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CIES 2017 Conference
Atlanta USA, 5-9 March 2017

**Kazakhstan Higher Education Leadership
Professional Development Program:
A Preliminary Study**

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Outline

- Background of Kazakhstan
- Professional Development Program for Higher Education Leaders
- Statement of the Problem
- Research Questions
- Theoretical Framework
- Research design and data collection instruments
- Sampling
- Preliminary Findings (phase 1)
- Next steps



Background of Kazakhstan



From: <http://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazakhstan>



Background of Kazakhstan: HE Reforms

- State Policy aimed at improving the position of Kazakhstani universities in the international educational space:
 - State Program for Education Development for 2011-2020 (SPED, 2010)
 - State program for Industrial-Innovative development of Kazakhstan for 2015-2019 (SPIID, 2014)
 - State Program for Education and Science Development 2016-2019 (SPESD, 2015)
- The intent to use universities as a principal vehicle for the socio-economic development of the country.
- The consequent transition towards university autonomy which plans a huge obligation on universities to become outward looking, research, business and industry oriented and internationally focused.
- Clusters of 11 universities intended to become the “engines of regional economies” and the centers initializing the spirit of entrepreneurial activity among undergraduate, master and doctoral students, as well as the faculty.

Professional Development Program (PDP) for Higher Education Leaders

- 3-year PDP program commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science of RK (2014 -2016).
- **Aim:** To improve skills of HEIs leaders in the areas of strategic planning and corporate governance in transition to a new model of university governance, to develop their research , entrepreneurial, teaching& learning activities in accordance with the objectives of State Programs for Education Development and to develop their skills in managing the complex change process.
- Designed jointly by NU Graduate School of Education and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, UK.



PDP Strands

2014

- Leadership

2015

- The Entrepreneurial and Adaptive University
- Research
- Teaching and Learning

2016

- Entrepreneurial University
- Research University



Program Design

Module 1

- **NU based:**
- University based workshops for trainees with an input from UK-based Leadership Foundation for Higher Education

Module 2

- **International experience:**
- 4-5 day study visits by trainees to foreign universities in UK, USA, Singapore, Japan, South Korea , Hong Kong, Netherlands, Germany

Module 3

- **NU based:**
- Sharing experiences at NUGSE based upon previous modules, cross-cutting themes and study visits

Statement of the Problem

- Following higher education reforms, there has been no evaluation of the effects of the PDP programs
- Little empirical evidence available on the ways in which PDP programs have been developed and implemented within the Central Asian context
 - A need to address the cultural context of the region
 - A need to provide insights into educational reform within higher education

Research Questions

1. What is the the effectiveness of the PDP?
2. How have PDPs trainees been practicing their learning in their home institutions?
3. What recommendations can be offered for future PDPs in Kazakhstan and the region?

Theoretical Framework

- Educational change (Fullan, 2007)
- Diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 2010)

Research Design

- Longitudinal
- Large scale
- Mixed-method program evaluation design (Fitz-Gibbon & Morris, 1987)
- Two phases (presenting on phase 1)

Data Collection Instruments

PHASE 1	PHASE 2
Survey questionnaire (n=300)	Comprehensive survey questionnaire
Limited sample:	Expanded sample:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-structured interviews (n=15) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semi-structured interviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis (e.g. reports, program design) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document analysis (e.g. action plans, policies implemented)

Sample

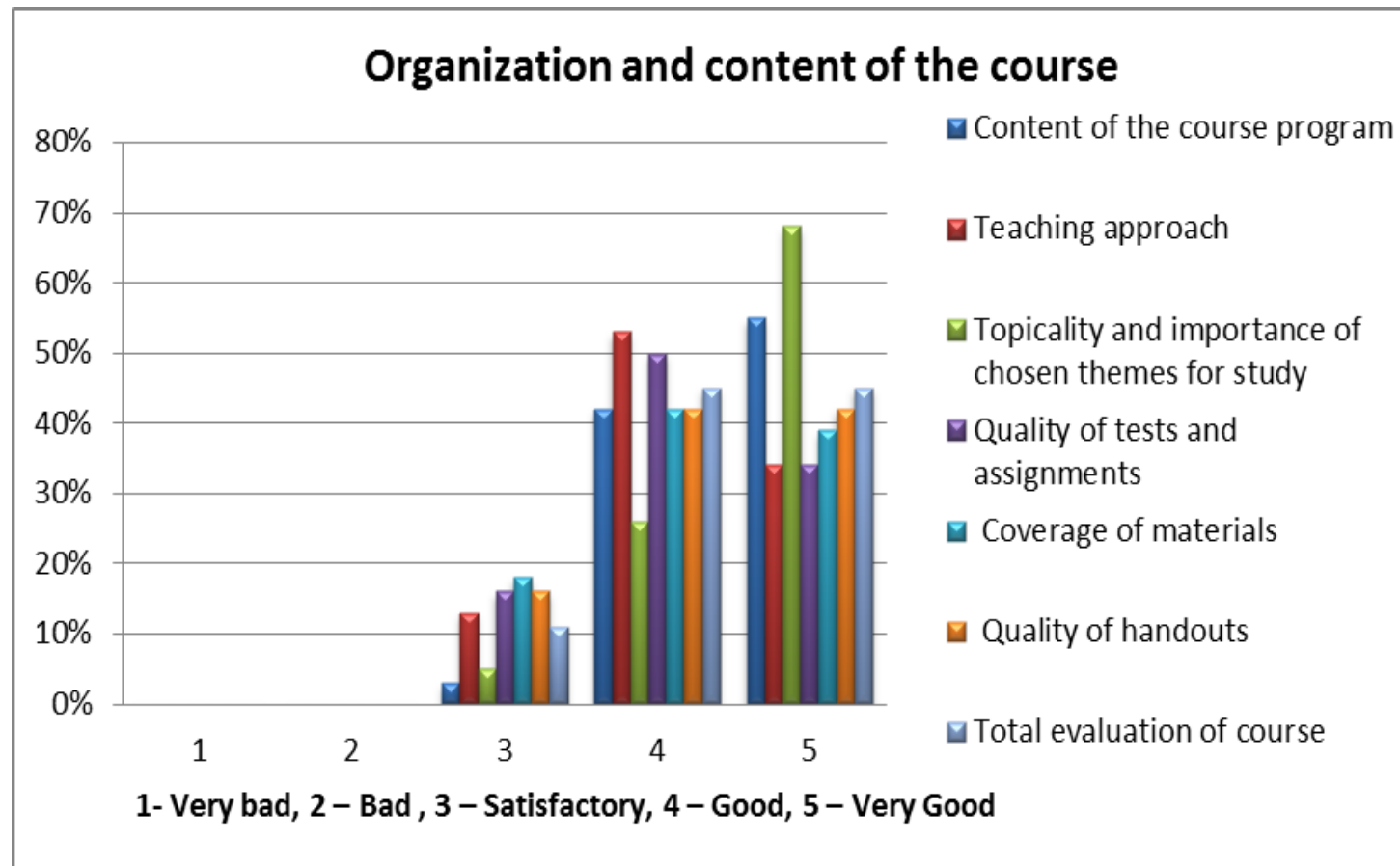
- PDP participants: 300 higher education leaders from across Kazakhstan
Survey was filled out by all participants
- Interviews: n=15
- Focus groups: n=3
- Purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2014) for focus groups and individual interviews



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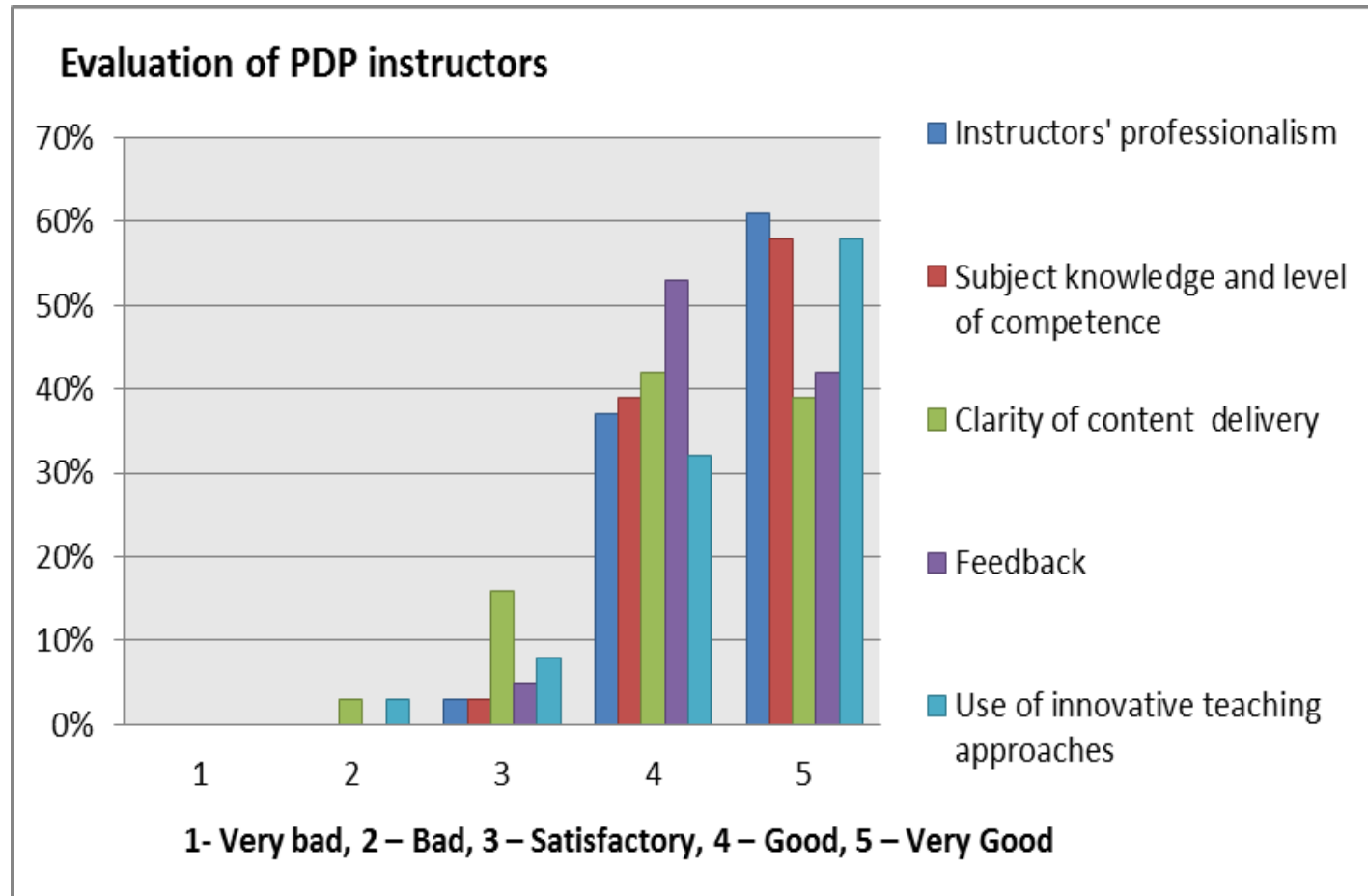
Preliminary Findings: Phase 1

(RQ1) Effectiveness: Survey Findings

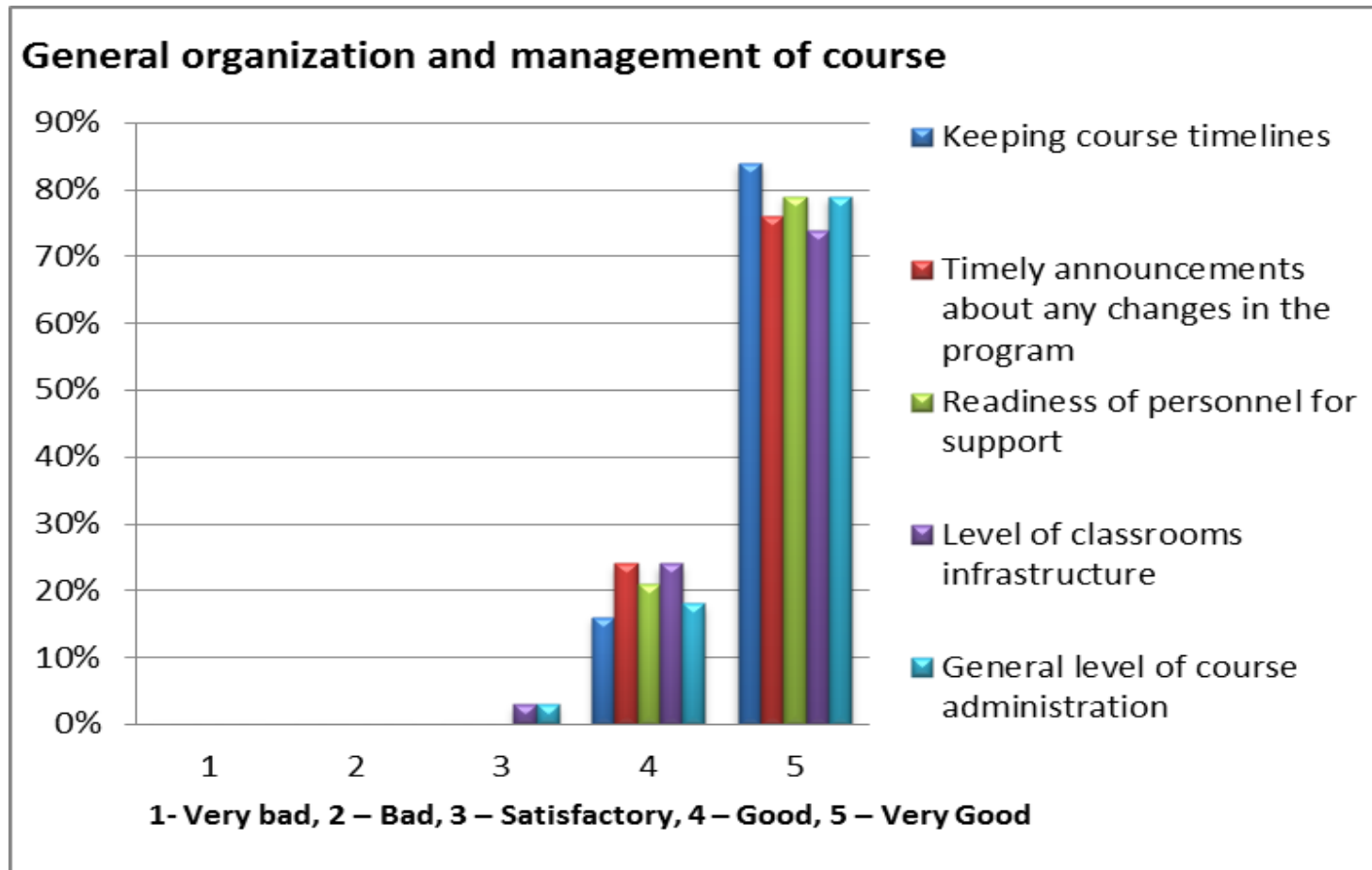




(RQ1) Effectiveness: Survey Findings



(RQ1) Effectiveness: Survey Findings



(RQ1) Effectiveness: Interview Findings

- **Well thought-out 3 modular design**

“The first module was introductory, while the second module provided with international experience, and the final third module helped us to consolidate our learning and develop action plans” .

“The last module was useful as it was for consolidating our learning, working in groups and developing recommendations or action plans. Every group from each university developed their action plan, so to say, reforming their university”.

(RQ1) Effectiveness: Interview Findings

- **Exchange of ideas/ Fellowship with colleagues**

“We gathered and met many professors from other universities of Kazakhstan and we exchanged ideas and experiences. Exchange of ideas was the most useful part”.

- **Gaining new impulse**

“The program allowed to get new knowledge, systematize existing ...exchange views...We received new creative impulse. Further steps: conceptualization/comprehension, actions, work...”.

(RQ1) Effectiveness: Interview Findings

- **Benefits of International Trips**

“We saw in Singapore the way they teach, how they use different technology., and how they use student centered learning. We really liked it. We were all motivated to apply our learning back in our universities”.

“It was useful to observe how they assign students group diploma projects. Students learn to work in groups. We also participated in many group work activities ourselves. This is something I liked and I am now using”.

(RQ2) Practices Identified

Two primary themes emerged from thematic analysis of surveys, interviews, focus groups, and reports:

1. Development and implementation of action plans
2. Identified challenges

Theme 1:

Development and implementation of Action Plans



Revisiting institutional missions;



Revisiting institutional
development strategies;



Suggesting changes in the
organisational structure;



Proper introduction of systematic
risk management;



Creating a pool of senior and
middle managers.

Theme 2: Identified challenges

- **Mismatch between expectations and actual program (or lack of information about the program)**

“We thought that we would learn about innovations, but we were lectured about data bases and it was kind of waste of time. We could have listened to another professor who was involved in innovations”.

“Some lectures were not connected, some lectures were too basic and they sometimes underestimated us. They lectured about the things we knew”.

- **Lengthy program**

“The first Module was too long. Too theoretical. We knew many things already but many lectures were boring. Later, more practical sessions were very helpful”.

“Our first Module coincided with the conference at NU. Not all lectures were designed according to the plans. ..Instead of one week they could cover material in three days, for example”.

Theme 2: Identified challenges

- **Lack of Kazakhstani context knowledge by trainers**

“Some foreign presenters presented off the topic of the PDP sometimes, but it was still useful. We at least learned from how they do presentations”.

“It would be better if the foreign lecturers could be familiar with our education system and presented then. They themselves often told that they do not know our context and they told us to see what is relevant or not”.

“Representatives of Kazakhstan should be included in the team of trainers. They could advise them a lot. They could help to select foreign lecturers. They could tell what is useful or not for Kazakh universities”.

- **Bureaucracy in Kazakhstan**

“The main challenge is the bureaucracy. We are very busy with paper work and there’s almost no time for creative work”.

RQ3) What recommendations can be offered for future PDPs in Kazakhstan and the region?

- The program needs improvement in the delivery of materials, be more practically oriented: “less theory, more practice” ”.
- Involve industrialists from Kazakhstan into program delivery to help trainees understand how they might engage more effectively with them as stakeholders.
- Include industrialists together with ministry officials and university representatives as participants in a program to jointly address entrepreneurialism and develop joint approaches.
- Ensure that trainers are knowledgeable about the education system of Kazakhstan and apply materials to the realities of the country.
- Have additional follow-up from program organizers.

Next steps

- Phase 1 preliminary results inform next step into expansion of the study in Phase 2 (e.g., comprehensive survey, interviews, focus groups).
- Taking a step toward future research that can inform practice and policy in Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

Thank you!

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Appendix: Sample Questionnaire: Phase 1

1. Please, evaluate the organization and content of the program
2. Please, evaluate teachers/instructors of the professional development program.
3. Please, evaluate overall organization and management of the program.
4. In your opinion, what are the best aspects of the program?
5. In your opinion which aspects of the program could be improved?
6. Would you recommend this course to a colleague?
7. Comments and suggestions.

Appendix: Sample Questionnaire: Phase 2

Program:

1. How do you rate the whole program? (Likert- 5 point scale)
2. How well do you feel the program achieved its stated aims? (Likert - 5 point)
3. The program helped me in increasing and developing which of the following?
Select as many as you identify with...

Impact:

1. How do you rate your learning in this program? (a lot, a little,...)
2. How did you implement what you have learned?
3. How well were you able to influence your home institution?
4. How successful were you in influencing changes in your home institution?

Challenges

1. Were there any challenges you met during the program? (Yes/No)
If yes, what were the challenges? Select as many as apply.
2. Were there any challenges you met during the implementation? (Yes/No)
 - a. If yes, what were the challenges? Select as many as apply.

Recommendations:

How could the program be further improved? Select all that apply.