

AMURCON 2021**AmurCon 2021: International Scientific Conference****HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH THE EYES OF MODERN
HIGH SCHOOLERS: SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

Evgeniia E. Abrosimova (a)*, Mariia Iu. Kulanina (b), Ekaterina E. Tiper (c)

*Corresponding author

- (a) Department of International Relations and Law, Vladivostok State University of Economics and Service, 41 Gogolya St., Vladivostok, Russia, gajjony@mail.ru
- (b) Department of Philosophy and Legal Psychology, Vladivostok State University of Economics and Service, 41 Gogolya St., Vladivostok, Russia, maria_kulanina@mail.ru
- (c) Department of Philosophy and Legal Psychology, Vladivostok State University of Economics and Service, 41 Gogolya St., Vladivostok, Russia, ktiper@mail.ru

Abstract

To understand how modern high schoolers, choose an educational institution, as well as the expectations of high school students from higher education, a sociological study "Higher education through the eyes of modern high schoolers: a sociological analysis" was conducted. The exploratory nature of the study is due to the need for the authors to understand how to set the goals and objectives of a larger study of higher education in the modern world. To get an idea of how and where high schoolers plan to enrol, the authors conducted a questionnaire survey. The questionnaire included questions, the answers to which make it possible to understand by what principles future applicants choose a university and a speciality, whether the level of education of their parents affects their choice. An integral element of the modern university admission strategy is the services of tutors. That is why, in the survey, respondents were asked the appropriate question. To get a more accurate picture of the studied situation, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods was used in the work: the questionnaire was supplemented with a semi-standardized interview, which included questions, the answers to which allow us to understand how the informants plan to continue their studies after school. The empirical data obtained as a result of the conducted research reflected which universities and specialities are popular among high schoolers, as well as the main reasons and motives for entering the university.

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1. Introduction

The modern information society is astonishing in its dynamism of the ongoing changes affecting all aspects of life. A significant part of the society of the new historical phase is engaged in the production, processing, and realization of information, especially its highest form - knowledge. And every year the need for high-quality and accessible knowledge is growing. This actualizes the need to study such an area as higher education. According to a survey conducted by the Internal Monitoring Center together with the HSE Directorate for Expert and Analytical Work in 2020, 87% of school graduates plan to enrol in higher education institutions (Gokhberg et al., 2020). However, along with these data, the educational realities of our country have faced a rapid increase in the popularity of secondary vocational education among high schoolers and their parents (Konstantinovskii & Popova, 2020). According to the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, admission to secondary vocational education programs has increased significantly, colleges are chosen by 60% of ninth graders. And most likely, the popularity of secondary vocational education will only grow. Even greater demand by high schoolers for this level of education will be due to its rapid development, both qualitative and quantitative. This will be facilitated by the implementation of the strategy for the development of secondary vocational education programs until 2030, which includes five priority areas: updating the content of educational programs, forming a new landscape of the secondary vocational education system, increasing financial stability, and targeted support for colleges, improving the skills of employees of the secondary vocational education system, developing a culture of professional competitions (Podvedeny itogi., 2021).

In the context of increasing competition between different levels of professional education, it becomes as relevant as possible to understand how today's high schoolers make their choice, what determines the choice of university, and how preparation for admission takes place. The ideas of high school students about higher education is a topic of constant interest since it sheds light on the social appearance, relationships, and motives of the behaviour of a fairly significant group of the younger generation, which, on the threshold of independent life, chooses its future and forms an educational and professional strategy. The importance of this topic nowadays is due to the change in the everyday ideas of the country's population, characteristic of the modern period, about how important higher education is for the formation of a successful personality (Esina, 2019).

Over the past 30 years, the field of higher professional education has undergone a huge number of reforms and transformations (Kozhayev et al., 2020). Rapid and sometimes drastic changes actualize research interest in this problem. The social changes faced by modern high schoolers and their parents require constant monitoring of the situation in the educational services market. Thus, researchers from the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences conducted a study "Youth, the labour market and the expansion of higher education." According to the results of their research conducted in 2020, at least 87% of the surveyed students of the eleventh grade expect higher education (Gokhberg et al., 2020). But it's not just the choice itself that matters. Predictably, higher education has become the norm in Russian society (Pugach, 2020). The prevalence of higher education is indeed extremely significant for social stratification. The middle class, for example, is usually prepared by universities. But the question is, do students choose this or that education themselves? How much does it suit them? And how

thoughtful and independent is their choice? What criteria are used to choose a university? Based on what they choose a speciality? Why do they need higher education at all (Konstantinovskii & Popova, 2015)?

Many researchers have paid attention to the influence of family attitudes and the socio-economic status of the family on the choice of the educational trajectory by school graduates. Thus, Karachurina and Florinskaia (2019) in their study "Migration intentions of school graduates of small and medium-sized cities of Russia" concluded that the decision to obtain higher education is influenced by the level of education of parents, the level of material security of the family, and in some way, the academic performance of high schoolers also influences. And in the study "Effectively supported inequality, the choice of an educational trajectory after the 11th grade of school in Russia", Khavenson and Chirkina (2018) draw attention to the fact that in situations of distribution along educational trajectories, socio-economic inequality manifests itself, since the choice depends not only on academic performance but also on resources, motivation and, values formed in the family. This factor was also considered by Chirkina (2018) in the study "Socio-economic situation and choice of the educational trajectory by students: theoretical approaches to the study of the relationship". Such a factor as the socio-economic situation of the family is also considered in the study of Khavenson and Chirkina (2019) "Educational choice of students after the 9th and 11th grades: comparison of primary and secondary effects of the socio-economic situation of the family".

Other researchers have found gender specificity in choosing the level of further education. Thus, in Isupova's (2020) study "Gender specificity of the life plans of the youth of the Russian Far East", it was noted that boys and girls plan their further implementation in life and profession differently, which affects the choice of the educational trajectory. Several studies are devoted to the specifics of the regional choice of educational strategy (Blinova & Fedotov, 2019; Patciorkovskii & Krukhmaleva, 2019).

2. Problem Statement

Higher education is of particular importance for our country, as it forms the personnel potential for the sectors of the economy, science, technology, and culture. Despite the increasing demand for secondary vocational education, the development of distance, and additional forms of obtaining professional knowledge and skills, university education remains the field of training highly qualified specialists. For this reason, the requirements for the quality of training of graduates of modern universities should be increased, on the one hand, and on the other, universities should clearly understand what modern applicants want, in what realities they will have to live and work after receiving higher professional education. Meanwhile, modern university education in Russia is characterized by several trends that are determined by the social, economic, and demographic transformations of Russian society. It is necessary to maintain a balance between traditions and innovations in the field of higher education in order not to lose the valuable long-term experience of Russian higher education, as well as to take into account the modern requirements of the globalizing world.

3. Research Questions

In the presented study, the authors tried to reflect the preferences of modern high schoolers on how they plan to choose a university for education, which characteristics of the university are significant for them, and also updated the issue of educational migration and identified some of the respondents planning to enrol in other cities of Russia.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine how high school students plan to choose a university for higher professional education. This goal actualizes the following tasks: by what criterion do teenagers choose a university, how does the preparation for admission go, which university is future applicants focused on, what form of education are they planning to choose.

5. Research Methods

The authors conducted a questionnaire survey to understand how and where Vladivostok high schoolers plan to enrol (Abrosimova, 2013). The transformational processes taking place in the modern information society have expanded the subject area of sociological research, which, in turn, required the expansion of research tools. In this regard, the survey of students was conducted using Google forms, which greatly simplified the collection of information and the availability of respondents. The respondents were 10th-grade students of schools in the city of Vladivostok (N=157). The choice of tenth-grade students is determined by the objectives of the study: on the one hand, high schoolers have already partially made their choice towards higher professional education, on the other hand, they can still change their minds. However, they are faced with a choice of speciality and directly, an educational institution, including its location.

For a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the issue under study, semi-standardized interviews were conducted with informants (N=5). In the interview, the respondents were asked the following questions: What speciality do you plan to choose and which university are you considering for admission? If you don't enrol in a state-funded program, will you be able to pay for your education? If you fail to pass on a state-funded program for a certain speciality, to a certain university, will you enter the same university for a fee-based program or will you go to another university for the same speciality, where the tuition is cheaper? How important do you consider getting a higher education? Who do you imagine yourself to be in 10 years of professional activity?

The last two questions are aimed at understanding how high schoolers feel the importance and necessity of higher education for their future profession. After all, when choosing a future profession, a child should understand not only what exams are necessary for admission to the university, but also what one will have to do in the future; does the child have an idea about one's profession or is the choice of speciality dictated solely by the experience of older relatives.

6. Findings

The study involved 43.6% of boys and 56.4% of girls of the tenth grades of the city of Vladivostok, mainly at the age of 16 (58%).

The academic performance of the majority of respondents is quite high: more than half of the respondents (72.6%) study at "excellent", "excellent" and "good", and "good". Such a high level of academic performance is due to two factors: firstly, these are children who have moved to the tenth grade and therefore have successfully passed the main state exam. Also, the high level of academic performance may be caused by the fact that more than half of the students (63%) study with tutors. At the same time, a quarter of respondents study with a tutor only once a week (25.5%), slightly less than a quarter of respondents 2 times a week (23.5%). Among the subjects in which modern tenth graders study with tutors are the following: mathematics (40%), English (18%), Russian (10%), biology (9%), social studies (8%), physics (5%). To understand whether the respondents are determined to continue further education, at the very beginning of the survey they were asked the question "Do you plan to continue your studies after finishing 11th grade?". 98.1% of respondents said that they plan to continue their studies after school.

The educational level of parents often affects the future of children more than their academic performance at school. The staff of the HSE Institute of Education found out what role this factor plays in the choice that a student makes after grades 9 and 11. As follows from the results of the study, this choice is not always dictated by academic performance. A family with a high level of education helps a student to choose such strategies that allow them to get a good education even with low academic performance (Khavenson & Chirkina, 2018). It is for this reason that the study formulated questions about the availability of higher education for parents. The majority of respondents' parents have a university degree, 67.6% of respondents noted the presence of higher education for mom and 57.6% for dad. Perhaps, for this reason, it is possible to see a positive trend in the decision to receive further education after receiving a diploma of higher education (61.1%).

After graduation, slightly more than half of the students consider a university in Vladivostok, that is, in their hometown (59.9%), slightly less than half of the respondents consider other cities and countries for further continuation of the educational process (40.1%). Among the most popular cities for potential university studies, respondents noted St. Petersburg (52%) or Moscow (38.4%). This choice is quite popular because it is in these cities that a large number of educational institutions are concentrated. According to the survey, this choice is due to the desire to get a better higher education (29.3%), to move to another city (23.4%), and the prestige of the diploma (18.6%). The data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Motives for choosing higher education in another city

Answer option	% of the respondents
The quality of education	29,3%
I want to move to another city	23,4%
The prestige of the diploma, guaranteed employment.	18,6%
I like a certain university	12,6%
I have friends/relatives in this country	7,2%
The opportunity to improve my knowledge of the foreign language	6,8%
My whole family is planning to move	2,1%

The results of the interview reflect the fact that respondents plan to choose a university, guided not by the presence of the desired speciality, the quality of the educational process, or the cost of training. One of the significant factors when choosing a university, indicated by modern high schoolers is geographical location. The results of the survey showed that St. Petersburg is one of the most popular cities among high schoolers. The results of the interview confirmed this statement. The respondents replied that they had not yet chosen a speciality, but already knew that they would study in St. Petersburg. Such answers were received during the interview: "The university is either FEFU or one of the universities of St. Petersburg", "I have not yet chosen a specific university, but most likely it will be located in St. Petersburg and related to mathematics and physics or mathematics and computer science", "I plan to choose a speciality related to physics, I have not thought about the university yet, but I plan to study in St. Petersburg."

We asked the students the question "What speciality do you plan to choose and which university do you plan to consider for admission?", after receiving the answers, we were able to understand that only half of the respondents had decided on a profession. The rest of the students have not yet decided, they only know which area it will be associated with. Some students have decided exactly on the university, other students have decided only on the city in which they plan to study, but they are not aware of universities to choose from. Answers received during the interview:

A large number of respondents noted that they plan to stay in another city after graduation (82.2%). As a possible option for obtaining higher education, 13.7% of respondents indicated foreign cities. Among the foreign cities, respondents noted Seoul, Toronto, Tokyo, and Munich. Respondents also considered other cities that are located in Russia, 9.6% noted such cities as Kazan, Krasnodar, Novosibirsk, Omsk, and Khabarovsk.

The respondents' answers were distributed almost equally between children who are planning to enter the university of their city and children who want to leave the city. In the context of the cities mentioned by respondents belonging to the group of potential migrants, it can be concluded that applicants plan to leave the Primorsky Krai. The population of Primorsky Krai according to Primorskstat as of April 1, 2021, amounted to 1872.6 thousand people. This is 5,282 fewer people than at the end of 2020 and there are no objective prerequisites for a sharp improvement in the situation (Isupova, 2020).

The majority of respondents choose a particular university based on the fact that there is a speciality that they are interested in (63.3%) and the absolute majority is based on their desires, interests, and abilities (89.5%). These results are very encouraging, as students go to those specialities that they are interested in. And not where the lowest passing score is to graduate from university for the sake of a diploma, it is also gratifying that students began to choose a speciality based on their desires, interests, and abilities because previously parents dictated to children where they should go to study, although it might not be interesting for them at all.

Also, this study shows that if students are unable to enrol in the desired university on a budget, in the speciality that they like, they will choose another university with the same speciality (68.9%). This is due to their choice of speciality is important for students, because, with the same subjects passed on the Unified State Exam, you can apply for different specialities at the same university. We see a different

picture if a student has the opportunity to enrol for a fee, in which case the majority of respondents note that they will enrol in the university they have chosen, even if the cost of studying at another university in the same speciality will be lower. (72%), most likely, the prestige of the university and getting an education there is important for respondents, maybe students see prospects for further employment only with a diploma from a certain university.

The most popular areas that respondents want to study were: mathematics and natural sciences (21.3%), humanities (20%), engineering, technology and technical sciences (18%), social sciences (16.7%), art and culture (11.3%). If we look at this indicator by gender differences, the male sex prefers mathematical and natural sciences (35.3%), the female sex prefers the humanities (28.4%).

The most popular answers to the question "Indicate your motives for obtaining higher education?" were: "Become a specialist in a certain field" (30.9%) and "Get a high-paying job" (25.9%). Only 6.1% of respondents are ready to get an education because of their parents' demands, this is a good indicator. This confirms that the profession they want to master is really important for students, they are interested in it. The data is presented in table 2.

Table 2. Motives for obtaining higher education by high schoolers

Answer option	% of the respondents
To become an expert in a certain field	30,9%
To get a high-paying job	25,9%
To Increase one's social status	11,1%
The prestige of studying at a university	9,5%
To avoid serving in the army	7,1%
To fulfil the hopes of my relatives, to meet their expectations	6,4%
Parents' requirement	6,1%
Family tradition.	3%

During the interview, respondents were asked another question: "How important do you consider getting a higher education?". The following responses were received: "I think it's important because, in the field in which I plan to work, I have no connections and acquaintances that would help me get a job," "I think that in my field of activity it is very important to get a higher education because with a diploma I will achieve more," "I think that higher education is not the most important thing, but it's still a very good back-up measure so that you can go to work in the profession." This block of answers translates the perception of higher education by informants as a kind of social elevator. Having an education, according to children, will allow them to be more successful in the professional field. However, some respondents do not believe that higher education is a guarantee of success: "Nowadays it is not so important, experience and practice are more important, but I also think it is important for competitiveness because many employers are looking at whether you have a diploma of higher education," "I believe that some people do not need it, they do well and find themselves, but for most people, it is quite an important stage in life, so it's better to get a higher education."

Based on the answers above, it can be assumed that respondents see higher education as a way to improve their status. But higher education is not only about getting a diploma. Higher education is about

gaining knowledge, communicating with various people and, much more, but most see it as a way of finding a more prestigious job.

The majority of respondents (48.4%) believe that getting a higher education does not guarantee them employment, a third believe (28.8%) that education guarantees them employment, the remaining respondents find it difficult to answer this question (22.9%). At the same time, more than half of the respondents want to get a high-paying job (60.4%).

The families of the majority of students (71.1%) consider paid tuition, if they fail to pass on the budget, this may be because families are ready to help the child get a higher education since higher education is highly valued in employment, perhaps this is regarded as a contribution to the future, subsequently, the child will earn more than parents and will be able to help them financially.

During the interview, respondents were asked a specific question, which was aimed at finding out whether teenagers represent themselves in their professional future. This question was quite difficult for teenagers and made most of them think. Some children could not answer this question: "I do not yet imagine myself in this field of activity in 10 years," "I do not imagine myself in 10 years." Only one teenager has formed a vision of his future: "After 10 years, I imagine myself as an artist-designer, possibly working for some large company, I have not yet fully decided on the exact place of work, perhaps in some field of game design, in some Russian, or maybe a foreign company. The design of games, the design of websites, maybe I will work for myself, but still, in 10 years I'm going to have some exact place of work. One of the respondents already presents his life strategy for the next ten years, however, his path is not connected with higher education: "I want to become an individual entrepreneur and open different businesses from year to year, so as not to stop at something specific and develop, improve myself and my ideas." Based on these answers, we can say that for someone the task turned out to be very difficult, which is quite obvious. Someone was able to accurately describe their life strategy, despite the desire to get a higher education, plans to develop their business.

7. Conclusion

As part of this work, a sociological study was conducted, during which the main ideas of adolescents about higher education were revealed. Also, this work helped the authors to outline further directions of research work. One of the main research vectors identified in this work is the study, analysis, and development of recommendations on the issue of attracting applicants to universities, mainly on a regional scale. Also, the prospects for further research work lie in the plane of improving empirical tools to obtain a more representative and voluminous result on the problem under study.

To date, a fairly informative "rub" of a tenth grader has been received. A modern schoolboy plans to continue his studies after graduation and chooses a higher educational institution to obtain a profession. Half of the students plan to enrol outside their region. A student chooses in favour of a particular university based on the fact that there is a speciality there that he likes or he sees prospects for further employment. However, the choice of the geographical location of the university sometimes outweighs other factors of choosing a university: children plan to leave their hometown, and admission to the university is a process of educational migration. Most likely, having received an education in a larger city

(and respondents in their answers indicated mainly large cities in Russia), teenagers plan to stay working in the same city.

The respondent chooses the speciality based on their desires and interests. This is evidenced by the fact that high schoolers do not plan to change their speciality, in case of a shortage of points at the desired university - the student is focused on changing the university, not the speciality.

If respondents fail to enrol on a budget, their families will consider tuition on a fee basis. Most respondents plan to study full-time. Such choices indicate the willingness of informants to study at the university under any conditions. Almost all respondents are children of educated parents, which also contributes to the formation of a desire to study at a university. Also, the influence of parents can be traced in the process of preparing for admission: most respondents resort to the services of tutors. The responsibility for the decision to apply to tutors lies not only on the potential applicant but also on the parents since this involves certain financial costs for the whole family. This strategy of obtaining higher education is caused by the fact that the main motive for obtaining higher education is to become a specialist in the chosen professional field. High schoolers believe that higher education can serve as a certain social lift for them and it guarantees successful employment in the future.

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