

YOUTH DESIRES AS A RESOURCE FOR INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT: WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN AN INDUSTRIAL REGION OF RUSSIA?

Yana Didkovskaya

Abstract

In this article, we consider a problem of availability of such urgent resources for youth like education and professional training to reach desired social-economical positions.

All findings in this article based on the data, collected during sociological survey of young people (n=1530) in the age from 15 to 30 years¹, which are either working or still studying. The survey conducted in Sverdlovsk oblast – one of the largest industrial regions of Russia. We have found that youth consider a high-level professional training and quality higher education to be the most important resources to achieve success in socio-economic sphere.

However, youth are not satisfied with a quality of regional education, especially in Ekaterinburg and other cities of region. Professional training issues in the region are even worse – young people are not satisfied with quality of professional training and consider it as not matching the employer's requirements.

The study reveals the connection between the type of settlement and the evaluation of education accessibility: youth from middle and small cities and rural area evaluate the access to a quality higher professional education as difficult.

Key words: youth, higher education, professional training, accessibility, industrial region.

JEL Code: J 210, J 230

Introduction

Youth form a social group, which obtain the most powerful potential for successful development of a society. Everyone who plans any innovative activities in contemporary society have to know how youth identifies opportunities and threats on the way to achieve life goals.

¹ In Russia the official age of youth defined from 14 to 30 years

We have a big number of studies on youth basic values and life goals for today (Gaspani, 2018); (Oosterhoff, Ferris, & Metzger, 2017); (Tishkov, Barash, & Stepanov, 2017); (Sedova, 2016). Studies of Visnevskiy and Narkhov proved that among the most valuable life and professional goals of youth in Russia are high income, career development and professional success (Vishnevsky & Narkhov, 2017). Studies of Selivanova contains quite the same data. Selivanova studied youth and teenagers in industrial region of Bashkortostan, Russia, and she found that the first place in the hierarchy of teenager's life goals taking "a good profession" value (Selivanova, 2017).

In other words, for modern youth success in life closely associated with the opportunity to occupy high socio-economic positions in the social hierarchy. To occupy desired socio-economic positions one have to obtain specific resources and social capital.

According to studies of Konstantinovskiy and Popova, today the most valuable resource for youth is an education (Konstantinovskiy & Popova, 2015). We suppose that only the higher education alone as a "sign" of being educated not enough for employee to succeed in society oriented on innovative development. More valuable resource to succeed in such society has to be quality professional training, but does youth possess such kind of resource today?

Unfortunately, one of the problems of modern Russia is unequal access to various social goods (among them to quality professional education), that growing only stronger. The researchers note, that as the mass higher education without high quality professional training is rather accessible for general segments of youth, than the higher education in prestigious universities with high quality professional training accessible only to the segment of youth with abundance of resources (Konstantinovskiy, 2017); (Erofeeva, 2015).

In our opinion, this problem is especially evident in industrial regions. In such regions, from one hand, there are a lot of opportunities for educational and professional mobility of youth, but, from the other hand, competition between youth to enter the most prestigious universities and having the best job are very strong too. That's why our study completed in one of the biggest industrial regions of Russia – Sverdlovsk oblast.

This region with its well-developed educational and industrial infrastructure provides young people with relatively good educational and employment opportunities. Even though, in a period from 2013 to 2017 year we observed negative dynamics of absolute and relative number of young people in the region. In our opinion, this situation reduces the chances of innovative development of the region and stimulate us to focus on the needs and aspirations of young people.

The purpose of our article is to study accessibility of such important resources for the youth as education and professional training. Our study based on subjective assessment of the youth on accessibility of these resources.

1 Data and method

The conclusions of the article are based on the data collected during the sociological survey of working and studying youth aged 15 to 30 years (n=1530)

The study conducted within the research project "Social well-being of youth from Sverdlovsk oblast", which was completed under the guidance of Professor Yuri Vishnevsky and with the participation of the author. We used a questionnaire survey method.

The survey was conducted in 25 settlements of Sverdlovsk oblast: in the capital of the region – city Yekaterinburg, in large cities with a population more than 100 000; in medium and small towns with a population less than 100 000 and in rural settlements of the region.

Respondents structure: 68% studying youth (studying in high schools, colleges and universities of the region); 29% employed youth (working in industrial and commercial sectors of the region); 3% unemployed youth.

2 Results

We have found that young people consider quality higher education as the most important resource for achieving socio-economic success (Tab.1). This is particularly the view of younger age cohorts of youth (under the age of 20). Besides, youth believe that professional training also important to achieve success.

Also, we have found, that youth highly appreciate such means as: communicative and teamwork skills, knowledge of foreign languages and a social capital in the form of family and relatives support. Moreover, if the IT competence and knowledge of foreign languages more highly appreciated by the respondents of younger age cohorts, than the social links by the older cohorts of young people.

The specific feature of the age cohort of young people under the age of 20 is related to its current status: most of them are at the stage of education in schools, colleges or during their first year in the university, most of them do not have any real professional experience yet.

Tab. 1: Means to achieve success in the field of employment according to opinion of youth in different age cohorts, per cent (multiple choice question)

What kind of resources you have to obtain to have a good job?	Cohorts by age		
	Under 20	21–25	26–30
Quality higher education	52	35	35
Quality professional training	57	63	57
IT competence	24	20	19
Knowledge of foreign languages	37	33	24
Communicative and teamwork skills	36	40	37
Managerial skills	21	24	17
Social links	28	39	33
Good health, good physical condition	21	13	7
Good looks	14	9	12
No bad habits	17	5	9
Good CV	18	12	7
Positive image in social media	5	4	0

Source: author's calculation

Our survey revealed that the substantial part of youth in the region is not satisfied with quality of the education they are receiving (or already received), especially in the capital of the region, Yekaterinburg (Tab.2).

Tab. 2: Level of satisfaction with the quality of the receiving (already received) education, per cent

Respondents cohorts according to settlement type	Fully satisfied	Rather satisfied	Rather not satisfied	Fully not satisfied	Index*
Yekaterinburg	23	48	24	5	+0,42
Big cities	20	58	16	6	+0,56
Small and medium-sized cities	28	48	20	4	+0,52
Rural settlements	23	52	24	1	+0,50
By array in total	23	51	21	5	+0,48

Source: author's calculation

*The index calculated as the difference between positive (fully satisfied, rather satisfied) and negative (rather not satisfied, fully not satisfied) questions divided by 100.

The satisfaction index in cities and rural settlements of the region varies from +0.50 to +0.56, and in Yekaterinburg is only +0.42. Moreover, objectively, the capital has great educational opportunities for young people, concentrating the vast majority of educational

institutions – colleges and universities. However, young people’s demands to the quality of education in Yekaterinburg is higher here.

Even less young people are satisfied with their professional training. They believe that it does not meet the requirements of the employer. Especially it is true for the young people of the average age cohort of (21-25 years), who, as a rule, already have a university degree and are during the process of entering the labor market (Tab.3).

Tab. 3: Level of satisfaction with the quality of the professional training, per cent

Respondents by the age	Do you satisfied with the quality of the professional training?				
	Fully satisfied	Rather satisfied	Rather not satisfied	Fully not satisfied	Index*
Under the age of 20	22	45	19	5	+0,43
21–25	14	45	33	6	+0,20
26–30	16	50	23	3	+0,40
Total	19	46	23	5	+0,37

Source: author’s calculation

* The index calculated as the difference between positive (fully satisfied, rather satisfied) and negative (rather not satisfied, fully not satisfied) questions divided by 100.

We studied accessibility of higher education for youth of region according to subjective assessment of young people. The study revealed a relationship between the type of settlement and the assessment of education accessibility, which reflects the resource inequality within the region: between the center and the periphery, between cities and rural areas. Young people living in cities and rural areas of the region, notes the relatively low level of access to quality higher education (Tab.4) While in Yekaterinburg only 12% of young people believe that they have no access to quality higher education, than in small and medium-sized cities 23% of respondents, and among rural youth 32% of respondents believe that they have no access to quality higher education.

Meanwhile, at the time of the survey, less than a third of young people (31%) believe that their level of professional education is sufficient for effective work and career. About 30% of respondents believe that they will need to improve their skills in the near future, 11% will need professional retraining, and another 20% are already experiencing a lack of available professional knowledge and skills, and 8% do not use any skills acquired at the university or college.

Tab. 4: Assessment of access to quality higher education in the region, per cent

Respondents by the type of settlement	Have access	In some situations have access, in other situations do not have	Do not have access
Yekaterinburg	55	33	12
Big cities	42	38	20
Small and medium-sized cities	43	34	23
Rural settlements	40	28	32
By array in total	48	34	18

Source: author's calculation

These data confirm the results of the study by Tavokin. Tavokin conducted the expert survey of employers and representatives of state employment centers. According to this survey the quality of training young graduates in many regions of Russia today does not meet the requirements of the production due to the lack of adequate cooperation between universities and business (Tavokin, 2016).

Conclusion

According to our study, young people believe that the most important resources for achieving life success are the high level of professional training and quality higher education.

Also, the youth highly appreciates teamwork skills, knowledge of foreign languages and social capital in the form of support of family and relatives to achieve success.

However, young people are not satisfied with the quality of their education, especially in Yekaterinburg and other major cities in the region. Even less young people are satisfied with the quality of their training and believe that it does not meet the requirements of the employer.

The study revealed the relationships between the type of settlement and the assessment of the availability of education: young people living in the middle-sized, small towns and rural areas, notes they have no access to the quality higher professional education.

A significant part of the youth experience lack of professional knowledge, skills and the need to improve their professional training in the near future.

In general, this shows that the problem of discrepancy in the level, orientation and quality of professional training of college and university graduates to the demands and requirements of employers is not solved today, despite all attempts to establish cooperation between educational institutions and the labour market.

The problem is complicated by the existence of resource inequality in access to quality professional education among young people and it poses a threat to the opportunities for youth to realize their goals in the sphere of work and employment.

Acknowledgment

The article is prepared within the research project "Young people from Russian industrial regions: social future image as a factor for youth innovative potential development" with the support of grant of the Russian foundation of fundamental research № 18-011-00907.

References

- Erofeeva, P. (2015). Agency and Structure in Social Mobility in the Light of Individualization: Empirical Research Review. *Sociologicheskoe Obozrenie*, 14(2), 107-150.
- Gaspani, F. (2018). Young-adults NEET in Italy: orientations and strategies toward the future. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 38(1-2), 150-164.
doi:10.1108/ijssp-04-2017-0038
- Konstantinovskiy, D. L. (2017). Expansion of higher education and consequences for social inequality (the case of Russia). *Higher Education*, 74(2), 201-220.
doi:10.1007/s10734-016-0043-7
- Konstantinovskiy, D. L., & Popova, E. S. (2015). Youth, labor market and expansion of higher education. *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniya*(11), 37-+.
- Oosterhoff, B., Ferris, K. A., & Metzger, A. (2017). Adolescents' Sociopolitical Values in the Context of Organized Activity Involvement. *Youth & Society*, 49(7), 947-967.
doi:10.1177/0044118x14560528
- Sedova, N.N. (2016). Russians' life goals and strategies in a passionarity context. *The Sociological Journal*, 22 (2), 73–91. DOI: 10.19181/socjour.2016.22.2.4260
- Selivanova, Z. K. (2017). Life Goals and Professional Preferences of Older Adolescents. *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniya*(5), 51-56.
- Tavokin, E. P. (2016). Russian youth in the labor market in the expert assessments. *Monitoring Obshchestvennogo Mneniya: Ekonomicheskie i Sotsial'Nye Peremeny*, 132(2), 175-184. doi:10.14515/monitoring.2016.2.10

Tishkov, V. A., Barash, R. E., & Stepanov, V. V. (2017). Identity and Students' Vital Strategies in Russia. *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniya*(8), 81-87.

doi:10.7868/s0132162517080098

Vishnevsky, Y. R., & Narkhov, D. Y. (2017). What Society Is Just: Views of Sverdlovsk Region Students. *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniya*(5), 35-46.

Contact

Yana Didkovskaya

Ural Federal University

Institute of Public Administration and Entrepreneurship

Mira str., 19, Yekatherinburg, Russia, 620002

diyanadiyana@icloud.com

I.V.Didkovskaia@urfu.ru