

**SCTMG 2020****International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the  
Context of Modern Globalism»****HIGHER SCHOOL EDUCATION TRENDS IN RUSSIA AND  
RUSSIAN NORTH**

Maria Vyacheslavovna Druzhinina (a), Anastasia Nikolaevna Zagorodnyuk (b), Olga Valerevna Istomina (c)\*, Ekaterina Andreevna Fedoseeva (d), Sun Yanan (e)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov, 17, embankment of the Northern Dvina, Arkhangelsk, 163002, Russia, m.druzhinina@narfu.ru

(b) Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after Lomonosov, 17, embankment of the Northern Dvina, Arkhangelsk, 163002, Russia, ermoanastasiya@mail.ru

(c) Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov, 17, embankment of the Northern Dvina, Arkhangelsk, 163002, Russia, olgaist0311@yandex.ru

(d) Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after Lomonosov, 17, embankment of the Northern Dvina, Arkhangelsk, 163002, Russia, istomina\_94\_94@mail.ru

(e) Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after Lomonosov, 17, embankment of the Northern Dvina, Arkhangelsk, 163002, Russia, ya.sun@narfu.ru

***Abstract***

Education is the leading form of human activity. A high level of education ensures putting knowledge into practice through the advanced information resources use. Education is a single dedicated process of upbringing and training carried out in the interests of a man, family, society and the state. The formation of educational policy at all levels indicates that the higher education sphere plays a significant role in international educational space and socio-economic communities of all countries. Accordingly, the authors investigated the top educational trends based on the scientific literature study and materials systematization. The results were presented to the international scientific and pedagogical community. The work aimed to conduct the theoretical analysis of higher education system modernization processes in Russia and in the North of Russia. To study the problem of higher education quality was carried out the survey of the pedagogical universities students' attitudes to learning. Students are a mobile social group, its composition, values and reasons for obtaining an education are constantly changing. Thus, in order to ensure the education quality, it is necessary to reveal the students' attitude to learning regularly. As the results, a scientific literature theoretical analysis of the finding out the trends of higher education system development and the study of students' attitudes to it by means of questionnaires was conducted. Received data can contribute the quality of higher education system.

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**Keywords:** Educational space, higher education trends, higher education quality, educational policy.



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## **1. Introduction**

The system of higher education in Russia is in the stage of continuous modernization. Higher education is the main mechanism for state intellectual potential formation in general. Society progress directions in the intellectual orientation is a basis for innovative activity in the context of high education system development. In the process of globalization, the internationalization role of all human life spheres, including education, is increasing. In this regard, the system of higher education, which provides qualified personnel to the state, is designed to ensure the growth of the country's competitiveness.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The system of higher education has a multicomponent structure, and is characterized by a variety of processes occurring in it, activities diversity, a plenty of tasks to be solved, and multi-functionality of the system components. It is necessary to come to decisions of numerous higher education problems and contradictions in the conditions of its modernization and transformation from the positions of integrity, complexity, rationality, inconsistency, balance of opinions and measures taken in the conditions of multiplicity. Higher education is considered as a system, process and result, as well as a socio-cultural institution and a pedagogical system. All mentioned components of a complex system complement each other in content and functionality. In the conditions of the multicultural world and new challenges to learning it is assumed that the multicomponent system of higher education is aimed at a high level of formation and improvement of various skills, is designed to develop new abilities to perceive and change the world, making optimal decisions, mastering the professional activity culture. The graduates' quality is assessed by their nature, ability to solve professional problems and to self-improve.

## **3. Research Questions**

The key component of higher education is quality. Quality, as a research subject, is the result of interaction between teachers, students and the institutional educational space. Quality assurance should contribute to the creation of an educational space in which the content of programs, opportunities and means of education correspond to the stated goals. According to scientists, quality assurance and quality improvement are interrelated (Vinogradov, Posokhova, & Ignatova, 2016).

In the context of present world education modernization, the universities transformation into scientific, educational and industrial complexes has become an international trend. This global trend is a response to the challenge of the time to be a competitive University within the international educational space development. This is noted by many scientists (Druzhinina, 2009, Kappe & Flier, 2012).

It is believed that competitiveness can be achieved through the integrated implementation of the University main functions: social, cultural, scientific, and professional. However, it is extremely difficult to do this, as it is required to make decisions in the field of educational policy, management of the University complex and management of education quality assurance (Druzhinina, 2009, Elliott & Tudge, 2007).

Another challenge of the time is the rapid change of the social world. The preservation of traditional values and the appearance of new ones is also an international trend in the higher education system development (Eklof, Holmes, & Kaplan, 2005).

In general, the processes taking place in the international educational space are focused on democratization, humanization and humanitarization, education universality, innovations development, quality management. At the same time, the so-called challenges of the time are being formed, among which the demand for high quality modern specialists training, ensuring the education internationalization and meeting the requirements of the labour market, the competition growth, the need to manage the flow of information flow.

In the process of the Bologna Declaration implementation, there were revealed such positive trends as the formation of a single educational space, increasing education subject mobility, the existence of the possibility to choose (language, University, teacher, course, textbooks), the knowledge certification fulfilment the desire to unify diplomas, obtaining the right of educational institutions to be autonomous, increasing motivation of two or three foreign languages learning, entering into the international labour market, the use of information technologies, the development of critical thinking and self-analysis, etc. The second, more problematic group of trends should be considered such as economization, commercialization, expectation of instant effect, minimization of content and fundamentality, acute competition of universities, financially costly accreditation procedures, certification, licensing, the pursuit of indicators, the growth of unjustified claims to quality, not always high professionalism of personnel, lack of funds, staff reduction, lack of supervision system for subjects of education, violation of stability in work, the growth of anxiety, discrepancy of material and technical base to modern requirements and others. Such trends exacerbate the contradiction between the requirements for the education quality and their satisfaction (Druzhinina, 2009).

The researchers from all countries seek to address the issues of education quality assurance in various ways: by searching for an ideal education model (Bodovski, Byun, Chykina, & Chung, 2017), philosophical understanding and cultural interpretation of educational processes (Lehtisaari & Mustajoki, 2017), development of models of education management (Murdowno, 2018), development of academic mobility and international partnership (Casiraghi, 2017), evaluation of teachers' work in higher education system (Pavlovic, 2016), search for ways to ensure the quality of education (Zepke & Leach, 2007).

In order to improve the education quality, Internet resources, social networks, e-learning and distance learning technologies are actively used, which is a global trend in the development of education (de Lera, Almirall, Fernández, & Gisbert, 2012; Gendina, 2013; Zepke & Leach, 2007)

One of the strongest tendencies of modern Russian and foreign education is the technologization of educational processes. At present, to acquire personal and professional qualities, progressive technologies and methods of training are used, for example, problem training. It has a positive effect upon education, as it is based on four modern views on learning: constructive, independent, collaborative and contextual. Problem learning refers to the process of creating meaning and constructing personal interpretations of the world based on personal experience and interaction with other subjects of the socio-cultural context (Eklof et al., 2005; Elliott & Tudge, 2007).

Researcher Tan (2004) believes that problem-based learning is one of the main approaches to education and is an educational innovation. He notes three components of a problem-oriented educational process: the inclusion of content in problem solving, the role of coaching, and the involvement of students in problem solving.

The article of Brown, Collins, and Duguid (1989) explains the role of activities and educational situations in cognition and learning. Through activities, positive results are achieved, which is part of the university educational policy. The authors argue that it is impossible to ignore the natural processes of knowledge, as this is detrimental to the achievement of the goal acquiring reliable knowledge goal.

No less important in the educational process are the project method of training (Druzhinina & Zashikhina, 2017), the method of critical thinking and quality assessment (Casiraghi, 2017), the use of open Internet resources in training (de Lera et al., 2012).

The work of Thomas (2002) examines the issues related to the students' motivation to learning in higher education institutions. Despite financial and other difficulties, students, according to the author, strive for receiving higher education. In this case, the environment of the higher education institution influences the students to continue their studies at the University. The author emphasizes the importance of the institutional environment of students and gives recommendations on the development of University policy for the formation of a success situation among students.

One of the forms of University education cultural heritage is constant research scientific training. According to Martín and Santiago (2015) the implementation of research projects in various fields of knowledge is considered an integral part of the educational process.

The Northern territories development of the Arctic zone is a strategic objective of the Russian Federation policy, and is governed by the Federal regulatory documents. The Russian North higher education system tasks are integrated socio-economic development of the Russian Federation Arctic zone; development of science and technology; creation of modern information and telecommunications infrastructure; environmental security; international cooperation in the Arctic, etc.

The aim and objectives of the Russia and Russian North education modernization strategy includes ensuring the independence and competitiveness of the country through the creating of an effective system of growth and the fullest use of the nation intellectual potential; creating opportunities to identify talented youth and build a successful career in the field of science; creating conditions for research and development; forming an effective communication system and international cooperation model in the field of science, technology and innovation.

The specificity of higher education in Russian North is clearly marked by the Arctic vector development. This means the realization of national interests and the achievement of the main Russian Federation state policy objectives in the Arctic. These objectives are achieved by solving the main tasks taking into account the strategic priorities that ensure national security and sustainable socio-economic development of the Russian Federation Arctic zone.

Thus, we have identified trends at the world, state and regional levels. They are similar in terms of development, multidimensional content, but different in political decision making. For example, some contradictions are removed through the formation of educational policy at the institutional level; others are eliminated at the Federal level. However, global agreements for the international educational space

and University complexes development are adopted, as a rule, at the international level and determine the leading trends of educational systems.

Trends in the development of large University complexes are figured out by regional specifics, as we have shown on the example of the Russian Arctic zone development. A pronounced feature of the trends described in the work is their synergistic nature which based on nonlinearity of development, openness of the system, exchange of information with the external environment.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

To understand the processes of modernization in the higher education system, it is necessary to analyse the positive and negative phenomena, advantages and disadvantages of the ongoing processes, trends in development. Finding answers to these issues is relevant, as higher education remains one of the priority social values in Russia.

Higher education is designed to provide not only the necessary professional training but also to develop socially significant individuals' skills of the individual that are directed for the society benefit. Students are the main consumers of educational services. Therefore, the study of students' expectations from the higher education system, their attitude to the received education is of particular importance.

Thus, in accordance with the purpose the material is presented as follows the study of the system properties, description of the main higher education system development trends, search for answers to the time challenges, research of students' opinions about the education quality.

The hypothesis of the study is based on the statement that the theoretical analysis of the scientific literature on higher education development trends and the results of the study empirical part will contribute to improving the higher education quality in Russia.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The materials of this work are based on the study of domestic and foreign scientific literature on this problem, including legal acts of the Federal and regional levels. A large number of sources were analysed, which made it possible to generalize the different views of scientists on the changes in the higher education system taking place in the world, Russia and in Russian North.

It should be noted that the authors have extensive experience in research activities, which allowed empirically supplement the development trends description of higher education system in Russia and Russian North. In order to determine the higher education importance in the modern students values system, their vision of higher education entirely we organized and conducted a second-year student's survey on "Primary School Teacher" training program. The study was carried out on the base of Northern Arctic Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov.

Intramural students in the number of 45 took part in the survey. Respondents were asked to complete a survey titled "Your opinion on higher education", which consists of three blocks:

- questions related to the need for higher education;
- questions that reveal the level of students' satisfaction with the education quality;
- questions concerning the students' vision of modern higher education system.

The survey results were analysed, systematized, visualized and presented in the article.

## 6. Findings

The process of transformation and modernization of the higher education system in Russia and in the North of Russia are closely interrelated and characterized by increasing requirements of the education quality insurance. The concept "(education) quality" is a key feature of higher education system in all regions of Russia and a response to the challenges deal with globalization process and labour market internationalization of the international educational space.

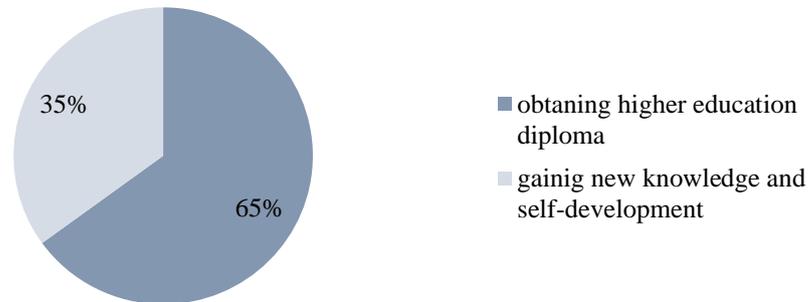
The literature review allowed stating following modern trends in higher education:

- educational policy of the University defines its educational activities strategic goals and basic ways for their achievement;
- the University as a socio-cultural and innovative education centre contributes to the specialists training with a broad outlook, people who are ready to carry out professional activities successfully in the context of present economic circumstances, active citizens are capable to develop all spheres of life fundamentally;
- the University educational space provides an opportunity for students to identify themselves in society, to meet their own learning needs, to perceive education as a personal value;
- digitalization of education (transition to education with active ICT technologies use);
- desire to improve the quality education, increasing the effectiveness of training (to teach the students to be result-oriented);
- striving for international cooperation (the development of productive forces and establishment of sustainable production ties which allow achieving useful results in the field of production and marketing, research at lower costs both within the country and on the world stage);
- focus on project activities (the formation of necessary skills for the innovative activities implementation aimed at the development of the University priority areas);
- perspective technologies use (the professional training of specialists are capable to think critically, make innovative decisions, analyse and estimate the professional activity for qualitative labour functions fulfilment).

Therefore, summarizing the trends, identified by us, in the modern higher education system we can conclude that in the world of global competition the education quality becomes a factor which allows both individuals and society as a whole to gain and maintain a leading position in the market. The appearance of these trends in the field of higher education in Russia and the North of Russia, in particular, is due to the fact that the customer-oriented higher education system has led to serious competition among universities, and the globalization of education has become the basis of alliances between universities in the country.

To reach the purpose, we conducted a survey to identify the students' attitude to the education quality. The analysis of respondents' answers showed that 65 % of them consider higher education, first of all, necessary for obtaining a diploma and future career growth, only 35 % of respondents (Figure 01) noted that the possibility obtaining new knowledge and self-development is significant. In addition, the

surveyed student singled out that higher education increases the chances of employment and is a boost for a career growth (83 % of respondents).



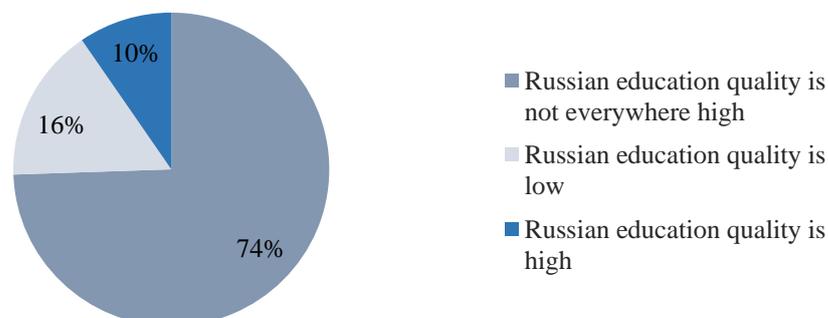
**Figure 01.** Responses breakdown of the question “Why it is necessary to receive higher education?”

Within the survey students was asked the following question "Do Russian universities provide quality education?» which is in demand in the modern labour market. Most of respondents (70 %) answered "Yes, but not all", 15 % – "no, the quality of education in Russia is low and formed competence does not correspond to practical reality." Only 9 % of students believe that the education quality meets the modern needs of employers. Students, also, had to rate the education quality they receive. The majority of students (80 %) have assessed their education at 4 (good) and 5 (excellent).

In addition, students were asked to express their opinion of the modern higher education system. The most of respondents have described the modern system of higher education with such statements as "non-assessment system", "practice-oriented education", "development of language culture", "in-depth study of foreign languages" (Figure 02).

Thus, the results of the study allow drawing the following conclusions:

- for students, obtaining higher education in the future is an opportunity to find a better job and move up the career ladder;
- students consider the level of education they receive is worthy;
- according to the study participants, higher education should be non-assessment, practice-oriented with in-depth study of foreign languages and language culture.



**Figure 02.** Responses breakdown of the question “Do Russian universities provide high quality education?”

In modern society, education is the most important means of achieving success and a symbol of a person's social position. There is no doubt that the university training success of highly qualified specialists depends largely on the quality of education provided to students. Expanding the circle of highly educated people, improving the education system have an impact on social mobility in today's world making it more open and perfect, thereby fulfilling one of the main goals of the University is to meet the public need for the highest category specialist training.

## 7. Conclusion

The singled out development trends of higher education in Russia and Russian North are not exhaustive. They are related to the international economics, the international educational space, strategic priorities and policy decisions of the international, federal, regional and institutional levels. The continuous process of higher education transformation is driven by the University complexes desire to a high level of education quality. In this regard, the University has to investigate constantly and take into account the students opinion in the formation of educational policy.

Modern students assess education quality level in Russian North rather high and understand the importance of a higher education obtaining. However, they would like to see it more practice-oriented. Thus, during the educational process students focus on being skilled professional and, then, getting high-paid job.

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