

## **Bologna process in higher education system in post-Soviet Azerbaijan and Georgia: A Comparative study**

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**Abstract** The purpose of this study is to compare and contrast the higher education systems of post-Soviet Azerbaijan and Georgia after joining the Bologna system. I focused on the governance of higher education and the implementation of the Bologna principles in Azerbaijan and Georgia. Furthermore, the students' awareness of the Bologna principles was clearly explored. This mixed- research was conducted through a documentary analysis and surveying students from Azerbaijan and Georgia. The document was the study on the Higher Education Systems in the Tempus Partner Countries, which provided me with the relevant information on the integration of above-mentioned countries to the European Higher Education Area. The survey participants studied in the years between 2005 and 2019 responded to the questions related to the Bologna process in their countries. This study allowed me to outline the differences and similarities between the HE system of Azerbaijan and Georgia such as centralized education system, student preparedness, the governance of higher education institutions and the quality of education.

**Keywords** Bologna process, higher education, EHEA, centralized education system.

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## Postsovet ölkələri olan Azərbaycan və Gürcüstanın ali təhsil sistemində Bolonya prosesi: müqayisəli araşdırma

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**Annotasiya** Bu araşdırmanın əsas məqsədi Bolonya sisteminə qoşulduqdan sonra postsovet ölkələri olan Azərbaycan və Gürcüstanın ali təhsil sistemlərinin müqayisəsini aparmaqdır. Burada müəllif əsas diqqəti ali təhsilin idarə olunmasına, Bolonya prinsiplərinin Azərbaycan və Gürcüstanda tətbiqinə yönəlib. Bundan əlavə, müəllif tələbələrin Bolonya prinsipləri ilə bağlı məlumatlılıq səviyyəsini araşdırıb. Bu çoxmetodlu araşdırma sənədli təhlil, həmçinin, Azərbaycan və Gürcüstandan olan tələbələr arasında keçirilmiş sorğunun nəticələri əsasında aparılıb. Müəllif məqalədə yuxarıda qeyd olunan ölkələrin Avropa Ali Təhsil Məkanına (EHEA) inteqrasiyası barədə Tempus proqramının tərəfdaş ölkələrinin ali təhsil sistemlərinin araşdırılması zamanı əldə etdiyi məlumatlara da istinad edib. Sözügedən sorğu 2005-2019-cu illər ərzində təhsil almış tələbələr arasında aparılıb. Sorğu zamanı tələbələr öz ölkələrində tətbiq olunan Bolonya sistemi ilə bağlı sualları cavablandırılıblar. Bu araşdırmada müəllif mərkəzləşdirilmiş təhsil sistemi, tələbə hazırlığı, ali təhsil müəssisələrinin idarə olunması və təhsilin keyfiyyəti baxımından Azərbaycan və Gürcüstanın ali təhsil sistemlərində mövcud fərqləri və oxşarıqları izah etməyə çalışıb.

**Açar sözlər** Bolonya prosesi, ali təhsil, EHEA, mərkəzləşdirilmiş təhsil sistemi

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## **Introduction**

This comparative study explores the Bologna process in higher education (HE) system in post-Soviet Azerbaijan and Georgia located at the crossroads of Western Asia and Eastern Europe. The break-up of the former Soviet Union has led to the challenges and prospects for these countries which never experienced independence in terms of democratic ideals (Silova, 2002). In this fashion, it was required to change the education structure and curriculum and to modernize the education system in accordance with international standards (Heyneman, 2010). Nonetheless, the economic collapse and political situation adversely impacted the education system in these countries when they reestablished a new HE system in the early 1990s. On the other hand, participation in the Bologna process, cooperation with the international organizations and western countries helped them to develop the HE system. However, the integration to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) did not bring dramatic changes to the existing HE system of these two countries and students were not provided with enough information regarding the implementation of the Bologna principles. This study will allow understanding what changes are essential to make to the HE systems of Azerbaijan and Georgia in order to prepare the students for the labor market and to increase the quality of education.

Most notably, the centralization in the higher education system which is one of the Soviet legacies still exists in the HE system of many post-Soviet states. Clearly, the centralized education system is assigned by a central agency which deals with the content of the curriculum, regulates the budget and is accountable for the employment (Brennen, 2003). Therefore, centralized education system and administration preclude the establishment of local ownership and innovation in universities. Besides, as this process was considered for the Western countries, there is a lack of knowledge and competence among the educational managers and academic staff. Despite all these, Azerbaijan and Georgia have always strived to become appropriate for the Western HE policies and have become the active members of the Bologna process since 2005.

## **Literature Review**

It is obvious that the Western HE systems were luckier to achieve success in the implementation of the Bologna principles that are mainly considered for those countries. Also, the common history in many areas including education allows the Western countries to fully integrate to the EHEA in comparison with post-Soviet Azerbaijan and Georgia. On the other hand, political chaos, economic crisis, endemic state crisis, crime, corruption, ethnic tensions, competition over

energy sources and social collapse influenced the HE systems in Azerbaijan and Georgia after the fall of the socialist public and political system in the early 1990s and the fall of the Soviet Union (Development concept, 2012; Silova et al., 2007). The collapse of the economy and public administration after the wars in Abkhazia and Nagorno-Karabakh<sup>1</sup> also adversely influenced the Azerbaijani and Georgian HE systems. In addition, the reestablishment of a new HE system and the implementation of the Bologna principles, which were not considered for post-Soviet states, were quite challenging. Silova et al. (2007) state, "Overall, the period since independence in 1991 has been characterized by an acute sense of drift or crisis in educational policy, as various internal actors and external or multilateral institutions struggled to create 'new' and autonomous educational systems out of what had been a tightly integrated and highly standardized system in the Soviet Period" (p. 164-165).

It is argued that the Bologna process was established to solve European challenges. Therefore, "The Bologna process neither take into consideration highly centralized, nationally supervised educational systems, nor the impact of the social, political, and economic factors on higher education in transition countries (post-Soviet states) (Murshudova, 2011, p. 2). In this manner, it can be impractical in the post-Soviet states such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and others that do not have any similarities between their education systems and European educations systems. Some writers on the Bologna system argue that the difference between the Western education systems that support the Bologna reforms and the post-Soviet legacies lead to the discrepancy in the aims, priorities, and initiatives in terms of the applying the principles.

### **The objectives of the Bologna process**

The Bologna Process was created to increase the competitiveness of the European HEIs when the US HEIs became more popular for educational standards and research (Zajda and Rust, 2016). In this regard, the ministers of education

- .....
- 1 The War in Abkhazia (1992–1993) was fought between Georgian government forces and Abkhaz separatist forces. The Abkhaz separatists were supported by Russian armed forces and hired North Caucasian fighters. Most ethnic Georgians were expelled from Abkhazia, while Georgia lost control over the breakaway region. It is now a non-recognized independent territory and de facto Russian protectorate Nagorno-Karabakh War was waged between the late 1980s and 1994 between Armenia and Azerbaijan in an enclave in southwestern Azerbaijan. Like the Abkhazian War, it led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of persons and is considered a frozen conflict up to the present day. Like in the case of Abkhazia, Russia is widely perceived as capitalizing on the conflict to advance its interests in the region. (Dobbins and Khachaturian, 2014).

from France, Germany, Italy and the U.K. met at the Sorbonne to discuss the establishment of the Bologna process (Gänzle et al., 2009). In 1999, the Ministers of Education and university leaders of 29 countries adopted the Bologna declaration and launched the Bologna process (ibid.). The main aim of this process was to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010 with “a harmonized degree and course credit system that would allow students to move freely between European countries without having to translate their credits or qualifications” (Zajda and Rust, 2016, p.14).

The post-Soviet Azerbaijan and Georgia, as well as Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine, joined the Bologna process in 2005 at the Bergen Communiqué (EACEA, 2010). This process is often called a revolutionary process which involves cooperation in the EHEA. Many HE systems were changed in order to ensure the objectives of the EHEA. These objectives include: “(1) a comparable system of higher education degrees; (2) a three-cycle structure of the university studies; (3) the implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); (4) the quality assurance (QA) of higher education systems; and, (5) to foster the mobility of students and academics which will promote the free movement of human capital”(González et al., 2009, p.113). The mobility of students is being promoted through the ECTS achieving “recognition and assessment of visiting periods in European institutions of research, education and training”, (ibid.). The ECTS make studies and courses more transparent which is essential to increase the quality of higher education (EHEA, 2016). In addition to ECTS, The QA aims to enhance the quality of research and teaching supporting the development of the HEIs (EHEA, 2016a). Besides, student mobility plays a very important role in enhancing “the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education” (EHEA, 2016b). Moreover, “national qualifications frameworks designed to encourage mobility and employability” (EHEA, 2009).

### **The Bologna process in Azerbaijani and Georgian HE system**

Despite these challenges, the implementation of the Bologna principles in these post-Soviet states remains under-researched. There is a lack of research on the principles of the Bologna process such as quality assurance, the NQF and research process in both countries. Most studies in the field of higher education have only focused on HE system (Murshudova, 2011; Isaxanli, 2006; Jibladze, 2018), the quality of education (Guliyev, 2016) and higher education planning (Gavaramadze, 2010).

Isaxanli (2006) emphasizes that although the main requirement of the Bologna process is autonomy, the highly centralized HE system in post-Soviet states prevents the development of the HEIs. Isaxanli (2006) also stresses that

universities should have autonomy to frame their strategies, list fields of studies and programmes, and select faculty members and students inconsistency with their own standards. In addition to Isaxanli's (2006) views on centralized education systems, Zajda (2016) also believes that higher education in the former Soviet Socialist republics was "was one of the highly centralized and state-controlled systems in Europe" (p. 157). According to him, the adaptation of the former Soviet education system to an Anglo-American one was one of the challenging tasks that led to the difficulties in quality assurance. However, Gavaramadze (2010) highlights that Georgia started to move from the centralized education system to the independent one following the fall of the former Soviet Union. Jibladze (2018) also claims that the decentralization principles were implemented to the Georgian HE system. She states, "HEIs were granted autonomy (Law on Higher Education 2004), were provided with internal governance structures that would allow them to function with minimal dependence on the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and institutional and program accreditation" (Jibladze, 2018, p. 4).

Furthermore, Jibladze (2018) found out that, Georgian HEIs improved the education quality and research capacity by applying new teaching schemes. The Bologna Process Implementation Report (2018) emphasizes that the learning management system allows improving the quality of education in Georgia by adapting the teaching material and methodologies in accordance with the students' data. On the other hand, Guliyev (2016) argues that most of Azerbaijani HEIs do not teach applied skills. Instead, they still use old teaching methods and materials. In his study, Guliyev (2016) points out that more 50 percent of Azerbaijani students reported that they could find a job in a labor market (ibid.). On the other hand, Bischof and Tofan (2016) claim that the highly centralized education systems also prevent giving an adequate response "to the changing needs of a dynamic labor market" (p.21). By contrast, the Bologna Process Implementation Report (2018) shows that almost the same percentage of Georgian students believe that their studies prepare them for not only the domestic market but also for the international market. Regarding the students, Isaxanli (2006) indicates in his study that they are also key role players in the Bologna process like the HEIs. In terms of ensuring quality and contribute to the policies, the students should participate in the decision-making process (ESU, 2018).

"Ministers stressed that the involvement of (...) students as competent, active and constructive partners in the establishment and shaping of a European Higher Education Area are needed and welcomed. ...Ministers affirmed that students should participate in and influence the organisation and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions" (Prague Communiqué, 2001).

Besides, NQF also plays a very important role in ensuring cooperation with the labor market. According to the Bologna Process Implementation Report (2018), Georgia achieved the completion of the first step of the NQF by “filling NQFs with real national qualifications frameworks into working tools”. Also, it is among the 19 countries where the NQF is used by the national authorities to prepare the skills needs and to communicate with the labor market institutions (ibid.). However, this report claims that Azerbaijan has not achieved this step since 2015 and still is working on it.

## **Methodology**

The research design is a mixed-research, comparative case study of higher education systems. Azerbaijan and Georgia were chosen as the education system of these countries was ruled by the former Soviet Union for nearly 70 years (Silova et al., 2007). A mixed-method approach (Creswell et al., 2007) was appropriate for this study’s purpose as it allows to collect both quantitative and qualitative data through the integration of the data in different phases in the research process. The integration was achieved in the data collection and analysis.

Two main data sources were used: first, the in-depth analysis of the relevant original the document titled “Overview of the Higher Education Systems in the Tempus Partner Countries: Eastern Europe, 2012” in English; second, an online survey with the students and graduates in these countries who studied in the years between 2005-2019. According to Punch (2005) documents that represent both history and modern times are of great importance for data collection in social research. This document was accessed from the official website of Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

A survey instrument was designed based on literature from the previous study on student’s perception of implementation of commonly agreed Bologna reforms (ESU, 2018). A five-point Likert scale and open-ended questions were used in the study. The instrument was divided into two sections: Section 1 covered the main Bologna principles, while Section 2 focused on participant and university demographics. The online survey was implemented through Google Form, an open source platform, and was shared on Facebook social media and email invitations were sent. In this way, more than 300 people had access to the online tool. However, only 14 Georgian and 23 Azerbaijani students filled the survey. The collected data was used only for this research project and was not disseminated among other people (Thomas, 2013). In order to be sure of the security of the collected data, I saved the data in my laptop and USB flash drive which were protected by a password (ibid.). I compared and contrasted the data in the document with similar ones in the survey.

In terms of Ragin's (2014) terminology, the comparative method refers to the comparison of large "macrosocial units". Accordingly, this method "serves to develop a tailor-made explanation of each individual case using a common set of explanatory factors, but allowing for variety in their country-specific characteristics and interaction" (Witte et al., 2008: p.220). The comparative analysis mainly allows us to see the differences in the contexts of the two countries and to understand how the same context exists differently after joining the Bologna process. Second, it forms "identifiable and shared characteristics" that are essential for grouping different categories.

### ***Research questions***

The aim of this research is to compare and contrast the implementation of the Bologna principles on higher education in Azerbaijan and Georgia. For this purpose, I laid out my research questions as follows:

1. What changes have been made to the HE of Georgia and Azerbaijan since joining the Bologna process?
2. Are the students aware of the changes influenced by the Bologna principles?

This study will mainly focus on the changes observed in the higher education systems of the above-mentioned post-Soviet states after implementing the Bologna principles to integrate into the European Higher Education Area. In order to answer the first question, the differences were identified through the analysis of the HE systems in the period of the former Soviet Union and after joining the Bologna process. The second question was answered through the study of the responses of the students and graduates to the questions related to the implementation of the Bologna principles in their countries.

### **Data Analysis**

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section will study the changes that have been made to the Azerbaijani and Georgia HE system since 2005 through the interpretation of the document titled "Overview of the Higher Education Systems in the Tempus Partner Countries" (Tempus, 2012). This document explores the higher education in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine. I focused on the study of higher education in Azerbaijan and Georgia to identify the differences and similarities concerning the Bologna process. In the second section, the research analyzed the data collected from an online survey to see what Azerbaijani and Georgia students know about the Bologna principles such as quality assurance, national



qualifications framework (NQF) and ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) (EACEA, 2010).

### ***Azerbaijani and Georgian HE system after joining the Bologna process***

In order to define the shifts made to the Azerbaijani and Georgia HE system, the document about the overview of higher education systems in EHEA partner countries was analysed. There are a number of important differences between Azerbaijan and Georgia in the governing and management of HEIs. After joining this process, Azerbaijani HE system has still being governed by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan (EACEA, 2012). Unlike Azerbaijan, Georgia mainly attracted attention to the principle of autonomy in “the Law of Georgia on Higher education”(2011) (ibid.). Although the Georgian government granted the HEIs with some level of autonomy, the state authorities such as the Parliament of Georgia, the government and Ministry of Education and Science are still the main role players in the HE policy and management. While the President of Azerbaijan has the authority to approve and dismiss the rectors at public HEIs in Azerbaijan, the members of the Academic Council appoint the rectors in Georgia. However, the Board of Founders has the right to appoint the rectors of the private higher education institutions in Azerbaijan. In contrast to Azerbaijan, the Academic Council, the Council of Representative and the Students’ self-governing body also attend in the management of the HEIs. Besides, the Academic Council has been granted with a responsibility to define salaries for academic staff. In Azerbaijani HE system, the Ministry of Education defines “the beginning/end and organization of the academic year”. Similarly, both the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan and Georgia determine the length of the academic year. Besides, the structure of the Georgian HEI is significantly different from that in Azerbaijan in terms of the faculty autonomy. Georgia gives academic freedom the HEIs to develop their curricula whereas only optional subjects can be defined by the HEIs in Azerbaijan.

Quality assurance has been one of the main Bologna principles since 2005. Additionally, the Quality Assurance Service defines a new structural unit at public HEIs in Georgia. The quality of higher education plays a significant role in the creation of a European Higher Education Area (ESU, 2018). In regard to the quality assurance, Georgia is different from Azerbaijan which is one of the Bologna principles. Georgian HEIs are demanded to create internal quality assurance services according to the Law on Higher Education. In addition, Georgia created the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) in 2006 to guarantee the authorization and accreditation process in Georgia through applying “the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance

in the EHEA". On the contrary, the Accreditation Commission under the Ministry of Education was established in Azerbaijan in 2010 to ensure the quality assurance and accreditation of HEIs in conformity with the "approved state standards and legal requirements".

Another significant difference is that Georgian students play a decision-making role in the external quality assurance process. Nevertheless, Azerbaijan allows students to participate in this process rather than to play a decision-making role.

Another Bologna principle is a NQF which was added to the Bologna Process (BP) agenda following the adoption of the Berlin Communique in 2003 (Berlin, 2003). "QFs have been described as a tool to create a workforce with comparable degrees as an outcome from the European market of higher education" (ESU, 2018; Haukland 2017: p.265). In this regard, Georgia formally adopted the NQF and its implementation is in the process. However, Azerbaijan only agreed on the purpose of the NQF and has not started the application of it yet.

The ECTS is also of great importance for the Bologna process. While ECTS is applicable in Georgia, there is another credit system and ECTS cannot be defined by the student workload in Azerbaijani HE system.

The student mobility is also one of the main Bologna tools. Student mobility is set through international agreements and contracts signed between different countries (Tempus, 2012). Both Azerbaijani and Georgia students can fund their studies through the international scholarship programmes and institutions including DAAD, Erasmus Mundus, Open Society Georgia Foundation, International Research and Exchange Board and others. They also can benefit from exchange programmes. Besides, Azerbaijani government offered the local students the state scholarships to study at bachelor's, master's and doctoral level world top-ranking universities in the years between 2007-2015. The scholarship programme was renewed in 2018 only for doctoral studies that will start in 2019 and end in 2023 (MoE, 2018).

Research is of utmost importance for any country that aims to integrate to the EHEA. In this regard, Georgia made changes to the research field by abolishing "the old system of research institutes under the Academy of Sciences". Georgian HEIs also cooperate with organizations in order to develop research potential of the country. Similar to Georgia, Azerbaijani scientific research institutes work in cooperation with governance bodies in education, HEIs to develop the field of research. While research is one of the main components for Master's and Doctoral degree programmes in Georgian HE system, no specific information is available on research for degree programmes in Azerbaijani HE system. There is a lack of a competitive mechanism to increase research quality in the country.

In terms of university-enterprise cooperation, Georgian HEIs carry out surveys

to define the market demands for graduates whereas there are no available studies on defining market demands for Azerbaijani graduates. In this regard, there is a discrepancy in Azerbaijan between what higher education provides and market demands (Murshudova, 2011).

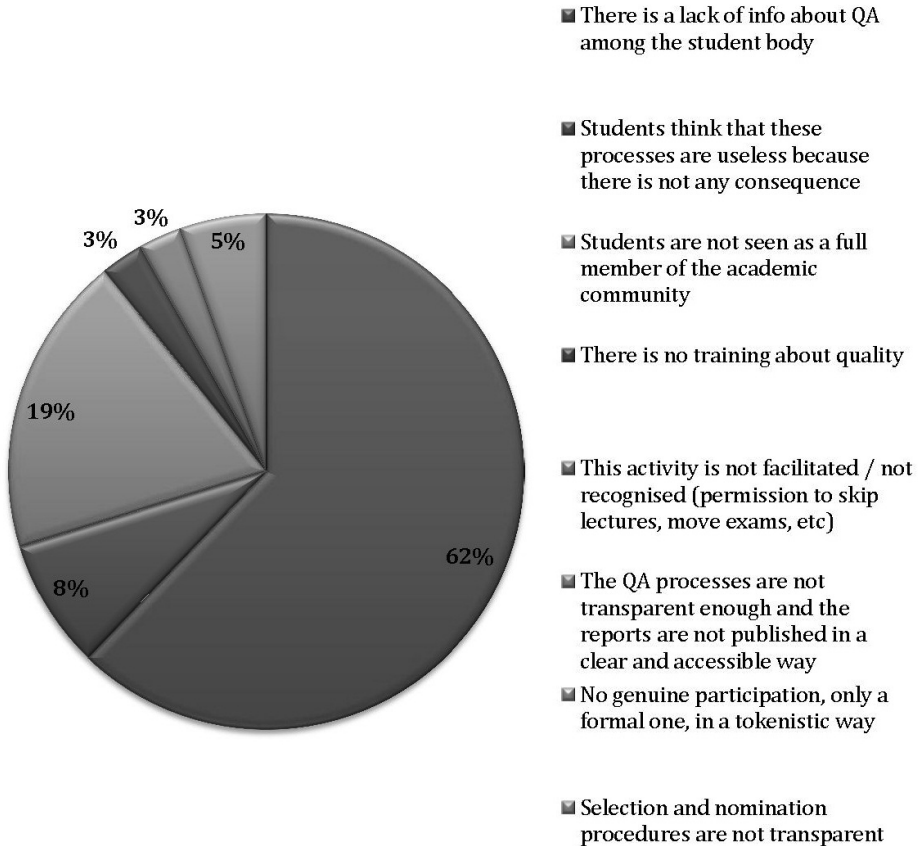
A lack of autonomy, underdeveloped research field, inappropriate cooperation between the HEIs and enterprises can be considered as an indicator of centralization in HE system of Azerbaijan which also directly influences the implementation of the Bologna principles (Isaxanli, 2006). In contrary to Azerbaijan, Georgian HE system has become a market-oriented system rather than a centrally controlled system following the implementation of the reforms since 2005. Those reforms include “National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement, University Curriculum Development Programme, National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF) for the Higher Education Project, University Textbook Development Programme, Higher Educational/Research Programme, Higher Educational/Research Institutions Supporting Programme” and others. All these reforms made Georgia unique in the region in terms of integration to the EHEA. Compared with the reforms in Georgia, the reforms in Azerbaijani HE system mainly focus on the introduction of “academic plans/programmes, scientific and methodological guidelines on modern training and information techniques”, development of “educational content and teaching technologies”, HEI governance, university facilities and new mechanism for budget support of HEIs.

The challenges defined by Azerbaijan and Georgia in the implementation of the Bologna principles significantly differ from each other. For instance, Azerbaijan still struggles with developing “training and methodological literature, exemplary curriculum and textbooks” in regard to national education standards. On the other hand, Georgia has already improved these areas through the above-mentioned reforms. Another challenge was related to the “recognition of the quality assurance mechanism of the Republic of Azerbaijan” in the countries signed the Bologna declaration. On one hand, Georgia’s problem is “insufficient recognition of the HE system of Georgia in other countries and lack of trust in its performance” and “shortage of educational managers and leaders at university level”.

### ***The Bologna process in the eyes of Azerbaijani and Georgia students***

The respondents were asked a total of nine questions to see if they have information about the changes made after joining the Bologna process. The majority of respondents (62%) stated that they find the lack of information on QA amongst the students’ representatives as the main barrier to their involvement. The information is the key role player in the quality assurance process. “When

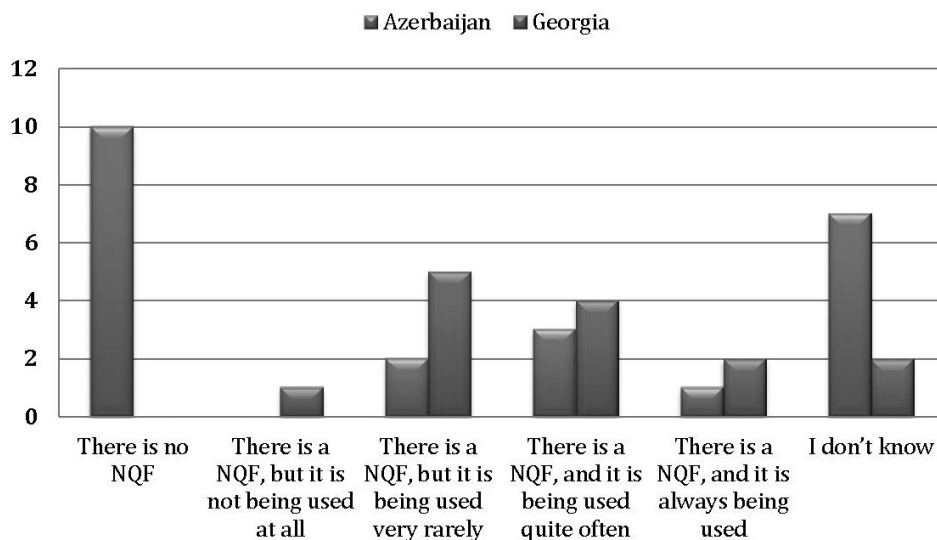
**Figure 1:** What are the main barriers that students find in their involvement in QA (Multiple Choice)?



students lack information about procedures, programmes or are not supported enough to be involved in the decision making process, they are left out of having any ownership and enthusiasm and consequently are not able to ensure any meaningful students' perspective in the QA", (ESU, 2018: p.48).

19% of students reported that they believe that they are not considered as full members of their academic communities. The responses to all the below-mentioned questions enable to claim that students are concerned about being perceived as less important, less intelligent or less essential partners (ESU, 2018). Inequality is one of the problems which makes "students uncomfortable and unwelcome not only in the QA but within the whole academic community" (ESU, 2018: p.48).

**Figure 2:** Is there a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in your country, and if so, how often is it being used?

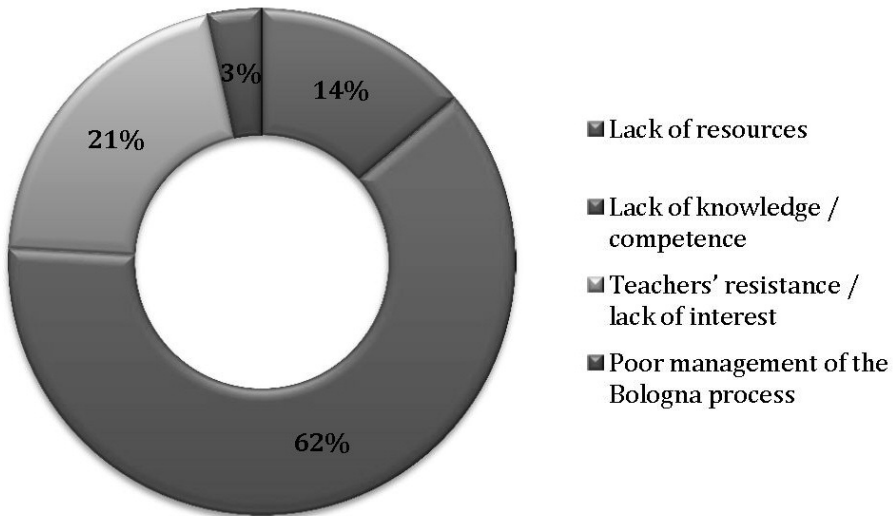


Most of the EHEA partner countries developed NQFs in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework. However, students still encounter challenges getting their qualification recognised. The majority of Azerbaijani students think that they don't have NQF in their education system or they are not aware of it. However, almost the same number of Georgian students' stated that there is a NQF but it is being used rarely or quite often.

Figure 3 illustrates the problems defined by Azerbaijani and Georgian youth in the implementation of the Bologna reforms. 62% of them regard the lack of knowledge/competence as the main obstacle. 21% stated that teachers' resistance or their lack of interest leads to the challenges in the implementation process. Obviously, the lack of interests by the older or conservative university lecturers and instructors can be considered as one of the barriers to the Bologna process in post-Soviet states.

### Limitations of the study

The major obstacle that was encountered in this research study was the difficulty in recruiting both Azerbaijani and Georgian students to participate in the survey. The data collected from the survey of a small number of respondents cannot present the views of all of the students. Besides, the research could not

**Figure 3:** Main challenges in the implementation of the Bologna principles

find the document of 2018 on the higher education of two countries. It would provide more reliable data on the current trends in the HE education in terms of the Bologna process.

## Conclusion

As shown in the data analysis section, Georgia has made more drastic changes to the HE system in comparison with Azerbaijan. Although both countries made reforms in the HE system being inspired by the European education systems, apparently, Georgia is the one that made progress through eliminating the Soviet legacy and Russian influence. By contrast, Azerbaijan still preserves the Soviet legacy in the governance of HEIs and in identifying the educational policies and needs to move from centralized education system to market-oriented one like Georgia. In this regard, it can be argued that the former Soviet education system did not prepare students for changing demand for labour characteristic of a liberal market economy (Sharvashidze, 2005). Clearly, the process of integration into the EHEA was slower in Azerbaijan rather than in Georgia that still struggles with the implementation of the Bologna tools such as QA, NQF and ECTS. The main obstacle is the gap between the intentions by the officials and capabilities that influence the implementation of the Bologna principles in post-Soviet Azerbaijan and Georgia. Besides, both countries do not

pay attention to the students' role in QA process that can contribute to the quality of education.

Future researchers may consider to analyse the quality assurance, the NQF and research in terms of the Bologna process through recruiting a great number of students and academic staff from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Russia, Central Asia and Estonia to compare the most and less successful ones and focusing on the best applicable practices for less successful ones.

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