Academic Freedom for the University as an Intellectual and Creative Organization

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Abstract. The article reveals the essence of the “academic freedom” concept and phenomenon, develops the directions for the development of universities as an intellectual and creative organizations based on the implementation of the academic freedoms’ principle, and offers a matrix for the realization of academic freedoms and autonomy of the university. The practice-oriented matrix presents the infrastructural components, the development of which creates the transformational basis of the university, the principle of academic freedom autonomy.

The author considers the features of the university as an intellectual and creative organization, determining the specifics of its management based on the implementation of the principle of academic freedom. This approach involves the transformation of the marketing paradigm of the university as a management tool that activates the intellectual and creative potential of its employees based on the implementation of the principle of academic freedoms in the context of the digitalization of the scientific and educational process.

The main function of the “academic freedom” concept is revealed, which consists in the formation of a theoretical and ideological paradigm, which serves as the basis for creating sociocultural, economic and managerial mechanisms to counter the most powerful negative impact vector on the university environment, which has a destructive effect on the essence of university science and education.

The specifics of the concept’s contents and the essence of the managerial tool “academic freedom” are studied in relation to the current stage of the university as a social institution development, which allows them to be used as the basis for transformational processes aimed at de-bureaucratizing the university and building a future university self-government system.

Keywords: Academic freedom · Creative organization · University
1 Introduction

The socio-economic institution “university” has a long history and traditions. The purpose of the university is to be the center of advanced science, education, culture, the focus of the intellectual and creative elite, to form and develop the intellectual, scientific, creative potential of society. Historically, an important component of the university’s concept, the foundation for building its corporate culture, scientific and educational relations between scientists, teachers and graduate students, students were academic freedoms that allow teachers, researchers, students and graduate students to be independent in their scientific and educational activities. Massification of science, reduction of state financing of higher education, strengthening of state control in relation to universities, quantitative methods for assessing the effectiveness of its activities, the destruction of the university’s self-government system, the development of a managerial approach to the organization and planning of science and education in higher educational institutions and research institutes, including control of the content component of the educational and scientific process, total digitalization [1], including in its chaotic forms during the coronavirus pandemic, practically led to the destruction of the institute of academic freedom, which contradicts the essence of the university and the activities of scientists, teachers, students and graduate students within its walls. Thereby, the main research problem is the contradiction between the listed dominant trends in higher education and the essence of a university based on the principles of academic freedom and autonomy. The scientific and educational product of the university is the result of the intellectual, scientific and creative work of scientists and the cooperation of the faculty with students and post-graduate students. The formation of a high-quality scientific and educational product is based on human capital development, the intellectual and creative potential of the university, regard for the personality of a teacher-researcher, post-graduate student, student. Our hypothesis is that the university is an intellectual and creative organization, and the leading principle of university management marketing as an intellectual and creative organization is the principle of academic freedom, which activates the intellectual and creative potential of scientists, teachers, graduate students, students on the basis of self-management of scientific and educational activities.

The materials of our research are the publications of a scientific and practical nature devoted to the problems of modern educational systems, practical cases representing fragments of the educational process at the university, academic freedom program documents, publications in professional communities, social media posts. Observation, monitoring were used as research methods in order to identify the features of the implementation of academic freedom principles in the modern scientific and educational process; the descriptive and analytical method made it possible to present approaches to the “academic freedom” and “university autonomy” concepts in program documents; Semantic analysis of the content of publics in social networks devoted to educational problems has revealed negative phenomena in the modern academic environment associated with the restriction of academic freedoms.
2 Results

Studying the concept of “academic freedom” in diachronic and synchronous aspects led to the following conclusion: its essence is changing, depending on which of the socio-economic forces exerted on the university, striving for autonomy, independent and objective scientific knowledge and truth, the greatest negative impact, prevented the realization of his social mission. In different historical periods, the church, the state, the fundraising and financial management system of the university, its administrative apparatus, and the public became such a force. In the Middle Ages, the university and the scientists developed their scientific ideas to oppose churches and declarations, and then to realize academic freedoms in order to create a university space of science that is safe for scientists who could not influence the pro-clerical forces. Thus, scientific thought and scientific discoveries, opposing and contradicting clerical dogmas, gain a right to exist, and their authors should be in relative safety, conduct their research and express their ideas within the walls of the universities. It is believed that the institutional consolidation of the “academic freedom” concept, that arose in an autonomous medieval universities, occurred in 1811 under the influence of the ideas of J. Fichte. H. Helmholtz at the end of the 19th century noted in his speech that the professor is free to choose the direction of scientific research, teaching methods and lifestyle [2]. Especially relevant in the period of transformation of the management of scientific and educational activities of universities, an example of which is the Russian system of higher education, in the light of the discussion about modern rating systems and effective contracts as tools for evaluating the work of scientists and teachers is the idea of G. Helmholtz that they can only be evaluated by peers - scientists with authority in a certain field of scientific knowledge. The main basic value of the classical German University is truth, the search for which is carried out by scientists in compliance with the principle of academic freedoms - freedom to learn and freedom to study based on the principle of the unity of research and education [2]. The modern European approach to the concept of “academic freedoms” was laid down by the Unesco Recommendations (1974), Magna Charta Universitatum (1988) [3], the Declaration on Academic Freedom and Autonomy of Universities (1990), and the Unesco World Declaration on Higher Education (1998), The Bologna Declaration (1998) and other documents [3].

The analysis of Russian documents and social processes associated with the phenomenon of “academic freedom” shows that the latter are the point of application of forces in the struggle for democratic values and part of the liberal picture of the world. Thereby, one of the first documents in Russia, declaring the academic freedom were so-called the Privilege on the Academy in Moscow in 1682 [3]. In addition to academic freedoms, the Privilege declares class equality, the right of its own charter and diploma. This document was never adopted, and only under Peter I, in 1706, a decree on academic freedom was signed at the Moscow Academy [3]. The St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, founded in 1724, in fact, lacked autonomy and academic freedom, the Academy was under the control of government officials of the Academic Chancellery [3]. Under Alexander I, two important documents were adopted that developed academic freedom in Russia: the Decree Act for the Imperial University of Dörpt (1802), which subsequently extended to other Russian universities, and the First
General University Charter (1804), which declared university autonomy [3]. University freedom in Russia in the 19–20 centuries become the object of struggle of various political forces. So, in 1835, the adoption of the University Charter abolished most academic freedoms, in 1863, the new Charter, as part of the liberal reforms of Alexander II, returned part of the academic freedoms to the profession, in 1884, Alexander III, during the “counter-reforms”, essentially eliminated academic freedoms and the autonomy of universities [3], and in 1905, Nicholas II, yielding to the requirements of all-Russian student strikes, returns the rectors’ election, which later was canceled in the Soviet period in 1929 and returned in 1987 [3]. In 2012, the Federal Law “On Education in the Russian Federation” was adopted in Russia, in which the academic rights and freedoms of teachers and students and the autonomy of educational organizations are declared as principles of state policy [4].

The content of the “academic freedom” concept was transformed when it was transferred to the US academic environment (in 1885 the first publication on academic freedom was published in the USA [2]). The source of negative influence that can deform the essence of the scientific process has become part of the internal environment of the university. The university’s fundraising system, designed to provide the financial and economic foundations of its activities, began to directly influence the thematic and essential direction of university scientific research. The possibility of commercializing scientific research is becoming an important motive for supporting various areas of scientific activity. The fundraising system negatively affects one of the main academic freedoms - the freedom of informed choice of topic and direction of scientific research. In addition, the university’s management structures began to step on the civil liberties of the professors. The reason for the creation of a special document - the Declaration on Academic Freedoms [3] - was the dismissal of 11 professors. The document can be conditionally divided into two parts - conceptual (declaration of principles) and practical. In the conceptual part, three elements of academic freedoms are highlighted - freedom of research, of learning, and freedom of expression and action. The declaration emphasizes that the problem at the moment is precisely the freedom of expression and action as part of the professor’s civil and political position both within the university and outside. The existence of the problem is due to pressure from the board of trustees, which require the university to implement the policies of their owners, investors, and dissent can lead to dismissal. In the discussion of this issue, the Declaration contains an important idea for our study that the material motivation of scientists as workers does not dominate the university. Much more important elements of a scientist’s motivation are the possibility of self-realization, research, an independent position, the ability to share the results of one’s research, scientific and civic position with students and the general public [4]. This kind of motivation is a striking feature of the creative class [5] to which university professors belong. The Declaration traces the idea that if a scientist is not endowed with academic freedoms, society will not be able to get the benefits and knowledge necessary for its development from science, and the university is considered in its civilization mission to provide society with the knowledge it needs for development, to teach new things and provide society with trained specialists, labor resources. Students’ respect for the teacher is based on the belief that the professor is independent and free in expressing his ideas and views. The authors of the Declaration emphasize that respect for the professor and the educational process are destroyed if students have a
suspicion that Teacher is intimidated, repressed, does not dare to truthfully and sincerely express his position. The Declaration points to the importance of board of trustees, however, the principle of equality of board of trustees and faculties should underlie a balanced university system. The morale of the university, which is based on academic freedom, is a factor that ensures the effectiveness of the university in relation to public interests. It is interesting that the authors of the Declaration consider the university as a refuge from the tyranny of the ruler in a totalitarian society, as well as a salvation from the tyranny of public opinion in a democratic society. The authors of the declaration offer a number of practical recommendations that can be used in conflict situations related to the attack on academic freedoms at the university.

An analysis of the processes taking place in the modern system of higher education in Russia demonstrates that disregard for the principle of academic freedom has a negative effect on the educational and scientific process. Despite the fact that academic freedom and universities’ autonomy are declared as the main principles of state policy in Russia, the realization of academic freedom faces certain institutional and social barriers. So, for example, the existing system of research funding absolutely deprives of chances or significantly reduces the opportunity to receive financial support from existing funds [6]. The stated policy of the Russian Science Foundation and the analysis of the grants provided by the fund show that the bulk of its financial resources are directed to the technological and natural science spheres of scientific research, while humanitarian, socio-economic areas of research are less likely to receive financial support. This does not exclude the possibility that scientists can carry out these studies on an initiative basis, which is quite possible in some scientific fields, but absolutely impossible in those areas in which it is necessary to attract significant material and financial resources that make it possible to conduct research. In the field of education, academic freedom and universities’ autonomy are largely limited by existing federal state educational standards, the system of accreditation of universities, and the bureaucratization of their management.

The principle of academic freedom is closely connected with another principle - the autonomy of universities, their joint implementation creates the foundation for a high-quality scientific and educational process. The main contradiction of the current stage of universities’ development in Russia is that they are not able to be autonomous in economic terms, and society through state mechanisms ensures their financing [6]. Together with state funding, the state comes to the university, going far beyond the financial and economic activities of universities, permeating all aspects of their activities, destroying their autonomy and making it impossible to observe the principle of academic freedom. An alternative to public funding is a concept in which “universities finances themselves” through business contracts, grants, and student fees. This concept cannot be realized in Russian modern conditions, because it does not have a sufficient social base - a well-off one, capable of paying for a higher education of the middle class and a developed system of grant-giving funds, market participants who could take on the functions of creating financially sound trustee boards universities. Processes of this kind are typical for most post-Soviet countries [7]. In this situation, a need has arisen in Russia for a new Declaration of Academic Freedoms and the Autonomy of Universities, followed by the formation and conclusion of a Social Contract between universities, society and the state. The initiation of such an agreement would be possible “grass roots”: in the university teaching environment, the prevailing
situation is negatively assessed, but this is currently unlikely, since the processes of consolidation of the university community are weakly expressed [8]. A possible development of events is the initiation of the Russian Declaration of Academic Freedoms and Autonomy of Universities and the Social Contract “from above” as a result of the desire of political elites to propose a solution to existing problems in university science and education [9, 10].

The following directions for the development of the university based on the implementation of the principle of academic freedom and autonomy of the university as an intellectual and creative organization are proposed:

– the recognition of the university as a special social institution that performs the functions of preserving, transmitting, searching for and creating the scientific knowledge necessary for the development of society, the formation of a new generation and the provision of society with qualified labor resources;
– the recognition of the university as independent of state ideology, religions, political movements and decisions of authorities;
– the introduction of the presumption of the profession integrity principle;
– the revival of the institution of higher education reputation and the development of the principle of participants’ responsibility in the scientific and educational process for the results of scientific and educational activities;
– the formation of a system of self-government by scientific and educational activities;
– digitalization of management processes based on the principle of academic freedom;
– creating the conditions for the integration between the scientific and educational process at the university;
– freedom to choose the topic of scientific research and the direction of its development;
– freedom in presenting one’s scientific position on the content of scientific research, in putting forward scientific hypotheses;
– freedom of access to resources for research;
– freedom in academic mobility;
– freedom in expressing one’s civil and political position regarding socio-economic events and decisions in society;
– freedom to criticize scientific points of view;
– freedom in the organization and contents of the educational process of the university;
– recognition of the professor’s free time as a resource for the formation of his scientific, human and intellectual-creative capital;
– the transition to a qualitative assessment of the results of scientific and educational activities of the teaching staff by members of the professional community;
– election of faculty for 5 or more years, an increase in the number of perpetual contracts;
– transformation of the scientific and educational timing system of the faculty on the basis of changes in approaches to the formation of the load in the framework of the educational process;
– modernization of approaches to the formation of state educational standards and the system of accreditation of universities, the development of the autonomy of universities in the formation of standards for scientific and educational activities;
- transformation of the licensing system and accreditation of the university on de-bureaucratization basis;
- de-bureaucratization of educational and methodological support of the educational process;
- creation of institutional conditions for the university fundraising system development.

The solutions we developed are displayed in the form of the Matrix, the implementation of the academic freedom and autonomy of the university (Fig. 1).

![Matrix implementation of academic freedom and autonomy of the university](image)

**Fig. 1.** Matrix implementation of academic freedom and autonomy of the university (includes the institutionalization of the “academic freedom” and “autonomy of the university” concepts in three documents - the Declaration of Academic Freedoms, the Social Contract and the Educational Law and shows the ways of transforming the university based on the principles of autonomy and academic freedom)
3 Conclusion

The academic freedom of the university is its important competitive advantage both for students and post-graduate students in the market of scientific and educational services, and for scientists and teachers in the labor market. The academic freedom of the university is a factor that forms a special scientific and educational space, the environment most favorable for the formation of the intellectual and creative potential of professors, graduate students and students, the development of human capital and the scientific potential of society as a whole. Academic freedom is an important tool to counter the negative influence of the external and internal environment on the scientific and educational process, and as sources and vectors of negative influence change over time, the underlying document postulating the content of academic freedom must change. The urgent task facing the university environment is the development of a modern Declaration of academic freedom that can withstand the challenges of modern society, preserve the ability of the university’s scientific and educational space to stimulate the intellectual and creative activity of scientists, teachers and students, and produce high-quality scientific and educational products. The Declaration of academic freedom should conceptually reflect their essence at the present stage of development of science and education, form the basic principles of the organization of managerial and communication processes of the university, the implementation of which in practice can free the scientific and educational community from negative external and internal influences, give a qualitatively new impetus to the development of scientific educational process and its results.

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