some specific characteristics of these relations. In recent decades, economic policy in higher education has changed significantly in different countries of the world. The goal of the study is to analyze modern approaches to regulating the labor status of a university teacher and its elements. The authors investigate the history of the transformations of higher education since the 1990s which resulted in higher education turning from the sphere of human capital production into an independent branch of the service sector. The article shows that, as a result of the higher education system reforms, changes in university management, the system of labor relations, and the socio-economic status of university teachers are taking place. Various university management models are explored. It is demonstrated that in the modern setting, internal control is replaced by external control, academic freedom is pushed aside by administration, and academic standards are modified and replaced by formal rules. These reforms are accompanied by major changes in labor

relations and the role of management and teaching staff in universities. Various examples of the construction of labor relations with teachers adopted in different countries are studied. Close attention is paid to approaches to stimulating teaching activities. In the light of the current difficult situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the problems of labor relations aggravated with the transition to distance and blended learning are considered. The drawbacks preventing a higher quality of higher education in Russia are identified. Proposals for improving the regulation of labor relations in the field of higher education aimed at improving its quality are presented.

**Keywords:** Higher Education. Labor Relations. Incentive System. Innovative Teaching Methods.

## RESUMO

O presente artigo se concentra em uma análise geral das relações de trabalho em uma universidade moderna, bem como no estudo de algumas características específicas dessas relações. Nas últimas décadas, a política econômica no ensino superior mudou significativamente em diferentes países do mundo. O objetivo do estudo é analisar as abordagens modernas de regulamentação da situação laboral de um professor universitário e seus elementos. Os autores investigam a história das transformações do ensino superior desde os anos 1990, que resultaram na transformação do ensino superior da esfera da produção de capital humano em um ramo independente do setor de serviços. O artigo mostra que, como resultado das reformas do sistema de ensino superior, estão ocorrendo mudanças na gestão universitária, no sistema de relações de trabalho e na situação socioeconômica dos professores universitários. Vários modelos de gestão universitária são explorados. É demonstrado que no cenário moderno, o controle interno é substituído pelo controle externo, a liberdade acadêmica é deixada de lado pela administração e os padrões acadêmicos são modificados e substituídos por regras formais. Essas reformas são acompanhadas por grandes mudanças nas relações de trabalho e no papel da administração e do corpo docente nas universidades. São estudados vários exemplos de construção de relações de trabalho com professores adotadas em diferentes países. É dada muita atenção às abordagens para estimular as atividades de ensino. Dada a difícil situação atual causada pela pandemia COVID-19, são considerados os problemas das relações de trabalho agravados com a transição para o ensino a distância e o ensino híbrido. As desvantagens que impedem uma educação superior de maior qualidade na Rússia são identificadas. São apresentadas propostas de aperfeiçoamento da regulamentação das relações de trabalho no âmbito do ensino superior, visando à melhoria de sua qualidade.

**Palavras-chave:** Ensino Superior. Relações de trabalho. Sistema de incentivo. Métodos de ensino inovadores.

## RESUMEN

El presente artículo se centra en un análisis general de las relaciones laborales en una universidad moderna, así como en el estudio de algunas características específicas de estas relaciones. En las últimas décadas, la política económica en la educación superior ha cambiado significativamente en diferentes países del mundo. El objetivo del estudio es analizar enfoques modernos para regular la situación laboral de un docente universitario y sus elementos. Los autores investigan la historia de las transformaciones de la educación superior desde la década de 1990 que dieron como resultado que la educación superior pasara de la esfera de la producción de capital humano a una rama independiente del sector de servicios. El artículo muestra que, como resultado de las reformas del sistema de educación superior, se están produciendo cambios en la gestión universitaria, el sistema de relaciones laborales y el estatus socioeconómico de los profesores universitarios. Se exploran varios modelos de gestión universitaria. Está demostrado que en el entorno moderno, el control interno es reemplazado por el control externo, la libertad académica es dejada de lado por la administración y los estándares académicos son modificados y reemplazados por reglas formales.

Estas reformas van acompañadas de importantes cambios en las relaciones laborales y el papel del personal directivo y docente en las universidades. Se estudian varios ejemplos de la construcción de relaciones laborales con docentes adoptados en diferentes países. Se presta especial atención a los enfoques para estimular las actividades docentes. Ante la difícil situación actual provocada por la pandemia COVID-19, se consideran los problemas de las relaciones laborales agravados con la transición a la educación a distancia y semipresencial. Se identifican los inconvenientes que impiden una educación superior de mayor calidad en Rusia. Se presentan propuestas para mejorar la regulación de las relaciones laborales en el ámbito de la educación superior orientadas a mejorar su calidad.

**Palabras clave:** Educación superior. Relaciones laborales. Sistema incentivador. Métodos de enseñanza innovadores.

## INTRODUCTION

The system of labor relations in Russia is experiencing a protracted transformational crisis; to a certain extent, this conclusion can be applied to the sphere of higher education, as well. In the context of the rapid development of the world economy, Russian higher education has to be attuned to effective economic development and the needs of society (Dudin et al., 2019a; Osadchaya et al., 2018). The effective functioning of higher education should be based on consistency and meeting the interests of all its subjects including the social and labor subjects (Lan Hong et al., 2020; Pushkarev et al., 2020). Therefore, the study of the features of modern labor relations in the higher education system seems to be extremely relevant today.

The issues of regulation of various aspects of labor relations in the field of higher education in the context of its transformation are becoming extremely acute. This relevance determines the interest of many researchers in the problems of organizing the professional activities of teachers. The works of such authors as Kurbatova (2016), Lazareva (2020), and Shuklina (2020) make a significant contribution to the base of knowledge about the features of teachers' professional activity in the context of the higher education system transformation; however, this base remains insufficient. Therefore, attempts to systematize labor relations with the teaching staff and clarify some of their aspects made in the present study are of certain scientific and practical interest.

First of all, it is worth considering various models of management of organizations providing higher education services, i.e. universities since the type of management directly affects the formation of labor relations within the university. Different service delivery models and current development trends are described in Julian Le Grand's book "The Other Invisible Hand: Public Service Delivery Based on Choice and Competition" (Le Grand, 2011). The "trust" model is based on trust in professionals, managers, and other employees to provide public services without government interference in their activities. It implies cooperation, independence, and autonomy, the paramount importance of the moral standards of professionals. This model does not require constant monitoring and supervision of university employees. This model was characteristic of the organization of the public sector before the beginning of its reformation. However, as noted in the literature on the economics of education, back in the 1970s when higher education became widespread, the question of the efficiency of costs and the quality of provided services, of the responsibility of the heads of educational institutions for ensuring a high level of return from the public resources spent in the field higher education was already raised (Gill, 2009). Meanwhile, as noted by Pavliutkin, "the disadvantages of the collegial management system in which the most important decisions were made through collective discussions and agreement include the slowness of the decision-making process since discussion and agreeing take time. Such a system is viable if resources are unlimited. However, when resources are limited and tend to decrease, it is almost impossible to come to a consensus on exactly what costs need to be reduced" (Pavliutkin, 2004).

The conceptual basis for the reformation of the higher education management system was formed by the approaches of the new public management the essence of which lies in transferring the methods of work in the private sector to the public sector. The existing systems of state regulation of this sector are being dismantled and replaced by quasi-market structures. According to Julian Le Grand, such a structure is presented by the model of consumer choice and competition based on the fact that consumers can choose from many different suppliers that compete with each other to attract customers (Le Grand, 2011). The transition to quasi-market structures means the creation of competitive mechanisms for universities – normative per capita financing, competitive distribution of budget-funded places for students, etc. Meanwhile, it should be noted that the use of these mechanisms has far-reaching ambiguous consequences which are reflected in many studies (Saydulaev, Vysotskaya, Kochetkov, 2020; Dudin et al., 2020). What is even more difficult is the transition from the “trust” model to the model of consumer choice and competition involving revolutionary changes in the institutional nature (the All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference of Universities and in intra-university relations). The Russian Federation is currently transitioning from the “trust” model to the model of choice and competition through the formation of administrative control (goal setting management and result assessment). The model of administrative control, according to Julian Le Grand (2011) assumes that the state (a government agency) participates in the provision of a service through a management hierarchy in which the higher-level superiors issue orders or instructions regarding the given service to their subordinates (goal setting management and result evaluation). The criteria for the quasi-market assessment of the activities of universities which should demonstrate their efficiency include the “entry” indicators (applicants’ Unified State Exam scores), the “exit” indicators (employment), and the performance indicators (primarily the volume of scientific research activity). Goal setting management and result assessment have become the tools for overcoming the institutional resistance of the university professional community, breaking the model of trust and turning professionals into a part of the management hierarchy. It signifies the path to the market discipline through target discipline. This path is difficult. The consequences for the activities of university teachers are very profound and in many respects irreversible. Modern institutional studies emphasize that in the public sector, the methods of result assessment and increasing the effectiveness of organizations and employees that are typical for the private sector often produce results that differ from the expected. The transformation of universities into customer-oriented organizations and teachers into ordinary employees radically changes the organizational culture and incentives (Dim, 2004). The position of teachers is changing; “managers start to play a more important role than scientists” (Head, 2011). At the same time, a “bureaucratic vertical working on the principle of command control” of teachers’ activities interested in demonstrating their efforts to provide a “quality product” to taxpayers is being formed (Head, 2011). Incentives based on the current informal norms of academic standards of a certain professional community and reputational control mechanisms are being replaced with incentives set by the quasi-market conditions artificially formed by the state and the corresponding mechanisms of external assessment and control. These mechanisms entangle universities pushing them to work on the indicators (Tambovcev, 2006). The scientific literature describes the effects that manifest in countries introducing mechanisms of the “new public management”, such as increased dependence of teachers on the administration of faculties and universities, the development of competition for employment, and an increase in teachers’ workload (Gill, 2009).

The study hypothesis states that in the context of the ongoing reforms, the labor relations of the teaching staff in the field of higher education are undergoing a serious transformation based on competition and the incentives for their activities are being distorted. Proving the formulated hypothesis involved using the texts of normative documents taken from legal reference systems,

theoretical provisions presented in published scientific works, and the statistical information available on official websites.

## **METHODS**

The methodological foundation of the study is formed by a complex of general scientific approaches, namely the community, historical, statistical, comparative, institutional, and resource approaches. The community approach allowed us to examine the object of the study as a social community having certain specific characteristics. The historical method made it possible to trace the history of the development of labor relations in the sphere of higher education in modern Russia. The statistical analysis allowed us to study the dynamics of the latter (according to the indicators of official statistics) and assess their influence on the qualitative and quantitative changes in the higher education system. The adaptive abilities of teachers during the transition to distance learning and their attitude towards educational innovations were identified based on the institutional and resource approaches. The comparative analysis made it possible to determine the directions of development of labor relations accounting for the positive international experience.

## **RESULTS**

Modern Russian studies show that the reformation of the Russian higher education system results in universities showing the same effects that were observed in other countries as a result of the introduction of new public management tools (Kurbatova, 2016). Despite the new economic opportunities obtained by the leaders of universities in the 1990s, the administration remained a part of the university community up until the beginning of the higher education system reform. The administration was delegated from the university community and was accountable to it. The work of the rector and vice-rectors was rewarded by the state following general principles: the salary was set according to a unified tariffication system and decisions of academic councils were required to receive income from extra-budgetary funds legally. Significant shifts in the position of university leadership and intra-university relations began to develop rapidly with the introduction of a new remuneration system introduced by the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation №583 (August 5, 2008). The aforementioned system is based on the delegation of the state authority to formulate remuneration systems to the administrations of universities making the latter the only employer for teachers. There was a gradual change in the powers of administrations in several areas: at the level of universities, staff schedules began to be approved and wage funds were formed. The system of estimated financing was replaced by subsidies for the fulfillment of a government assignment. University leaders turned from members of the university community into managers and employers for teachers. Their income was made dependent on the decisions of the founder (at first, of the Federal Agency for Education of the Russian Federation and later of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation). These changes were supported by a change in the principles of university financing, the introduction of performance indicators, as well as a change in the practice of electing rectors which started to increasingly resemble appointments. The next step towards creating a vertical of administrative control is associated with the adoption of the "Program for the gradual improvement of the remuneration system in state (municipal) institutions for 2012-2018" (approved by the order of the Government of the Russian Federation of November 26, 2012, №2190-r) (November 26, 2012). The transition to the principles of "effective contract" implies that the activities of university administration and teachers are built into a single system of work on the production of educational services. The state establishes "framework conditions" for the formation of wage systems in universities and designs criteria for the bureaucratic assessment of the activity of universities and teachers and parameters for the formation of wage funds.

May Decrees of the President of the Russian Federation №597 “On measures for the implementation of state social policy” (May 7, 2012) and №599 “On measures for the implementation of the state policy in the field of education and science” (May 7, 2012), as well as the large-scale national projects “Education” and “Science”, defined several new requirements for the quality of higher education. At the same time, the issue of ensuring competitive remuneration of the teaching staff was resolved and big projects aimed at updating the material and technical base of educational organizations were implemented (Dudin et al., 2019b). Moreover, university administrations started establishing their own salary systems and concluding contracts with teachers differentiated depending on their “contribution” to the results of the university’s work identified in the course of the bureaucratic assessment. The increase in wages was tied to the established “real incentive payments” and “the need to link the increase in wages with the achievements in specific indicators of the quality and quantity of the provided state (municipal) services (work performance)” was proclaimed. University professors became hired workers and the system of control of the professional community over the administration of universities was destroyed. “The program for the gradual improvement of the remuneration system in state (municipal) institutions for 2012-2018” factually consolidates the transformation of teachers into “cogs” in the production of educational services: they are assessed based on “an interconnected system of sectoral performance indicators from the federal level to a specific institution and employee”. While the Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of August 5, 2008 №583 provides that incentive payments have to be established “taking into account the indicators and criteria for assessing the work of teachers developed in the institution”, the “Program for the gradual improvement of the remuneration system in state (municipal) institutions for 2012-2018” sets another goal of incentive payments – they should be associated “with the achievement of specific indicators of the quality and quantity of the provided public services”.

As a result, the salary of the teaching staff becomes unstable and depends little on the official salary. This effect is demonstrated in the table below compiled based on data from the monitoring of wages of workers in the field of higher education and science carried out by the All-Russian Trade Union of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia (K voprosu ob urovne oplaty truda rabotnikov v sfere vysshego, srednego professionalnogo obrazovaniia, nauki, n.d.) (Table 1).

**Table 1.** The share of the guaranteed (permanent) pay (salary) in the structure of teaching staff salaries at the end of 2015

Share of the official salary in the structure of wages	Number of universities among the monitoring participants	Share of universities in the number of monitoring participants
from 6% to 30%	7	2.8%
from 30% to 60%	100	3.8%
from 60% to 70%	87	34.7%
70% and higher	57	22.7%
Total:	251	100%

As for the average salary of a university teacher, according to independent research from the job search agency [russia.trud.com](http://russia.trud.com), it only reaches 30,406 rubles which is lower than the average salary level in Russia.

All of this focuses universities and teachers on working on reaching the required formal indicators of the production of educational services established by the state which distorts the incentives for their activities.

Thus, a “bureaucratic vertical operating on the principle of command control” is being built (Head, 2011). Changes in the system of relations and the socio-economic status of university

teachers manifest in the change of their position in the organization, as well as in the norms of behavior. At the same time, internal control is replaced by external control, academic freedoms are pushed aside by administration, and academic standards are modified and replaced by formal rules. The limitation of academic freedoms and their substitution by the coercion to follow formal rules manifests in all areas of implementation of their principles: in the impact on the content of disciplines and teaching methods; in direct and indirect obstruction of both certain forms of control of academic performance (tests, complex indicators of “control points”) and textbooks published in a specific year; in discussing issues related to the activities of the university; in the right to choose textbooks and teaching aids, etc. The above-mentioned results in decreased trust in teachers. Summarizing the experience of using administrative control tools in the UK, R. Dim notes that “the trust between employees at various levels has been replaced by the need to provide clear data and documentation and collegiality has been replaced by strict requirements for filling out various forms and bureaucratic procedures. Thus, professional independence and autonomy are gradually disappearing” (Dim, 2004). In Russian universities, vertical relations have changed. Changes in relationships within universities are also showcased by increased competition between teachers. Creative competition in educational and scientific activities between teachers is being replaced by competition based on market and quasi-market principles. Market competition develops actively and with powerful financial support from the Ministry of Education and Science as a struggle for a job in elite universities. Quasi-market competition is purposefully introduced through the implementation of formal indicators for the assessment of teachers’ activities, for example, publication activity and citation rate including the publications included in well-known international citation systems – Web of Science and Scopus. The change in the institutional nature of the university is accompanied by serious alterations in contractual relations and the role of trade unions in universities (Kurbatova, 2016). First, the formal statuses of the parties to contractual relations have changed. The administration of universities presents an employer, a link in the management hierarchy organizing the achievement of goals set by the state. Teachers present employees, the lowest level of the management hierarchy, an object of management. This situation requires a different organization of the negotiation process, an understanding of the divergence of interests, and the risks of increasing conflict. Second, the professional community experiences fragmentation: trust is undermined both horizontally and vertically, individualization starts to appear, and competition mechanisms are formed. This complicates the task of developing the position of a team on the fundamental problems of labor relations. Third, the bargaining positions of the teaching staff in contractual relations are deteriorating: the possibilities of “having a say” are reduced; relations of solidarity are undermined; collective action becomes difficult. Risks faced by individual teachers expressing opinions different from the current position of university leadership increase.

The set of implemented measures has undoubtedly allowed drawing attention to the fact that scientific, technical, and technological development as a factor of university growth and increasing the competitiveness of Russian education is reaching a new level ensuring not only an effective solution to internal problems but also the entry of several Russian universities into international university rankings. However, the problem of the educational organizations’ personnel remains severe primarily in terms of the categories of the teaching staff and scientific workers despite the measures that have been and are being implemented. In the last two years alone, the average age of the university teaching staff has risen due to a decrease in the number of young workers (and a decrease in the share of this category in the total number of the teaching staff). While the number of educational organizations’ staff decreased by 7% in 2019 compared to 2017, the number of pedagogical workers occupying the positions of an assistant and a teacher has reduced even more – by almost 9.4% (!) (Kudzh & Golovanova, 2020). A reduction in the number of science workers is also observed during the indicated period (although not as significant, only by 1.3%). In addition to the reduction in the number of young scientific and pedagogical personnel,

statistics also indicate a decrease in quality characteristics. The number of assistants and teachers with a scientific degree declined by 28.8% (Kudzh & Golovanova, 2020). The presented facts indicate the ineffectiveness of the system of incentives for teaching work.

Serious changes taking place in the higher education system and the modernization of Russian universities characterized by abrupt structural and qualitative metamorphoses require constant monitoring of the effectiveness of adaptation processes in all educational communities involved in them (teachers, students, representatives of educational management). To a great extent, this applies to people of the older generation who make up more than a third of the entire teaching community.

A group of people of retirement and pre-retirement age is the most important resource for the implementation of reforms in the field of education. The change in the social role of this group will be determined not only by the growth in the number of its members associated with the pension reform and the general aging of the population but also by the demand for human capital, specifically for people able to apply an integrated approach to solving complex problems of the development of higher education. The potential of this professional community is undoubtedly a leading intangible asset that must be converted into the educational resources of higher education and its stakeholders, the development of social, cultural, and economic spheres of individual territories and society as a whole. Meanwhile, the reorganization of Russian higher education does not account for the characteristics, specific needs, and capabilities of teachers of retirement and pre-retirement age. However, it is important to understand how the well-formed social, organizational, technological, socio-psychological, pedagogical, sociocultural, and other conditions reflect the specifics of their professional activities, status, adaptive capabilities, and age characteristics to support the development of human capital in this group. This block of problems is associated with the anthropocentrically oriented tasks of studying the adaptation of the teaching community to the expanding boundaries of retirement and pre-retirement age, their needs, and abilities to carry out not only professional but also socio-cultural, intellectual, and communicative activities allowing them to view the pre-retirement and retirement period as a full-fledged stage of life. The results of such studies will demonstrate the role of the older generation of teachers in the implementation of institutional changes and the degree of their readiness to be active subjects of social policy in the field of higher education (Shuklina et al., 2020).

The ongoing digital transformation of university education has a sufficient number of positive effects and all educational process participants are interested in it. Meanwhile, in the scientific publication sphere, the question of what will happen to the employment of university teachers, especially the elderly following the transition to mass digitalization has not yet been raised. It is not yet clear whether their role in the educational process will change, whether they will become participants in an action accompanied by “a rise in the salaries of ‘media professors’ and a decrease in the salaries of less successful teachers who will become computer tutors” (Rastorguev & Tian, 2019). The severity of these issues differs in each specific situation and depends on the trajectory of Russian universities in the formation of an electronic knowledge base: either through developing courses using their research and teaching teams or through purchasing third-party courses. Describing university action in the “Zuckerberg galaxy”, V. A. Konev defines the role of a modern teacher in it as follows: “A modern teacher should not read the educational material (textbook) aloud, their job is to create and place educational information on the network, said information should be formalized methodically competently using the resources provided by the Internet. A student is working with educational information designed precisely in this manner.

Moreover, this educational information can be prepared by people other than the teachers of the university in which the student is studying” (Konev, 2018). This form of knowledge transfer is accompanied by a university receiving economic benefits. According to estimates made in the Higher School of Economics (HSE), replacing lectures with online courses saves 70% of the cost of



traditional courses (MOOC могут изменить экономiku vysshego obrazovaniia, n.d.). It should be noted that the high economic efficiency of open educational resources is also generally confirmed by the results of research conducted by foreign colleagues presented, in particular, in the works (Acemoglu, Laibson, List, 2014; Sandanayake, 2019). The leading universities are aware of the threat of losing the human interaction component – (face-to-face) – in the educational field. For instance, Ia. Kuzminov states that “in the digitalization of the educational process, the HSE does not have the task of replacing the course of its teacher with an online course ... On the contrary, we are talking about saving their efforts – they can read a short lecture course based on the online course but do this only for those students who not only passed the exam but became interested in this issue. The share of such students can range at only about 20-30% but work with them will reach a new degree of quality. This will improve the quality of education and ensure that the material is assimilated deeper” (Proektnaia deiatelnost stanet osnovoi obnovlennoi modeli obucheniia studentov VShE, n.d).

The “inverted classroom” technique involving the students watching the lectures and mastering the course on their own while the lecturers spend their time and energy on solving research problems may be used in this case (Hsu, 2012). The position that fears about the decline in the role of the teacher in the educational process can be exaggerated is supported by the following arguments. First, the development of high-quality e-courses requires constantly updating their content and tests. This is an ongoing work involving both the leading lecturers and their assistants. Second, any e-course requires analytical support. It is necessary to analyze a lot of factors that turn out to be quite significant affecting the degree to which students study the course content and their performance in control tasks. Such factors include, for example, the “problem areas” of video courses causing a decrease in students’ interest; behavioral, gender, age, and other characteristics of perception; the relevance and necessity of the elements of gamification, etc. The aforementioned not only does not reduce teachers’ involvement but, on the contrary, expands the composition of the course development team and contributes to their specialization (scriptwriters, lecturers, assistants, technicians, mailing specialists, etc.) (Lobova et al., 2020).

An online course can also be viewed as a means of improving the qualification of teachers which can be used by them without leaving their university and as a tool for transferring the knowledge and methods of organizing and teaching a course from the best lecturers to beginners. A teacher receiving additional training or taking refresher courses is gradually developing the willingness to use blended learning techniques in their work with students. While working on an online course as a student, a teacher receiving additional training remains a teacher and is simultaneously thinking about how such an online course could be used in teaching “their own” students in the discipline they are teaching (Chekhonina & Kuznetsova, 2019).

However, it appears that the transition of Russian universities to a “digital track” has to at least correlate with the opinion and the changing status of the employees of educational organizations who typically present the developers and providers of these courses. In this regard, there is a need to expand the understanding of online courses from the perspective of their perception by teachers of Russian universities.

## DISCUSSION

Next, we will consider the examples of legal regulation of the same aspects of labor relations for foreign university teachers.

Labor relations in German higher education institutions are organized clearly. Serious attention is paid to selecting teaching staff in German universities. The teaching staff includes professors and researchers (Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter) (Khudaimuratova, 2020). Researchers are hired temporarily and typically on a part-time basis if external funding for research in the field of education is increased. While teaching at the university, such researchers do not receive full

payment according to the staff schedule. They are paid only for the hours in which they conduct classes with students, that is, they are only paid for teaching.

Labor relations of researchers working in German universities are concluded for a certain period under the Law of the Federal Republic of Germany on fixed-term employment contracts in science (April 12, 2007). According to the said law, persons with a master's degree or doctoral students can be hired for the positions of research assistants. A three-year employment contract is concluded with such a researcher under the condition of simultaneous work on a doctoral dissertation which they typically must defend by the end of the three years. As a compromise, this contract can be extended for another three years. Besides, such researchers are required to teach the compulsory four hours per week in a variety of scientific fields and their lessons usually have to include a workshop or exercises. Said scientific fields usually present the areas in which the researcher must defend the dissertation they are preparing. At the same time, a researcher may be employed in third-party companies, in an office or production, including those located abroad. After these six years, the researcher either becomes a doctor of science or is forced to stop working at the university and engage in another activity (Bode, 2015). A postdoctoral researcher is required to work at the university for at least 60% of their full time and the rest of the can be used for research or office or production work including work abroad.

A professor in a fundamental area remains in this position until retirement. The position of a professor typically implies being assigned to a department in the direction of research determined by the head of the department (Khudaimuratova, 2020).

The position of professor can only be occupied by candidates with a doctorate the presence of which implies the successful defense of a doctoral dissertation.

This scientific degree is currently being criticized by the public and may be canceled or changed in the future (Hasselhorn, 2014). In addition to the position of professor (Ordentliche Professur) in Germany, the position of junior professor corresponding to the junior professor (Assistant Professor) in the UK and the US and associate professor in Russia has been introduced. In this case, scientists who have defended their doctoral dissertation can occupy the position of the professor but for no more than six years. After this period, they must become professors on a competitive basis (Ergasheva, 2019).

It should be noted that wages in higher education in Germany are slightly higher than the national average. While the average monthly salary for manufacturing and services in Germany was 3,700 euros in 2012, depending on the cost of education which averages 5,000 euros per month, the salary in higher education was 3,900 euros, and professors received 7,500 euros per month on average (Khudaimuratova, 2020).

According to official data, in the US, there are more than 600 budgetary and about 1,800 private universities and colleges with a four-year cycle of study which correspond to Russian higher education (Gladkikh, 2005). Meanwhile, the higher education system is highly decentralized: no university is funded from the federal budget, and the status of a state university means that the university belongs to the state and is financed from its budget (Rimskaia, 2006). The structure of faculty positions in the US has four levels (Johnstone, 2003): 1) graduate-assistant; 2) assistant-professor; 3) associate professor; 4) full professor. A characteristic feature of the American faculty structure is the compulsory stimulation of the intensification of teaching and research activities carried out through limiting the tenure and selection of teachers at the first two levels and providing life-long appointments at the third and fourth levels. Overall, the system ensures an even distribution of the teaching staff across all four levels, and, therefore, by age (Maiburov, 2003). It should be noted that an American university teacher is primarily involved in three types of activities: 1. Teaching (a normative load is established in the form of the number of courses per semester or per year). 2. Research activities (the teacher must actively publish research papers). 3. Organizational and administrative activities (the teacher administers educational programs or

activities, participates in the work of various committees) (Umurakova & Iantilina, 2018). As in many universities in the country, there are both tangible and intangible incentives in US universities. The main material incentives include wages the level of which can be increased following the results of the assessment. In most universities, every teacher is entitled to payment for their participation in two scientific conferences per year provided that their report is accepted at that conference. Sometimes, funding does not cover all the costs of participation in the conference forcing a teacher to participate in funding themselves since participation in conferences is an important factor in the assessment of the quality of their work (Grishina et al., 2015). The level of remuneration of workers in the field of education directly depends on the availability of an academic degree. The highest salaries are paid to professors (about 27% of all teachers). The lowest pay is received by ordinary teachers and teachers without a scientific degree (26%). Significant differences are observed in the remuneration of teachers and professors depending on the type of university. In the private sector, the pay gap for teachers at various universities is more than \$ 43,000 and wages range from \$ 42,000 in two-year colleges to \$ 85,300 in universities. In state universities, this gap is smaller – \$ 16,700 (\$ 57,400 and \$ 74,100, respectively) (Kleri, 2008). In addition to the basic salary, each American professor has individual funds in the department's budget for scientific conferences and trips. Additional payments for consulting, research work, and lectures in other universities range from 18 to 22% of the established salary. Many educational institutions offer annual benefits for university professors (pension contributions, health insurance, social security, life insurance, etc.). It should also be noted that a scientist has the right to use paid vacations during the preparation of their dissertation and writing books which are paid at the rate of 100% of their earnings within six months or 50% of annual earnings. Thus, having sufficient income to meet their material needs, the staff of higher educational institutions in the US can fully devote their working time to science and constantly improve their knowledge (Rimskaia, 2006). It is also important to note that the following motives continue to play a leading role in the professional activities of teachers: – self-affirmation; – spiritual growth; – self-realization. Although external motives still do not act as the main factors in motivating and controlling teachers' activities, the significance of these factors is increasing. This tendency is the most prominent in the American academic environment where social status, high prestige of the profession of a university teacher, and a fairly high material remuneration act as the levers of control (Markova, 2012). Thus, the problem of stimulating teaching activity is relevant and important. Abroad, the system of incentives for workers in the field of education is based on assessing teachers' qualifications and business and personal qualities. Although the criteria for assessing the performance of teachers differ across universities, all of them typically include pedagogical skills, results of scientific research, attitude to work, professionalism level, results of creative activity, past achievements, and motivation to implement new teaching methods.

The question of the potential of aging workers is often raised in developed countries (Borman & Hedge, 2015). Sociologists have found that the main stereotypes about people of pre-retirement and retirement age usually include resistance to change, low ability to retrain, and decreased motivation to work (Bal et al, 2015). These stereotypes correlate with the social dysfunctions associated with the processes of aging and discriminatory practices against older age groups of the population that are currently widespread in the labor sphere both in modern Russia and foreign countries (Fisher et al., 2017). Scientists normally try to compare the performance of older people and their younger colleagues. Most studies confirm that the former tend to have professional experience but are more likely to resist change and are less able and not always willing to upgrade their skills. Thus, the experience of older employees increases the efficiency of the team, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, they are less tolerant of changes and technologies which means they are less adaptable (Iweins et al., 2013). Analysis and synthesis of the problems of adaptation of older workers allow us to see important aspects of theorizing and practical activity regarding this social community. Sociologists study the influence of teachers of pre-retirement and

retirement age on the development of the university community and explore the processes of forming academic leadership in the university environment (Evans, 2017), as well as the importance of mentoring (Weijden et al., 2015). Foreign experts argue that academic leadership emerges through interaction with senior colleagues within a specific disciplinary field. It is the elderly teachers who can introduce young people to the university culture demonstrating the specifics of the academic environment to them (Evans, 2017). Another significant aspect of research is university policy regarding older employees. A special focus of attention is presented by the course of universities in creating a system of benefits and guarantees for those planning to retire. A socially important problem articulated by foreign authors is the lack of confidence of older teachers in their social protection (Matthews, 2013), as well as problems of communication and various types of activity outside the work sphere. The adaptive potential of older teachers in the context of the transformation of higher education is viewed as the basis for their adaptation both to work activity before a well-deserved rest and the retirement itself.

Considering innovative teaching methods related to distance and remote methods and given the fact that in developed countries their development started a long time ago and they have been the norm for many years, most teachers at the pre-retirement and retirement age have successfully adapted to them; therefore, this problem is not as acute as in Russia.

Thus, it should be noted that despite the similarity of the directions of the transformation of higher education in Russia and countries recognized as leaders in terms of the quality of higher education, the organization of labor relations in universities of developed countries does not cause any conflicts between the management and teaching staff, does not result in unhealthy internal professional competition, does not lead to the formalization of teaching quality indicators, and the well-established material incentives allow carrying out teaching activities confidently and effectively.

## CONCLUSION

The studies discussed in the presented article lead to several conclusions. Due to its commercialization and digitalization, the ongoing transformation of higher education in Russia leads to significant changes in the management and regulation of labor relations. This process requires the participation of the state as a party interested in training qualified personnel for the economy, management, science, and culture. Thus, the role of the state lies in establishing the legal framework and requirements for the quality of higher education, as well as executing control. The study also shows that the labor relations currently developing between the leadership of universities and the teaching staff do not balance the interests of the parties which affects the quality of training specialists in higher education. The reasons for such an imbalance include the flawed system of material incentives, as well as the difficulties of switching to innovative teaching methods the introduction of which is determined by the general digitalization of society, as well as several other reasons of a global nature. Therefore, increased demand for the quality of higher education and the transition to innovative teaching methods (distance learning, online courses, and blended learning) should be accompanied by an increase in the level of material incentives for teachers actively using new methods and participating in their development. On the other hand, university students have to consider the fact that the current situation will inevitably change the professional requirements for teachers, as well as the approach to work with university personnel and the development of professional retraining and advanced training programs. The ability to use modern means of communication and organize teamwork remotely will inescapably become a part of the minimum standard of qualifications. So far, not all Russian university teachers have the necessary level of motivation to master the required professional competencies and it is not easy for such people to go through this transition. People managing the country's higher education system and the leadership of individual universities have to create conditions in which material

incentives will become the main factor in motivating teaching staff to transition to new teaching formats. The main objective of the present day should be to provide young workers with interesting and well-paid jobs, individual trajectories of education and professional development, and understandable working and living conditions while providing the current senior teaching staff with the opportunity to continue working at the university as mentoring professors creating scientific schools for the most promising areas of development of university science and technology university. The hypothesis of the present study appears to be proven. Several issues of the topic under study such as non-material incentive measures for improving the professional qualification of university teachers remain outside the scope of the article and require a separate study.

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