

## PhD Students' Challenges with Impact-Factor in Kazakhstan

**Authors :** Duishon Shamatov

**Abstract :** This presentation is about Kazakhstan's PhD students' experiences with impact-factor publication requirement. Since the break-up of the USSR, Kazakhstan has been attempting to improve its higher education system at undergraduate and graduate levels. From March, 2010 Kazakhstan joined Bologna process and entered European space of higher education. To align with the European system of higher education, three level of preparation of specialists (undergraduate, master and PhD) was adopted to replace the Soviet system. The changes were aimed at promoting high quality higher education that meets the demands of labor market and growing needs of the industrial-innovative development of the country, and meeting the international standards. The shift to the European system has brought many benefits, but there are also some serious challenges. One of those challenges is related to the requirements for the PhD candidates to publish in national and international journals. Thus, a PhD candidate should have 7 publications in total, out of which one has to be in an international impact factor journal. A qualitative research was conducted to explore the PhD students' views of their experiences with impact-factor publications. With the help of purposeful sampling, 30 PhD students from seven universities across Kazakhstan were selected for individual and focus group interviews. The key findings of the study are as follows. While the Kazakh PhD students have no difficulties in publishing in local journals, they face great challenges in attempting to publish in impact-factor journals for a range of reasons. They include but not limited to lack of research and publication skills, poorer knowledge of academic English, not familiarity with the peer review publication processes and expectations, and very short time to get published due to their PhD programme requirements. This situation is pushing some these young scholars explore alternative ways to get published in impact factor journals and they seek to publish by any means and often by any costs (which means even paying large sum of money for a publication). This in turn, creates a myth in the scholars' circles in Kazakhstan, that to get published in impact factor journals, one should necessarily pay much money. This paper offers some policy recommendations on how to improve preparation of future PhD candidates in Kazakhstan.

**Keywords :** Bologna process, impact-factor publications, post-graduate education, Kazakhstan

**Conference Title :** ICES 2015 : International Conference on Education Systems

**Conference Location :** Sydney, Australia

**Conference Dates :** December 10-11, 2015