



# Tracing and Problems of Professional Self-determination of Modern Youth

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**Abstract:** The article is devoted to the problems of professional self-determination of Russian youth. The relevance of the topic is justified by the results of tracing, monitoring of professional trajectories of graduates of educational institutions, as well as indicators of the modern labor market, unemployment and professional migration. The object of this research is the criteria for choosing educational and professional trajectories in the total volume of social strategies of young people. The article presents the results of sociological surveys "Educational and professional orientations of young people of the Irkutsk region" conducted by the authors in the period 2007-2020. The authors indicate the conditionality of the strategies of youth behavior in the labor market on objective economic factors and the state of the regional labor market, as well as on subjective socio-psychological factors, maturity / infantilism of the younger generation, on their readiness for independent decisions, for professional self-determination. The authors substantiate the introduction of a system for monitoring the involvement of young people in labor relations in order to solve the problems of staffing support, preserving the economic, demographic, and socio-cultural health of the regions, which was significantly actualized in the new post-pandemic reality that has changed the nature of social and labor relations.


## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Institute of Education, like other social structures, in the conditions of the rapid spread of a new viral infection and significant changes in the sanitary and epidemic situation in the world, has significantly changed its social appearance, adjusted the tasks, and of course, the forms of implementation. The challenges of the new realities of the 2020-21 pandemic divided the educational process into "before" and "after", traditional and the distance one, which has received the metaphorical name "stress test" in informational and analytical references. The pandemic has demonstrated an inter-stratification gap in terms of social well-being, quality of life, and, of course, the level of income, consumption of material goods, availability of social services, and receiving of educational services. A lot of practice-oriented projects, including professional self-

determination programs, have not found effective application in the distance format. Moreover, changes in the socio-economic situation have resulted in modification of the structure of career guidance activities in connection with the decomposition of career choices and the transformation of professional expectations and aspirations of the younger generation.

The modern Russian educational environment, according to the requirements of federal standards, is still and even more focused on the practical skills of the new educational generation. Due to this fact, a potential employer is actively involved in the educational process as a teacher, mentor in industrial practice, expert in final certification, and forms a list of qualification requirements for graduates. It is obvious that these changes in the educational system of the last decade have determined new guidelines for strengthening social ties between the institute of

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education and the labor market. The transition to a competence-based approach is determined by modernization processes, the search for "the effectiveness of regional educational management systems, the creation of a strategic program for the development of human resources". Measuring impact is made on the basis of a proven system of tracing or monitoring of professional socialization of graduates, which has been a mandatory procedure in Russian institutions of higher education for more than ten years, and the level of demand for graduates in the labor market is included in the list of accreditation indicators of the university. In addition, along with the indicators of the shortage of personnel in a particular profession, the success of professional socialization of graduates is assessed as a fairly significant factor in the formation of control figures for the admission of applicants for training on a budget basis. Tracing extends to the secondary and higher levels of education. The school graduate demonstrates the subsequent educational trajectories, as well as the university graduate demonstrates the professional route, the compliance / non-compliance of the employment sphere with the training profile. Monitoring the educational and labor trajectories of graduates reflects not only the strategy of modernization of national education, but also the state of the labor market.

The monitoring system allows all participants of the educational process and, above all, the educational organization to determine the professional choice of the graduate, his life and professional trajectories. The significance of these measurements is due to the ability to identify the dynamics of social and labor behavior of the younger generation, to identify the most typical areas of work for the youth audience, to record changes in the professional and educational structure of both the region and the state as a whole. In our opinion, tracing reveals the nature of social changes and serves as a basis for developing strategies for regulating labor activity, reducing the risks of graduate unemployment and countering the growth of employment in informal sector, and therefore is necessary to ensure social stability. The established monitoring system is a regulator of future social and labor relations, provides feedback to the employer, and allows building effective models of strategic management of a modern educational organization.

The tasks of tracing as monitoring of postgraduate professional socialization of young specialists are assigned, first of all, to the issuing educational organization, which collects primary information. The profiles are based on the information about the

results of employment from the respondents themselves and their parents. Scoping studies are conducted by the university in the first year of the graduate's work after graduation. In addition, educational institutions enter information about issued diplomas of education in the Federal Register of Educational Documents, which is the beginning of accounting for the total employment of graduates. These indicators are significant for the educational organization (they determine the choice of the main professional educational programs implemented by the university) and for the labor market (they determine strategic management, the choice of means to solve the problems of staffing support). In this regard, the results of employment monitoring are selectively checked by the Federal Education and Science Supervisory Service, then the social services of the region are connected to objectify the data. For example, the function of monitoring the information submitted by the university is partly performed by the territorial employment service, which records all cases of graduates applying for employment assistance and takes into account the number of people receiving unemployment benefits.

In addition to these services, it should be mentioned that it is necessary to clarify information from other sources. Measurements of the demand for graduates are conducted by the Pension Fund of Russia. The analysis of this structure is based on accounting for employers' pension contributions. The tax deductions of employees are also evidence of the entry of young people into labor relations. In other words, the determination of information on employment can be carried out by a number of state services and territorial bodies that provide social and tax control in the region.

Measurements of the number of "arrivals to the profession", primary employment and professional migration are most often carried out during the first calendar year after graduation. Although the staff shortage in many areas of work (in particular, in education, health care) reveals a high level of burnout, disillusionment with the financial support of the profession and, as a result, professional migration after 3-5 years of work. More often, the change of jobs during this period takes place due to the complexity of adaptation and the active search for a job that meets most of the economic and social needs of young people.

It is obvious that the monitoring system should include not only the fact of employment itself, but also the conditions of self-employment, entrepreneurship, and, of course, it is necessary to take into account the payments to graduates and their

correlation with the average indicators of the region's economy.

## 2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the research is to investigate the professional orientations of students, to identify the most significant criteria for professional self-determination. Achieving this goal involves solving the following tasks:

- to organize and conduct sociological surveys of students and working youth in order to determine professional orientations and social expectations from the post-work period of socialization;
- to identify the causes of difficulties in the initial employment of graduates of higher educational institutions;
- to reveal the factors of choosing a profession;
- to characterize the educational and professional trajectories of graduates that determine the economic, demographic, and socio-cultural health of the region.

## 3 METHODS

Dialectical, systematic, and comparative methods were used as the theoretical and methodological basis of this research. The authors also used a questionnaire survey and methods of secondary analysis of materials devoted to identifying the problems of the modern labor market in the Irkutsk region.

Sociological survey "Educational and professional orientations of young people", 2007, 2009, 2017, 2020. The total sample size is 546 respondents-applicants of higher educational institutions of the Irkutsk region. The selection of respondents was carried out on the principle of simple sampling. The purpose of the survey is to determine the educational and professional orientations of applicants from the Irkutsk region.

Express survey "Criteria for choosing a job". 448 respondents aged 18-30 years, representing the urban working youth of the Irkutsk region (Irkutsk, Angarsk), were interviewed. The purpose of the survey, namely, to determine the social expectations of working youth from the post-work period of socialization, led to the selection of such sample criteria as age stratum and being in work.

Express survey "Readiness of students to undergo professional retraining", 2018, 2020. The sample size is 200 respondents studying at the Pedagogical Institute of Irkutsk State University. The survey was

conducted on the basis of modern information technologies, based on the Internet platform Google Forms.

The materials of the sociological research were processed using the SPSS Statistics 17.0 software for Windows.

## 4 LITERATURE REVIEW

During periods of socio-economic instability, the results of monitoring professional orientations are a kind of evidence of the effectiveness of an educational organization and during admission campaigns work better than any of the best advertisement.

At the present stage, there is an experience of longitudinal research of professional orientations of young people in all leading universities of the world (Cocoza, 2014; Crew, 2015; Dusen et al, 2014; Ertelt et al, 202; Gaio and Korhonen, 2016; Stiwne and Alves, 2010; Vuorinen-Lampila, 2014). Russian universities have already had such experience as well. For example, the project "Monitoring the Educational and Labor Trajectories of School and University Graduates" was organized in 2009 by the Higher School of Economics. The aim of the project is to study the social processes that determine the dynamics of educational and professional trajectories. The professional orientations were based on life trajectories of young people, taking into account the financial situation of the family, social well-being, health status, social status of parents and other objective factors.

Such researches are necessary on an ongoing basis, as they are part of comprehensive solutions aimed at ensuring social stability. Monitoring of involvement in labor relations is aimed at creating conditions for interaction between all subjects of the educational services market and the institute of economics in the face of enterprises and organizations in the region: "the practical significance of such studies is supported by the possibility of making real decisions and proposals in accordance with the social order of the younger generation, and of course, with the needs of enterprises and organizations of the city and the region in the formation of labor collectives, staff support" (Istomina, 2019).

Today, innovative technologies of informational and methodological, social and pedagogical support of professional self-determination are being actively developed. The search is determined by the transformation of the value orientations of the younger generation in the context of changing paradigms of the institute of education (Koch and Orlov, 2020; Istomina et al, 2018). The significance

of new effective forms is undeniable (Dusen et al, 2014; Radetskaya et al, 2020).

It is obvious that in the conditions of transformation of social stratification, the life orientations of all segments of the population are changing. "The system of globalizing culture, new paradigms of thinking, types of rationality are also manifested in the educational structure of society... the university at the present stage is not only an educational organization, but also a regulator of social and labor relations" (Istomina, 2019).

## 5 THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

The difficulties of employment are caused by a number of reasons, the dominant of which is the inability to adequately assess the level of demand for specialists in the labor market, the applicant cannot always predict changes in the situation after 4-6 years. Thus, according to the author's research in 2007, 2009, 2017, and 2020, a weak level of awareness of graduates about the peculiarities of the regional labor market was revealed: 66% of the surveyed applicants know about the work of the employment fund, and 51% of respondents have information about the demand for professions in the region. The survey of applicants showed that no more than 60% of respondents are able to choose an educational organization independently, 16.4% of them turn to the help and recommendations of parents, and 14.8% of respondents resort to the advice of acquaintances and friends.

Modern realities have formed a clear belief among young people: the availability of higher education is a prerequisite for employment. Unfortunately, over the past ten years, young people's perceptions of the main factors of employment have not changed: the most effective ones, from the point of view of graduates of the region, are still personal connections and contacts (65%), a diploma of higher education (63%), professional qualities and the corresponding level of training (34%), personal qualities (21.5%), additional special knowledge (12.3%). According to 42% of respondents, finding a job for a graduate is difficult.

The choice of labor trajectories is often determined by economic factors, namely, the key criterion for most graduates is the amount of remuneration. According to the author's sociological survey "Criteria for choosing a place of work", the most significant criterion in modern social and labor relations is the amount of remuneration, which directly affects the amount of vital and cultural goods consumed.

The following criteria are highlighted in the list of significant criteria for respondents: the salary, including in the shadow economy (the presence of official employment is less important for young people than the amount of income, which is quite natural when assigning minimum payments that are insufficient to meet the current needs of the population) is extremely important for 67.8% of respondents. Social guarantees are seen as significant (42.8%). In the case of primary employment, the possibility of obtaining experience (28.6%), the state status of the enterprise (25.0%), and the availability of contributions to the Pension Fund of Russia (17.8%) are significant. Among the less significant criteria are "territorial proximity to home" (10.7%) and "compliance with the specialty" (7.1%). It is important that 28.6% of respondents said that they should like the work.

Unfortunately, the destructions taking place in modern society, the decline in real incomes of the population cause an increase in professional migration and often put a young specialist towards the choice of official and shadow employment. A young specialist faces a lot of unsolved material tasks (buying/renting housing; vital and cultural requirements; increasing costs of a growing family; unforeseen expenses due to the illness of children, parents, etc.). Under restricted economic conditions, it is difficult to think about solving future problems when the current ones are not solved. Monitoring allows timely implementation of programs to regulate real and expected problems in the labor market. Social forecasting and the resulting recommendations in this case are focused on narrowing the gap of informal sector of employment, fixation of socio-economic factors that act as "barriers to the individualization of personal trajectories or, on the contrary, resources for their development".

## 6 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS OBTAINED

Education, being a projection of the entire social system, is characterized by the "death of traditional stability", shows at this stage signs of deetatization of education (the state loses control over the system, its tasks include only ensuring the right of citizens to their own educational trajectory), as well as expanding the horizontal mobility of students (education is not only "lifelong", but also "lifewide") (Istomina et al, 2018). Innovative teaching methods based on the individual routing of the student are able to solve these problems.

Personal routing of education is the main condition for innovative processes in the education

system. During the period of study under the bachelor's and master's programs and after it, a student has an opportunity to master the program of professional retraining and expand the list of professional competencies. According to the results of the express survey "Readiness of students to undergo professional retraining", 98% of respondents are ready and would like to master an additional professional program in order to increase competitiveness in the labor market.

To ensure the positive dynamics of the educational and professional trajectories of graduates, long-term meaningful programs of material and moral incentives for young professionals are necessary, especially in socially significant areas experiencing a shortage of personnel. In the Irkutsk region, the areas of work that require serious "personnel injections" are education and health care.

Modern educational organizations develop various strategies for building a dialogue between graduates and employers, and the electronic informational and educational environment is recognized as one of them. Openness is a significant condition in the system of implementing a competent approach, it is associated with providing students with free access to all information about the educational process. The electronic informational and educational environment allows you to use not only educational and information resources through your personal account, but it also works in the interests of graduates, because it allows you to contact a potential employer through the electronic portfolio system. Personal achievements of students, which are presented in the portfolio, are evidence of the professional training of the graduate for labor relations, they reflect compliance with the requirements of professional standards.

In the current conditions of the new social reality, not only the university educational programs are of particular importance, but also the initiative, activity of the recipients of educational services, their involvement in the management of the educational process, the construction of an individual educational route, and meaningful professional self-determination are becoming crucial.

The scientific novelty of the research is seen in the following results:

- the methodological principles of the study of professional and educational orientations of young people as a factor of modern social and labor relations are revealed;
- the authors' programs of sociological research of professional and educational orientations of young people were tested;
- the effectiveness of the system for monitoring the professional socialization of graduates is confirmed, it is the basis for developing

strategies for regulating labor activity, reducing the risks of unemployment of graduates and countering the growth of work in the informal sector;

- the most important criteria for professional self-determination and job choice for graduate students are identified and analyzed, among which the amount of remuneration that determines the lifestyle of a young person is of particular importance;
- information about the views of young people about the main factors of employment was analyzed. The reasons for the difficulties of employment, according to young people, is the dominance of personal ties and contacts over the professional qualities of the applicant;
- the difficulties of professional socialization of graduates of the Irkutsk region due to the low level of awareness about the peculiarities of the regional labor market were revealed, and it requires the creation of conditions for an effective dialogue between the graduate, the educational organization and the employer.

## 7 CONCLUSION

In order to propaedeutics of social problems caused by unemployment, higher educational institutions develop and apply technologies to increase the competitiveness of graduates in the labor market. Today, the strategic management of an educational organization relies on a number of socially significant procedures, including: tracing, monitoring of educational orientations and professional trajectories of graduates; availability of an electronic information and educational environment; establishing a productive dialogue in the system of relations "graduate-educational organization – employer".

The research conducted by the author has confirmed the importance of these procedures for determining the dynamics of social and labor behavior of young professionals, the level of awareness about the state of the regional labor market, the available vacancies and growing shortage of personnel in certain professions.

In conditions of socio-economic instability, the role of monitoring increases due to decreasing real incomes of the population, which causes increasing problem of professional self-determination, which determines growing shortage of personnel in socially important areas of work, due to professional migration. In addition, the problems of staffing support are caused by the difficulties of choosing a profession and social forecasting of the state of the labor market for the next decade. The

epidemiological situation, which has changed the social space, has made serious adjustments to the forecasts of the labor market dynamics, and has further complicated the socio-psychological foundations of professional self-determination of young people.

At the present stage, the most important criteria for choosing a profession and place of work for the younger generation are payments (regardless of the presence / absence of an employment contract) and social guarantees, which is explained by the desire of young people for financial independence and material security.

The difficulties of constructing promising professional trajectories for graduates, their professional migration and difficulties in primary employment are explained by many economic and socio-psychological factors. Among them, it should be noted the infantile nature and lack of independence in choosing a profession, the short-term nature of life and professional plans, and the destruction of the labor market itself. According to the respondents, the risk-forming factor is the dominance of personal connections and contacts over the professional qualities of the applicant.

So, it is important to understand that the problems of youth employment in modern conditions are significant issues of social policy, affect the economic, political, demographic, socio-cultural health of society. Monitoring of labor trajectories is an objective assessment of the state of the labor market, and at the same time, a significant criterion for the formation of the marketing environment of an educational organization, which is especially important in regions with a high migration loss of the population. The system of monitoring social and labor relations is necessary, since it allows us to assess the level of demand for specialists in the labor market based on the strategy of modernization of domestic education, as well as formulate proposals that can meet the social orders of the new generation and the needs of enterprises and organizations in the city and region.

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