

# Institutionalization of Expert Activity in Educational Field of Cross-Border Region

## Institucionalización de la actividad de expertos en el ámbito educativo de la región transfronteriza

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#### ABSTRACT:

Globalization and regionalization of education contributes to international harmonization of educational systems in the cross-border region, involving the institutionalization of expert activity, which will contribute to the objectivity and reliability of quality recognition procedures of educational services and to wide dissemination of UNESCO/OECD Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education. The article is devoted to the improvement methods of expert activity in the context of institutionalization as the main factor of education quality evaluation in Russia, China and Mongolia. The realized project is focused on expert space creation in the cross-border region. Organizational-pedagogical conditions of expert activity development in educational field of cross-border region proves the expediency and necessity of developing the formation mechanisms of basics for expert activity development and of institutionalizing the interaction between educational subjects within Association as a clustered-network multiplicative model of expert activity. In the expert space, a network of relationships between the interested parties (local partnership) connects clusters.

#### RESUMEN:

La globalización y la regionalización de la educación contribuyen a la armonización internacional de los sistemas educativos en la región transfronteriza, lo que implica la institucionalización de la actividad de expertos, lo que contribuirá a la objetividad y fiabilidad de los procedimientos de reconocimiento de calidad de los servicios educativos ya la amplia difusión de las Directrices UNESCO / Sobre la prestación de calidad en la educación superior transfronteriza. El artículo se dedica a los métodos de mejora de la actividad de expertos en el contexto de la institucionalización como el principal factor de evaluación de la calidad de la educación en Rusia, China y Mongolia. El proyecto realizado se centra en la creación de espacios de expertos en la región transfronteriza. Las condiciones organizativo-pedagógicas del desarrollo de la actividad de expertos en el campo educativo de la región transfronteriza demuestran la conveniencia y necesidad de desarrollar los mecanismos de formación de los fundamentos para el desarrollo de la actividad de expertos y de institucionalizar la interacción entre los sujetos educativos dentro de la Asociación como un modelo multiplicativo Actividad experta. En el espacio

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de expertos, una red de relaciones entre las partes interesadas (asociación local) conecta clusters.  
**Palabras clave:** Institucionalización; Actividad de expertos; Educación más alta; Región transfronteriza; Cluster-Network Modelo multiplicativo

## 1. Introduction

Currently, organization of cross-border transferability of learning is important in the educational activity. Foreign sources are attractive to students and researchers under certain circumstances. However, high performance efficiency requires self-control and the external control (Chong, Yuen, & Tan, 2017, pp. 1-43).

Cross-border education reveals new opportunities for access to higher education, training and jobs, but it requires constant control over the educational institutions. In addition to the features of an educational institution, features of the State must be also taken into account. In this case, the study and comparison of different educational systems is advisable to create national and international quality standards for higher education. Implementation of joint educational projects contributes to strengthening cooperation between the regions; the education itself becomes universal. At the same time, it contributes to a healthy competition among institutions of higher education both in economic terms and in the aspect of research and innovation (Hammond, 2016, pp. 555-566).

In addition to educational changes, economic development and cooperation are also motivational factors. For example, China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) has expanded its capabilities in the field of education. The People's Republic of China has adopted the appropriate legislative instruments for advancement of education. Nevertheless, there are still particular problems and barriers, including in quality control management (Xu, & Kan, 2017, pp. 199-220).

Cross-border higher education development has contributed to the establishment and development of national quality assurance agencies to evaluate cross-border education, controlling foreign suppliers of educational services and the joint efforts of national and international educational institutions. These agencies are focused on the international level. This trend is a key aspect of education in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition to national organizations, the quality of cross-border higher education is improved by international organizations, for example, UNESCO, the World Bank and the OECD that have developed international guidelines to strengthen the quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications schemes at both national and international levels. QC type may depend on the regional peculiarities. Many countries are developing guidelines to control foreign educational institutions that are on their territory.

Internationalization and globalization of higher education is subject to a comprehensive study in order to promote effective cooperation, regulation of movements on the part of teaching team and students, to optimize higher education institutions. Besides relationship formation between the institutions, the appropriate educational policy is also necessary, as well as the international relations. Despite a large number of studies, this matter is studied a little and requires further research.

Currently, globalization in education comes along with a trend towards regionalization – the single European space, the education market of Australia and New Zealand, gaining the potential of South-East Asia. Such a processes entails the creation of a new concept of "cross-border education", characterized by a distribution of educational system outside a particular state. The quality of educational services of this scale should be controlled with appropriate expert activity. Expert activities in education as a purposeful process is determined by his or her understanding of the queries of modernizing modern educational system, values and demands for developing cross-border education systems.

Educational cooperation analysis, as well as the analysis of experience in research cooperation in the field of education between Russia, China and Mongolia, has shown the mismatch between the expert activities and the level of educational system. International harmonization of educational systems in the context of transition to a market economy in cross-border regions of Russia, China and Mongolia has an opportunity for mutual enrichment of historically different educational systems (Bardach, & Sazonov, 2007, p. 190). However, the educational systems of different countries are achieving this objective in the framework of similar norms, standards and constraints inherent in the institutional educational system. Thus, international harmonization in the field of education in cross-border region in the context of expert activity realization has reproduced the contradictions of educational system: following the codes and preserving features of the national educational system simultaneously.

The major challenge is to determine organizational and pedagogical conditions for international harmonization of educational systems in the cross-border region in relation to institutionalization of expert activity. This would contribute to the objectivity and reliability of quality recognition procedures of educational services and to wide dissemination of UNESCO/OECD Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education.

The purpose of this article is to determine the improvement methods of expert activity in the context of institutionalization as the main factor of education quality evaluation in a cross-border region (Russia, China and Mongolia).

Objectives of the study:

- analysis of the educational system of the Russian Federation and foreign countries, of expert activities in the context of independent education quality evaluation;
  - determining the features of expert activity in the educational field of cross-border region;
  - substantiating the cluster-network multiplicative model of expert activity in the educational field of cross-border region (Russia, China, Mongolia) as a form of institutionalization.
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## 2. Materials and Methods

The research on determining the basic approaches to assess the quality of educational services is based on the following materials:

- multi-standard approach, which takes into account the Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), standards and guidelines for quality assurance of European Association for quality assurance (ENQA), standards for quality management ISO/IEC 17024:2003, guidelines for quality assurance in cross-border higher education UNESCO and OECD (European Association for Quality Assurance, 2015; Improvement Method for the, 2015; Quality Assurance, 2009);
- conceptual documents: international standard ISO/IEC 17024:2003 non-state system of recognition of competence and staff monitoring; standard of job classification and performance evaluation of experts, professional category of the UN Commission on the international civil service (ICSC OS) (IAF Guidance, 2009).

Foresight method has a special place in the study, as it includes methods of expert assessment of strategic directions for socio-economic and innovative development, reveals the technological breaks that are capable to affect economy and society in the medium and long term (Miles, 2007; Saritas, 2011). Its use has allowed forecasting, identifying possible alternatives and choosing the most preferred. The choice of this method as optimal is determined by the assessment necessity of possible prospects of education development in the cross-border region. Thus, the availability of competent experts in the field of education is able to predict the likely effects on the economy and society. Secondly, it is determined by the possible participation of many experts from all fields of activity, related to education, by its focus on developing practical measures for approximation of selected strategic targets.

The first stage involves applied research on external empirical criteria for determining expert status. The second stage of the project involves an analysis of the regulatory framework for experts training and development of recommendations on system development and expert

activity in the field of education, analysis of current and future-oriented forms of networking in the field of education. The third stage of the project involves the analysis of joint expert activities of Transbaikal State University with educational institutions of Mongolia and China. We have analyzed the features of their interaction and the educational programs. We have determined the main interested parties and the features of networking with them. Clusters are developed based on the collected material. In the expert space, a network of relationships between the interested parties (local partnership) connects clusters.

This project can be implemented by a number of measures related to expert space creation in the cross-border region, by substantiating the relevance of assessing the institutionalization of expert activities in the educational field of cross-border region and by the opportunities for the cluster-network model of expert activity in cross-border education.

Expert space was created by implementing various projects:

- environment creation for improving the quality and effectiveness of the graduate educational leadership on the program including expert activities (Agreement "On joint research activity organization", Memorandum "On the establishment of an International Center of Advanced Experience" between the Zabaykal State Pedagogical University (Chita) and the Buryat State University (Ulan Ude) and the Mongolian State University of Education (Ulan Bator));
- the study of educational programs of the Transbaikal State Humanitarian Pedagogical University (Sabhu) on the part of the Russian-Mongolian educational institution of secondary (full) general education with advanced study of Russian language and with teaching in Russian (the agreement between the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Science and Education of Mongolia);
- Council establishment on matters of expert activity among members of the Baikal Open Interregional University Complex and Hulunbuir Institute (Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region);
- permanent working group creation to coordinate the organizational interaction and control over the implementation of innovative scientific and educational projects, testing models and procedures, innovative quality assurance systems of education (the agreement between Sabga and Heilongjiang University, China);
- discussion of problems in the format of round tables, expert panels, discussion platforms in the framework of the International educational forum "Modernization of professional education in Russia, China and Mongolia" (modern approaches to education quality management and their efficiency; the quality of vocational education and education management, basic criteria for ranking the educational organization of higher education; single system of instruments for control and assessment as a mean for assessing specialists' preparation and certification);
- harmonization of approaches to education quality assessment (participation in the seminar "AFNOR day in the Embassy of France"; Forum members of the Shanghai cooperation organization "Education without borders"; experiment development and implementation, related to the introduction of model variant of basic educational program with a focus on professional standard of pedagogical activity and qualification requirements with evaluation of its effectiveness by the Institute of Education, Higher School of Economics);
- creation of pilot platform "Model of Zabaykal expert-methodological center of professional education" together with FGAU "Federal Institute of education development".

The results are obtained by implementing these projects, the analytical departmental target program "Development of scientific potential of higher school" (No. 3.21/6835) and the project part of state task of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation (grant No. 27.2479.2014/c).

## **2.1. External empirical criteria analysis for determining the expert status in the field of education**

Educational organization has a special role in dissemination of knowledge. This idea can be used in professional development of experts and in the creation of so-called networks – communities of practice. This is a professional network leading to the creation of a professional

expert community. In this case, the network refers to a purposefully created social community, focused on achieving certain results. Networking gives certain advantages: reduced isolation, professional development through cooperation, finding joint solutions for similar problems, exchange of experience, the acceleration of knowledge exchange.

Innovative technology of design knowledge (knowledge of technology) makes it possible to take a direct part in the process of creating knowledge, obtaining competencies required for knowledge management. Thus, knowledge becomes an intellectual asset of the organization and is considered as a dynamic process. The competence allows not only managing the processes, people and knowledge, but also creating the framework of the network training organization.

Structural review of professional development efficiency in the framework of knowledge management allows us to formulate the following criteria and indicators of expert's qualification:

- professional and personal competence (level of maturity, educational knowledge, competence, sophistication, invariant functions of intellectual activity);
- innovative culture (transformation readiness, self-improvement, job specialty, participation in real projects, participation in conferences, the level of culture, of openness and trust);
- self-management (regularity and activity, personal performance and responsibility, the increment of personal knowledge and the level of self-management development, etc.) (Ignatieva, 2008).

Modern education development is characterized by increased requirements for expert's qualification. Highly skilled professionals are required for expert activity in the educational field of cross-border region: experts, who should possess the necessary knowledge and skills that are in demand in other countries. To date, the number of experts, who can be retained only by organizations of the UN system, has made up tens of thousands of people. Education is one of the most important fields of expert activity in the cross-border region (Russia, China and Mongolia). Experts provide technical assistance in developing curricula, educational institutions, literacy, adult education, training, integration and effective use of information and communication technologies in education. They play an enormous role in the conceptualization, planning, meaning and evaluation of results obtained in various educational projects at all levels.

Especially important is the fact that the expert is considered not only in terms of immersion into the subject area, but also in the geographical and national context. On the one hand, ideal organizational position provides direct involvement in activities of the national ministries of education, on the other – it is quite independent of their impact in analyzing the project efficiency.

Expert activity is a special professional activity that does not coincide with the activities of a particular specialist. Not every specialist, even highly qualified one with extensive professional experience, can be an expert.

In education, analysis refers to the analytical procedure, aimed at obtaining a reasoned presentation of result (integral object). This result is considered as parameters, which are recognizable and interrelated (Ivanov, 2008).

We consider the analysis as a study in which the changes (content, methods of organizing educational process and interaction with students, etc.) are expressed in evaluative judgments based on established correspondences with defined criteria and indicators.

The results are determined based on empirical research and criteria of expert activity in the educational field of cross-border region, their indicators and content, as well as on the limitations of these criteria.

Education has a direct impact on the world economy development and on the labor market. Thus, training activity is now considered as a commercial service (Decree of the WTO). The list and the scope of education services are governed by the agreements of the WTO's state-

members, namely, by the regulatory principles included in the special agreement. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) divides educational activities of any country on four basic ways of providing services (Larionov, 2007):

- Cross-border supply of services. Provider of educational services (educational establishment) and students are in different countries, the training is organized remotely, based on the use of modern information and telecommunication technologies (Internet or mail);
- Consumption abroad. The consumer travels to another country to obtain education services provided by foreign universities;
- Commercial presence. Educational institution is a legal entity of the country that commercially present in the territory of another country due to direct foreign investment for establishing a branch or a department (program) with further recruitment and training;
- Stream of natural persons. A person: lecturer, teacher, expert – arrived from another country to render educational or expert services in this country.

After joining the WTO, any state amends the national education policy to provide free regulation of importing-exporting educational services in other WTO's state-members. The main criterion here is the release from most of legal, visa and other restrictions for the smooth implementation of higher education institutions of other countries in educational services, including distance learning. In addition, the GATS implies the termination of the two forms of trade discrimination against foreign suppliers in the market of each country. Firstly, the government shall allow "free access" to its domestic market for foreign suppliers and, secondly – to ensure no discrimination of domestic and foreign service providers by allowing the latter to play by the rules of the internal market (the so-called most-favored-nation) (Starostina, & Kazachek, 2015, pp. 140-149; Ziguras, 2003, p. 89).

The extent, objects and forms of cooperation in the field of education in the cross-border region (Russia, China and Mongolia) have been expanded since the accession of Mongolia (1997), China (2001) and Russia (in 2012) to the WTO. Difficulties in curriculum coordination and imbalance in parity cooperation, regulation of training abroad and academic exchange in the field of education of Russia, China and Mongolia have determined the expert policy development in the Transbaikal State University. They also have determined a research within the Analytical departmental target program "Development of scientific potential of higher school (2009-2001)", within the project "Development of requirements and programs for world-class expert's preparation in the field of remote educational services" (No. 3.2.1/6835).

This project was realized by an applied research on external empirical criteria for determining expert status (the first stage of the project).

The results require evaluation by a specialist, who is also an expert. Certain criteria were considered in the ongoing study to find a solution within scientific and educational communities (Shanteau, Weiss, Thomas, & Pounds, 2003). The results of the study are presented in Table 1, which contains information about the types of criteria, their nature and disadvantages.

**Table 1.** Expert assessment criteria

<b><i>Criteria</i></b>	<b><i>Indicators</i></b>	<b><i>Content</i></b>	<b><i>Disadvantages</i></b>
<i>Experience</i>	The period (in years) that a particular person has worked	This criterion is based on the assumption that the extensive increase in knowledge and skills leads to expert achievements	Despite the positive correlation between experience and relevant expert technics, this position does not take into account a complex combination of external and internal factors and their relationship in achieving the expert level. Thus, this position

			cannot be considered as the main criterion in determining the expert status.
<i>Certification</i>	The certificate	Some kind of formal certification (accreditation), assessment of knowledge and skills	As in the previous case, the emphasis is on the period of being in a certain position, but not on the specific skills and abilities.
<i>Recognition by the professional community</i>	Expert level	Identification of experts working in this area	"The popularity effect". Recognition in the professional community refers to the past achievements, but to innovative solutions and concepts that may become of primary importance in further development
<i>Comparison with the expert activities of "super-experts" (authority)</i>	"Golden standard" in relation to a specific area	Decisions and judgments are the instruments in assessing the "super-experts". If a new judgment is close to the "gold standard", it is accepted, and a person gets an expert status	Assessment instruments of the "gold standard" are not always objective.
<i>Content knowledge</i>	Knowledge of relevant facts	Expert activity is determined by testing the actual knowledge	Simple increase in knowledge is rarely sufficient to become an expert. The expert has to understand what to do with this mass of facts and information, has to be able to apply this knowledge in specific expert activity.

We suggest that a system and sociological approach proposed by Harald Meegh is one of most promising approaches in determining the expert status and in evaluating the expert activity (Meegh, 2001). Instead of applying the separate criteria and procedures, one considers the expert activity with respect to social relations: "the 'expert-in-context' link should be a minimal unit of analysis" (Gobet, 2015).

The expert activity is necessary, according to this concept. It is necessary to consider the relationship between the expert's identity and his or her functions, since they determine the social context of expert activity. In this case, the function is a relevant expert's duty. The expert's role (and its specific features) is dictated by the interaction between the expert and the client or target audience for which he works. Experts and expert activities are perceived as a form of human capital.

The second stage of the project involves an analysis of the regulatory framework for experts training and development of recommendations on system development and expert activity in

the field of education, analysis of current and future-oriented forms of networking in the field of education.

The normative basis experts training system in cross-border region is the international standard ISO/IEC 17024:2003 – non-state system of recognition of competence and staff monitoring (IAF Guidance, 2009). ISO defines its objectives in the field of education as follows:

- standardization development of professional pedagogical activity to ensure the international exchange of educational services;
- cooperation development in educational, intellectual, scientific-technical and other areas.

The credibility of expert activity assessment is achieved through accepted worldwide assessment process (criteria and indicators), control and periodic reassessment of the expert's competence. It is a response to the changes in the higher education system that necessitates the constant improvement of expert skills in the field of education, supported by the implementation of additional professional training programs.

In addition, the requirements for the experts are set out by the documents of the United Nations. The main document describing the qualification requirements, methods of expert activity preparation and evaluation is the Basic standard of job classification and performance evaluation of experts, the professional category of the UN International Civil Service Commission (BS ICSC). The BS ICSC job classification system and expert activity organization is based on the principle of grouping, depending on the functions required in a particular environment.

BS ICSC provides guidance for consistent achieving of two main objectives: analysis of posts in the form of systematic collection and organization of information on specific terms and their expert assessment.

Expert's functions are to satisfy the demands of the organization for achieving the efficiency and quality and to meet the requirements of employees (interesting, challenging and gratifying activity that involves expert system analysis of effective planning and organization).

Guidelines for quality assurance in cross-border higher education (hereafter Guidelines) were developed on the 33rd session of the general conference of UNESCO held in October 2005. Guidelines took into account the diversity of higher education systems and the principles of responsibility distribution between the authority, higher education institutions and other education providers, student organizations, quality assurance bodies and accreditation agencies, as well as the recognition of academic and professional qualifications in the country. The guidelines are designed to ensure not only the quality of cross-border higher education, but also to serve as methodological guidelines for expert activity in the educational field of cross-border region.

## **2.2. Aspects of the expert activity in the cross-border region (Russia - China - Mongolia)**

The third stage of the project involves the analysis of joint expert activities of trans-Baikal state University with educational institutions of Mongolia and China.

Table 2 presents the results of comparing the Guidelines for quality assurance of higher education institutions/providers of educational services in the cross-border region and the aspects of expert activity (the educational program "Mining" in the Transbaikal State University and Mongolian State University of Science and Technology).

**Table 2.** Aspects of the expert activity in developing and implementing the network educational program "Mining" in two border universities, in accordance with the Guidelines for higher education institutions

<b>Guidelines for higher education</b>	<b>Aspects of the expert activity in</b>
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	<b>institutions</b>	<b>implementing the educational program</b>
1.	Provision of comparable quality of educational programs, including elements with due account for cultural and linguistic features and requirements of the host country	Educational program quality assessment through the lens of cultural tradition, linguistic features and requirements of the receiving party
2.	Recognition of the possibility of high-quality teaching and research under the supervision of a teacher and in the environment that meets the highest quality standards; independent and thorough assessment	Control over the proper realization of educational program, including the potential of the teaching staff, the effectiveness of logistical, informational and other conditions for compliance with the international quality standards
3.	The existence of a quality management system to ensure maximum use of the competencies of all interested parties — teaching team, administration, employers, students and graduates, and to ensure full accountability of higher education institutions and providers of educational services for the award of academic degrees that are comparable in standard with those that are in the host country and abroad	Control over and assessment of the quality management system, including the opportunities and factors stimulating international cooperation between national quality assurance bodies in order to increase their level of understanding.  Control over and assessment of the satisfaction with the educational program and educational outcomes
4.	Provision of cross-border higher education services that meet the requirements of quality assurance bodies of the host country	Definition and description of the transparency of academic degrees in order to improve their applicability in cross-border higher education and the quality of educational services by comparing them with the educational services provided in other countries
5.	Exchange of good experience by participating in national and international organizations and inter-institutional networks	Control over the proper use of effective experience in the cross-border region and its assessment
6.	Encouraging the recognition of academic degrees awarded by higher education institutions, networks and partnerships created in cross-border regions	Control over and assessment of the compliance of academic degrees and their standards in the country and abroad; possibility of cooperation in the cross-border region
7.	The use of the code of conscientious activity	Control over and assessment of its implementation
8.	Available and accurate information about the criteria and procedures of external and internal quality assurance, academic and professional recognition of degrees and qualifications awarded by higher education institutions and education providers, programs and qualifications	The study of information resources that students use to make decisions, to find possible risks in gaining information about the educational organization or about the limited applicability of certificates issued by the organization

9.	Transparency of the financial status of the institution and (or) the proposed educational program	Control over and assessment of the financial activities of educational institutions and the reasonableness of financial costs to implement the educational program
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Bibliometric analysis of higher education quality evaluation shows the lack of attention to such method of expert assessment as a meta-evaluation, widely used by the Chinese scientists (Chanchun, 2007, pp. 21-23; Tsonvey, Tsaniuy, & Zhen, 2004). Meta-evaluation has become a leading method in the study of state-public system formation and development of higher education quality assurance in China, conducted in the Transbaikal State University (Dugarova, & Tsi, 2015)

In determining the standards of assessing the higher education quality, we have used the evaluation theory by Feng Ping ("rational evaluation model") (Pin, 1995). He has allocated three requirements: "correspondence to reality" – the validity of all assessment objects and all facts relevant to the assessment (Tsonvey, Tsaniuy, & Zhen, 2004); "aesthetics" – internal consistency, harmony, logic; "benefit" – development potential of mankind and the progress of society (Shanteau et al., 2003).

The necessity of learning this method was substantiated by analyzing the evaluation indexes of the Shanghai Jiao Tong University in the ARWU (Academic Ranking of World Universities) that reflect the characteristics, essence and the real situation of expert assessment. The evaluation indexes are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Evaluation indexes of the Shanghai Jiao Tong University

<b>Index</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>
Nobel	Nobel prize winners in physics, chemistry, medicine, economics	20%
HiCi	Research intensity of teachers among the 21 universities	20%
N&S	The number of papers published in Nature and Science	20%
SCI	The number of articles indexed in SCI, SSCI	20%
Performance Per faculty	Performance in top four directions of each teacher	20%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

This fragment of meta-evaluation enables the experts to draw the following conclusions:

- index system of Shanghai ranking involves selected performance indicators of an educational institution; each indicator reflects the separate evaluation components, its purpose and object features;
- despite the accuracy of these indicators, they cannot be the only criteria in expert assessment. For example, the Nobel Prize cannot characterize the scholarly status of the University; the number of papers indexed in the SCI and SSCI does not reflect the quality of scientific achievements.

Meta-assessment requires comprehensive and system study of quality assessment in higher education in China, including the assessment of research quality assurance in higher education; the study of a standardized system of quality evaluation of higher education in China; determination of the optimal methods for quality assurance assessment in higher education.

Bibliometric analysis of expert activity and meta-evaluation of the higher education quality in China show that this material is not widely introduced to the theory and methodology of professional education both in Russia and in China. In this regard, there was developed a curriculum for additional vocational education of teachers and managers in the University to study the meta-evaluation method as a method of expert activity. Table 4 presents the module "Meta-evaluation: examination of the harmonization of quality assessment in higher education in China" curriculum experts.

**Table 4**  
Curriculum of the module "Meta-evaluation: research on harmonization of higher education quality assessment in China"

№	Unit, Subject and Topic	Total academic hours
Compulsory module		
1	Public-professional system infrastructure of higher education quality assurance in China	8 hours
2	The concept of rating the evaluation system of educational achievements (Fan Hanchin)	
3	Meta-assessing and improving the reliability of results and information awareness on the most important parameters of meta-evaluation	
4	Evaluation theory by Feng Ping "rational evaluation model": "correspondence to reality", "aesthetics", "benefit"	
5	Meta-evaluation analysis (material review): 1. Survey 2. Delphi Method 3. Level-by-level analysis 4. Integrated assessment methods 5. Collection of statistical data	
Elective module		
6	Model analysis of meta-evaluation reliability	28 hours at the choice of the listener
7	Meta-evaluation standards: – according to Fang Hongyiqin: quality, reliability, correspondence to facts and relevance; – according to Schwandt and Halpern; – according to Hei Zubin; – according to Gu Yonchai.	
8	Meta-evaluation possible fragments of Shanghai index system (Academic	

Ranking of World Universities 2003):

- Nobel Prize Winners among the graduates and teachers (category 2);
- research intensity of teachers among the universities (project 211);
- number of papers published in Nature and Science;
- number of articles indexed in SCI, SSCI;

Performance in top four directions of each teacher.

The solution to the third problem – underlying rationale for the cluster and network multiplicative model of expert activity in the educational field of cross-border region (Russia, China and Mongolia) as a form of institutionalization – requires to consider the possible approaches to the creation of an expert space.

It was found that the educational field of cross-border region between Russia, China and Mongolia is characterized by the use of the resource and the competitive potential of cross-border territories based on international integration, their accession to the World Trade Organization in accordance with the agreements of the WTO Accession. According to researchers, the analysis of the cross-border region of these countries is characterized by an additive model of interregional integration processes, forms and implementation mechanism of these processes (Mrikaev, 2009; Rostan & Vaira, 2011). The interaction of actors in the framework of the additive model of cross-border integration involves the use of extensive factors. The special policy in cross-border education will contribute to the formation of an international expert space representing students/learners in the cross-border region, adequate information resources for decision-making and protection against the risk of providing educational services of low quality. Main objectives determination of the policy in the educational field of cross-border region should be in accordance with the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education. This document provides the international framework to protect the interested parties from the risk of providing education services of poor quality. In this case, we recognize that international cooperation between both the representatives of higher educational institutions and non-governmental organizations is required in order to prevent the spread of false information, provision of low quality education, graduates receiving diplomas of limited applicability.

Experience analysis of creating expert space has showed that the multiplicative model should give priority to intensification expert cooperation, integration of institutional and social spheres of cross-border regions. The creation of such models requires expert integrated systems. Its implementation determines the institutionalization of expert activities, which can be realized through different organizational forms. Association is one of these forms. Association (from lat. association – the Union) is a voluntary group of individuals and/or entities for mutually beneficial cooperation, achieving a common economic, political, scientific, cultural or any other purpose while maintaining the autonomy and independence of the Union members (Seri, 2003).

Association establishment in the educational field of cross-border region is due to its international nature, purpose and specifics of expert activities in general, secondary and higher professional, additional vocational teacher education and will form a single expert community in the cross-border region of Russia, China and Mongolia. S. L. Bratchenko divides the examination into examination in the narrow sense (ENS) and examination in a wide sense (EWS). He emphasizes that "the extraction of the expert's knowledge by the survey is the key issue in ENS; a comprehensive full research to produce reasoned data on expert activity – in EWS. Careful planning of the research structure, its key principles, methods, procedures, etc. is the priority of the study" (Bratchenko, 2006).

We conclude that the understanding of an expert activity requires the use of general terms "research" and "research method", but not "assessment". Examination is required only if the

object or situation cannot be determined uniquely by existing standards or in cases of many different standards, knowledge, points of view, allowing various interpretations. The attention should be also paid to one paradoxical moment associated with such expert activity as a research. In terms of the study, there cannot be completely definite situations, despite all the available authoritative opinions. The necessity of an examination is determined by the client or by the expert.

Therefore, expert assessment is a quantitative evaluation, evaluation by scoring or phenomena that are not directly measurable.

The estimate is used only when it is possible to measure the process components and its results with already known measures or equivalents. Therefore, the subject of assessment is not how its results correspond with any standards, but the activity and changes in pedagogical sphere and in management.

In modern expert activity development, regardless of legal educational organization, educational program, the scope and location, a network approach to professional system of expert's education quality assessment involves a clustered-network multiplicative model of expert activity. The intensification of creating a network community of experts, who institutionalized a non-profit organization promoting independent expert assessment of education quality in the cross-border region is the priority in this system, which includes the following:

network interaction between educational institutions, authorities, entities of the external environment in order to increase the efficiency of educational and expert services in the cross-border region (Russia, China, Mongolia) according to international standards.

Contribution to:

- ensuring regional economy with highly competitive human resources in cross-border region (Russia, Mongolia, China);
- infrastructure development in cross-border region (Russia, China, Mongolia), which provides independent assessment, certification of specialist qualifications in a range of work-related professions.
- formation and development of mechanisms and instruments for expert assessment of staff related to secondary vocational education, for study, analysis and generalization of modern expert activity in general and in additional vocational pedagogical education.
- drawing public attention to the problems and achievements of independent quality assessment of education (general, secondary, higher and supplementary vocational education).

The main objectives of cluster-network model of expert activity in cross-border education:

- international cooperation in the educational field of cross-border region according to expert activities in education;
- state policy implementation by providing high quality of general, vocational and higher education and its assessment;
- mutual enrichment of national expert assessment systems, development of common international requirements for expert competence in the field of education in the cross-border region.

Institutionalized system of the expert community in the sphere of education in cross-border region is focused on:

- studying, analyzing and generalizing modern experience, forms and methods of expert activity on every education level;
- forming and developing assessment instruments and on the research on the independent education quality assessment;
- consolidation of Russian and international expert community in the field of education quality assessment to improve expert activity;

- joint research on expert activity in general, secondary vocational and higher education;
- creating international centers for collective use of educational and scientific databases on expert activities in general, secondary vocational and higher education;
- providing informational, methodical, consulting, legal and other support;
- organizing international cooperation in research, scientific-methodical work in the field of expert activities in education;
- creating general communication infrastructure in the field of expert activity;
- mutual assistance in organizing and holding international institutional and program accreditation;
- carrying out training, advanced training, retraining internship work related to the main issues of expert activities in education.

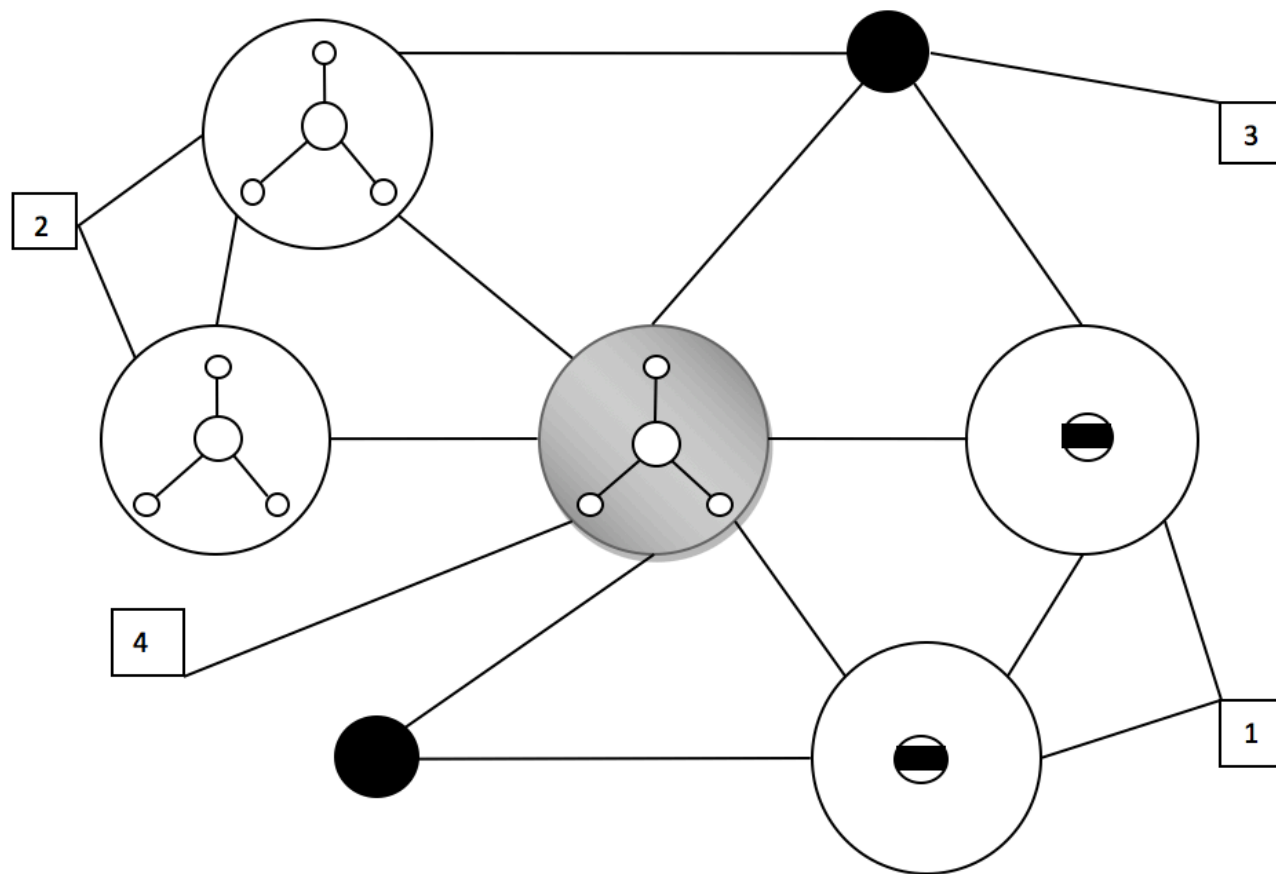
Organized partnership formation in the integrated educational system involves the creation of separate clusters, which are social, educational and expert institutions that define a distributed training infrastructure (OECD guidelines, 2016). Expert space involves six interested parties: public administration bodies, higher educational institutions (along with suppliers and consumers of educational services), student organizations, quality assurance bodies, accreditation agencies and professional associations. A network of relationships between the interested parties that create a local partnership connects its clusters. This enriches the curriculum and social practice, determines the content of the joint research and enables the rapid use of the results of these studies, as well as the use of generalized resources and exchange mechanisms.

Non-profit organization promoting independent education quality assessment – "International Association of Independent Education Quality Assessment" (IAIEQA) – is an example of cluster-network multiplicative, created in the cross-border region (Russia – China – Mongolia) at the initiative of Transbaikal State University. It is a voluntary Association of educational institutions of different levels (universities, institutions of additional vocational education, professional and educational organizations) for cooperation in the field of expert activities in education.

Morphological scheme of IAIEEQ that creates an expert environment in the cross-border region (Russia – China – Mongolia) illustrates the educational system of expert research. Cluster-network multiplicative model "IAIEQA" is a network that hosts three types of objects to clusters (Figure 1):

- institutional complex, which includes universities, schools, colleges, institutions of additional vocational pedagogical education – hard type of the cluster;
- social partnership of educational and professional organizations – soft type of cluster.
- private educational organizations or vocational institutions – non-clustered type.
- cluster switch is performing a particular function of educational or managerial domination and coordination of expert functions, common strategy development and development of expert activity areas, formation of scientific-methodical, expert functional and management levels.

**Figure 1**  
Cluster-network model "IAIEQA"



Institutions of functionally homogeneous expert entities (license, accreditation, certification, competition expert panels) require transformations in the field of research, training and educational institutions. Examination acquires a new form in the process of system genesis of expert communities within the association with institutional agents of new "culture of knowledge".

### 3. Discussion

At the beginning of the new century, expert activity becomes a key element in developing a knowledge society, as it is at the intersection of research, education and innovation. European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) is an institutionalized system that ensures the formation of a single managed educational complex, based on the resources of its members with the consolidation of basic expert activity aspects in legal documents (European Association for Quality Assurance, 2015).

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQA AHE) is a heterogeneous and structurally-coordinated system that brings together the accreditation agencies, designed to collect and disseminate information about the current and new developments in the theory and practice of evaluation, about the higher education quality improvement and support (INQA AHE, 2016).

The first stage of institutionalization of the integrated expert community in the educational field of the cross-border region (Russia, China, Mongolia) is characterized by a fragmented expert fuzzy technology and functional relations between monocentric educational organizations. The second stage involves the integration of heterogeneous educational systems. Variegated educational integration is presented as a system with determining and corresponding educational structure, organizational expert and functional units, which may be monocentric with one educational establishment and polycentric with several such institutions.

There is a regression mechanism in the expert community that transforms the integrated expert system into a homogeneous management system. Regression may occur if the relation between the structural components in research activities breaks during the examination. Expert assessment involves analytical positions in expert activity.

According to the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher

Education, expert activity in the cross-border region is difficult and specific due to performance of all interested parties. This determines the necessity of forming the educational expert associated complex that represents the form of integrated educational expert system – cluster-network multiplicative model for independent education quality assessment. For example, International Association of Independent Education Quality Assessment is presented by coordinating units-clusters (network switches), complex educational organizations (universities, schools, colleges, institutions of additional vocational pedagogical education) and social partnership.

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## 4. Conclusions

We have determined the peculiarities of the expert activity in the educational system of the cross-border region. This type of expert activity has its own characteristics because of its scale, importance and influence. Successful performance of his/her duties depends on the sufficient experience in similar activities, on the necessary knowledge, abilities and skills, his/her competence (certificate).

Modern education development is characterized by increased requirements for expert's qualification. Highly skilled professionals are required for expert activity in the educational field of cross-border region: experts, who should possess the necessary knowledge and skills that are in demand in other countries. To date, the number of experts, who can be retained only by organizations of the UN system, has made up tens of thousands of people. Education is one of the most important fields of expert activity in the cross-border region (Russia, China and Mongolia). Experts provide technical assistance in developing curricula, educational institutions, literacy, adult education, training, integration and effective use of information and communication technologies in education. They play an enormous role in the conceptualization, planning, meaning and evaluation of results obtained in various educational projects at all levels.

The first stage involves applied research on external empirical criteria for determining expert status. The second stage of the project involves an analysis of the regulatory framework for experts training and development of recommendations on system development and expert activity in the field of education, analysis of current and future-oriented forms of networking in the field of education. The third stage of the project involves the analysis of joint expert activities of Transbaikal State University with educational institutions of Mongolia and China. We have analyzed the features of their interaction and the educational programs. We have determined the main interested parties and the features of networking with them. Clusters are developed based on the collected material. In the expert space, a network of relationships between the interested parties (local partnership) connects clusters.

Organizational-pedagogical environment for expert activity development in the educational field of the cross-border region (Russia – China – Mongolia) involves:

- practicability and necessity of developing mechanisms to form the basis for expert activity development in the educational field of the cross-border region:
  - fixed criteria and indicators for expert qualifications (professional and personal competence, innovation culture, self-management);
  - peculiarities of expert activity in the field of education;
  - definition of expert activity as a research process, in which the changes (the content of education, methods of organization and interaction with students, etc.) are expressed in estimates on the basis of correspondences with defined criteria and indicators;
  - indicators, contents and shortcomings of expert assessment criteria;
  - expert activity aspects at the international level and development of recommendations for expert activity development in the field of education;
  - analysis of current and future forms of networking in the field of education;



■ institutionalization of interaction between subjects of educational space in the form of an association as a clustered-network multiplicative model of expert activity in the educational field of the cross-border region.

This organizational-pedagogical environment for expert activity development in the educational field of the cross-border region was useful in creating a non-profit organization "International Association of Independent Education Quality Assessment", which is the cluster-network multiplicative model of expert activities in the educational field of the cross-border region (Russia, China and Mongolia). It is a voluntary Association of educational institutions of different levels (universities, institutions of additional professional education, professional and educational organizations) for cooperation in the field of expert activities in education.

The relevance of this research lies in the possibility to use the provided systematic information in further research and in the possibility to apply the proposed cluster-network multiplicative model of expert activity in the educational field in various regions.

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