Sociological Portrait of Applicants and Students of the Most Popular and Perspective Specialties of Secondary Vocational Education: a Comparative Aspect

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Abstract

The relevance of the study is caused by the necessity to form a plan for the development of secondary vocational education that provides training of the most popular and promising specialties and working professions in accordance with international standards and advanced technologies on the basis of the leading professional educational organizations. The goal of this article is to identify the main motives and meanings of applicants' choices of popular and prospective specialties of secondary vocational education and working professions during the psychological, pedagogical and sociological research to paint a sociological portrait of students of vocational education and specialties from the TOP-50 list. The goals of the research are to carry out a comparative analysis of: 1) professional self-determination, 2) value orientations, 3) attitudes toward the teaching and upbringing, 4) life plans of applicants and students. The leading method in investigating this problem is the method of questioning. In our study we surveyed the applicants and students of specialties from the TOP-50 list. Results of the research: In order to study certain aspects of the sociological portrait of students through the method of questioning of students from the TOP-50 specialties we compiled a sociological questionnaire that included four blocks. The questionnaire for students included 28 questions and the questionnaire for applicants included 33 open and closed questions with the use of different scales with the possibility of selecting several of the listed options and the fields for answers. The results of the questioning of applicants and students are presented; the similarities and differences of the key motives, life plans, values of applicants and students who have chosen perspective professions of secondary vocational education are identified and summarized.

Key words: *Sociological portrait, Professional self-determination, Value orientations, Life plans, Secondary vocational education.*

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Introduction

The problems of the national educational system aggravated during the transition to the market economy, the crises in many production sectors, a long period of residual provision of the educational system, could not but affect the quality of mass training of specialists and skilled workers and led to a significant gap between the volume and qualifications of the trained personnel and the requirements of modern material production, to a decrease in the popularity of working professions and perspective specialties of secondary vocational education. To overcome this gap a number of strategic documents of the Russian Federation aimed at increasing the popularity of working professions and perspective specialties of secondary vocational education (Order of the Ministry of Labor of Russia No. 831, 2015) were adopted.

In order to achieve a sustainable development of the country, its economy needs personnel, which is capable of solving the applied problems of today, tomorrow and the future (Tarman, 2010; 2017). The society requires an advanced development of vocational education in general and the system of training of personnel and the formation of applied qualifications in particular (Tarman, & Yigit, 2013). This provision makes it necessary for the sphere of education to form, on the basis of an analysis of the current and prospective staffing needs of the economy, a list of popular and promising specialties and working professions. In this regard, educational institutions need to form a plan for the development of secondary vocational education that provides training of the most popular and promising specialties and working professions in accordance with international standards and advanced technologies on the basis of the leading professional educational organizations (Tarman, & Chigisheva, 2017).

The present project "The formation of a sociological portrait of applicants, students and graduates of educational programs of secondary vocational education providing training in the most popular, new and perspective professions and specialties of secondary vocational education", carried out by the team of authors within the framework of the state goal No. 28.4290.2017/HM, is aimed at identifying the main motives and meanings in the selection by applicants of popular and perspectives specialties of secondary vocational education and working professions during the psychological, pedagogical and sociological studies at the Federal state educational institution "Sochi State University" (Sochi) and the Federal state educational institution "Southern Federal University" (Rostov-on-Don).

Materials and Methods

In the domestic literature a number of works are devoted to the compilation of a sociological portrait. For example, the monograph of Gohberg, Kitova, Kuznetsova and Shuvalova (2010) is devoted to the analysis of motivations, value orientations and career aspirations as key characteristics of the socio-psychological model of behavior. Of particular interest for our study is the work of Pershenkov (2011) "Sociological portrait of an applicant-2011". The article of Ivakhnenko and Goliusova (2003) is devoted to the sociological portrait of modern students. Some aspects of the compilation of sociological portraits are presented in the work of Ivanenko (2011). "The non-resident: a sociological portrait", in which the author considers non-homogeneity as a matrix of self-identification that influences life strategies and value orientations of young people (Ivanenko, 2011). To substantiate this position, the author uses innovative procedures related to the description of territorial differences in the life of the student youth. Based on the monitoring of sociological surveys of medical students the work of Dregalo and Ulyanovskiy (2007) presents a comparative description of value orientations of students of different generations. Gendin, Sergeyev, Mayer and Bordukov (1998) explored the way of life of students of a pedagogical university, analyzing value orientations, their ideological positions, plans for the future. A number of studies are devoted to the examination of individual components in the sociological portrait of a student of secondary vocational education. Mazilina (2015) studied the characteristics of the contingent of students studying in the institutions of secondary vocational education as a significant factor in the formation of a system of professional and personal values. The same author examined the didactic conditions for the training of competent specialists of secondary vocational education (Mazilina, 2006). Some characteristics of graduates of secondary vocational educational institutions and potential specialists, who are in demand on the labor market, were investigated by Yakovlev (2000). The peculiar features of value orientations aimed at choosing a specialty from the TOP-50 list, which are presented in the student's social portrait, are analyzed in the article of Mushkina, Novikova and Ukraintseva (2017a; 2017b). Borodina, Simonyan, Ukraintseva, Khachaturova and Khovyakova (2017) examined the features of the sociological portrait of a student studying the most popular and promising specialties in secondary vocational education.

Therefore, a sufficient number of works is devoted to the consideration of certain aspects of the sociological portrait, but in our opinion, a comprehensive study of the sociological portrait of an applicant, a student and a graduate of secondary vocational education has not yet been presented.

The general totality of the research was made up of students from six institutions of secondary vocational education: The University College of Economics and Technology of Sochi State University, Federal state educational institution of secondary education Petrovsky College in St. Petersburg, Volgograd Energy College, Professional Pedagogical College of Yuri Gagarin State Technical University, Altai Academy of Hospitality, SBPEI College of Communications №54 named after P.M. Vostrukhin, Russia, Moscow

A representative sample in the study was made up of students of the following specialties: "Computer systems and complexes", "Relay Protection and Automation of Electric Power Systems", "Hotel Service", "Information Systems and Programming", "Hospitality", "Cookery and Confectionery" and "Technologies of machine building", which correspond to the list of new and perspective professions that are in demand on the labor market. Taking part in the study were 317 students, of whom 29,83% were boys and 70,17% were girls; and applicants, of whom 32,05% were boys and 67,95% were girls; the age of respondents ranged from 15 to 20 years.

In the system analysis a student, as a subject and an object, was considered by us in four aspects: 1) as a subject performing professional self-determination on the basis of the formed value orientations; 2) as a carrier of social and socio-psychological qualities; 3) as an element of management on the part of the administration and the faculty of the secondary vocational educational institution; 4) as a graduate of a secondary special educational institution and a potential specialist, who is in demand on the labor market.

In order to study certain aspects of the sociological portrait of students through the method of questioning students of the TOP-50 specialties we compiled a sociological questionnaire, which included four main blocks:

1) professional self-determination;

2) value orientations;

3) characteristics of the educational process;

4) life plans.

The questionnaire for students included 28 questions and the questionnaire for applicants included 33 open and closed questions with the use of different scales with the possibility of selecting several of the listed options and the fields for answers. To describe the segments we included such variables as "gender", "age", "education", "family composition", "number of children in the family", "social and property status", "sources of income", "emotional background while completing the questionnaire".

Results and Discussion

The average respondent is brought up in a full family (62,5%). In the family there are two children (61,54%). It can be described as a family, in which one can easily buy things of durable use, however, it is difficult to purchase really expensive things (32,07%). He currently lives with his parents (69,38%), in his apartment/private house (13,12%), he is fully dependent on his parents (52,53%). At the same time, there is an optimistic mood (44,03%) and a hope for a better future (33,96%) (Borodinaet al., 2017). The obtained results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Aggregate data of the respondents' answers (in %)

Characteristics of the sample		%
Gender	Male	29,83
	Female	70,17
Age	15 years inclusive	1,34
	16 years inclusive	14,77
	17 years inclusive	38,26
	18 years inclusive	34,23
	19 years inclusive	10,06
	20 years inclusive	1,34
Education	Basic general education	75,86
	Secondary education	4,02
	Secondary vocational education	10,12
Family composition	Full family (brought up by mother and father)	62,5
	Incomplete family (brought up only by mother)	16,67
	Incomplete family (brought up only by father)	2,38
	Incomplete family (brought up by one parent + stepfather (stepmother))	10,12
	I live without parents	8,33
Number of children in the family	The only child in the family	26,28
	Two children	61,54

	A large family (three or more children)	12,18
Socio-economic situation	I barely make ends meet. The money is not enough even for food	2,52
	There is enough money for groceries, but the buying of clothes causes financial difficulties	11,95
	The money is sufficient for food and clothes, but the purchasing of durable goods is a problem	17,61
	I can easily buy durable goods. However, for me it is difficult to buy really expensive things	32,07
	I can afford quite expensive things - an apartment, a summer residence and many other things	13,84
	Difficult to answer	22,01
Sources of income	I am fully dependent on parents (relatives)	52,53
	For the most part I depend on my parents (relatives) and have side jobs	29,75
	I work and live mostly on the earned money, but sometimes my parents (relatives) help me.	8,86
	I work and live only on the money that I earn myself	4,43
	Different answer	4,43
Emotional background when completing the questionnaire	Uncertainty about the future	5,03
	Pessimism	8,81
	Hope for a better future	33,96
	Optimism	44,03
	Different answer	8,17

Answering the questions that determine the motives for choosing a profession the applicants as the main reason indicated personal interest in the specialty (46,67%). The students also insist on a fully conscious entering the college, which is conditioned by the opportunity to get a secondary education and a profession (33,44%).

Having reviewed numerous studies conducted in the recent period we came to the conclusion that the structure of life goals and values, the level of spiritual and moral development is one of the main criteria for painting a sociological portrait. These factors are often referred to as subjective (Mushkina, Novikova, Ukraintseva, 2017c; 2017d).

Life values of applicants can be presented as follows (see Image 1).

As the first priority the applicants indicate the happiness of others (well-being, development and improvement of other people, the nation and humanity as a whole) and the opportunity to engage in creative activities. They highly appreciate the beauty of nature and art.
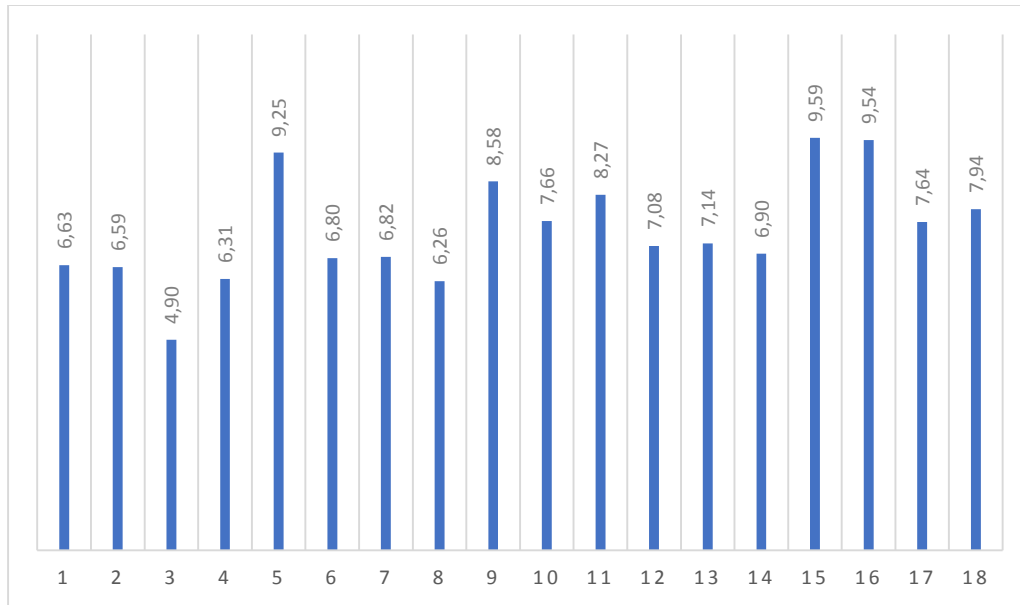
Image 1. Distribution of values by the degree of significance in life. The distribution of values by importance in the life of respondents (average scores): 1 - Active life (completeness and emotional fullness of life), 2 - Life wisdom (maturity of judgments and common sense achieved through life experience), 3 - Health (physical and mental), 4 - Interesting job, 5 - The beauty of nature and art (the experience of beauty in the nature and the art), 6 - Love (spiritual and physical intimacy with a loved person), 7 – Economic security (lack of material problems), 8 - Good and faithful friends, 9 - Social recognition (respect of others, of the team and colleagues) 10 - Cognition (the possibility of expanding one's education, outlook, common culture, intellectual development), 11 - Productive life (the fullest use of one's capabilities, strengths and skills), 12 - Development (self-improvement, constant physical and spiritual development), 13 - Freedom (independence in judgments and deeds), 14 - Happy family life, 15 - Happiness of others (well-being, development and improvement of other people, the nation, humanity as a whole), 16 - Creativity (the opportunity to engage in creative activities), 17 - Confidence (inner harmony, freedom from internal contradictions and doubts), 18 - Pleasure (pleasant, trouble-free pastime, no responsibilities, entertainment).

Regarding the life values of students, then their priorities include similar values: creativity and the beauty of nature and art (the experience of beauty in the nature and in the art) as well as the happiness of others. However, unlike the applicants, public recognition is

important for students (respect of others, of the team and colleagues). We will graphically show the results concerning various life values of students of secondary vocational institutions (Image 2).
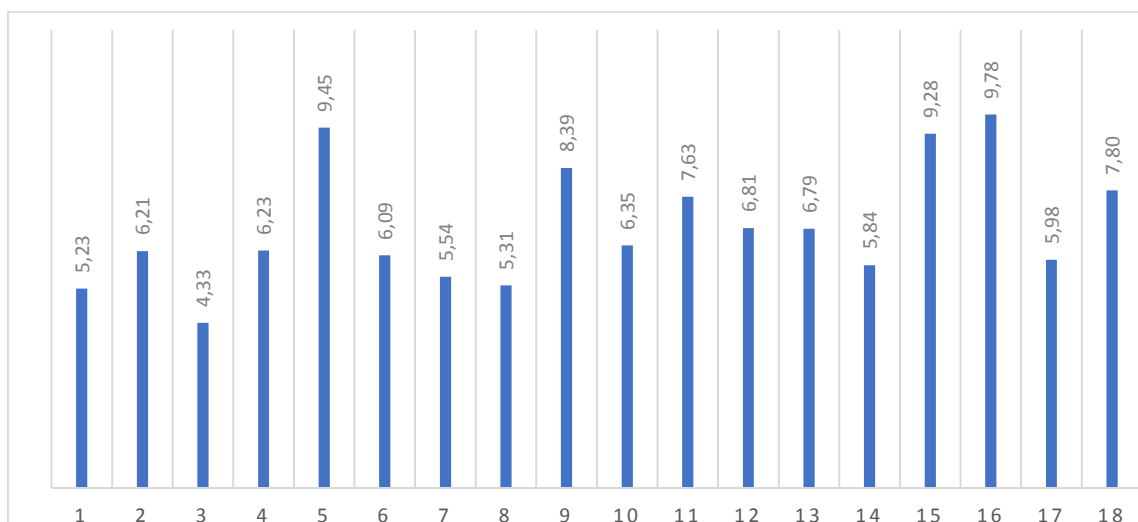

Image 2. Distribution of values by the degree of significance in life

A comparative analysis of values is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Comparative analysis of values 1

Specific values	Place in life		Abstract values	Place in life	
	Student	Applicant		Student	Applicant
Active life	17	14	Life wisdom	11	15
Health	18	18	The beauty of nature and art	2	3
Interesting job	10	16	Love	12	13
Economic security	15	12	Cognition	9	7
Good and faithful friends	16	17	Development	7	10
Social recognition	4	4	Freedom	8	9
Productive life	6	5	Happiness of others	3	1
Happy family life	14	11	Creativity	1	2
Pleasure	5	6	Confidence	13	8
	105	103		66	68

Comparative analysis of values 2:Values of professional self-actualization and personal life

Professional self-actualization	Place in life	Personal life	Place in life

Active life	17	14	Love	12	13
Interesting job	10	16	Good and faithful friends	16	17
Social recognition	4	4	Freedom	8	9
Productive life	6	5	Happy family life	14	11
Development	7	10	Pleasure	5	6
	44	49		55	56

It can be concluded that abstract goals are prevalent among applicants and students. With a small difference the values of professional self-actualization prevail over the values of personal life.

When choosing a specialty by an applicant it is of fundamental importance for him that the profession should be prestigious, give opportunities for the growth of professional skills, correspond to one's skills, and make it possible to realize one's managerial abilities. For the applicants high salary is on the fifth place in importance.

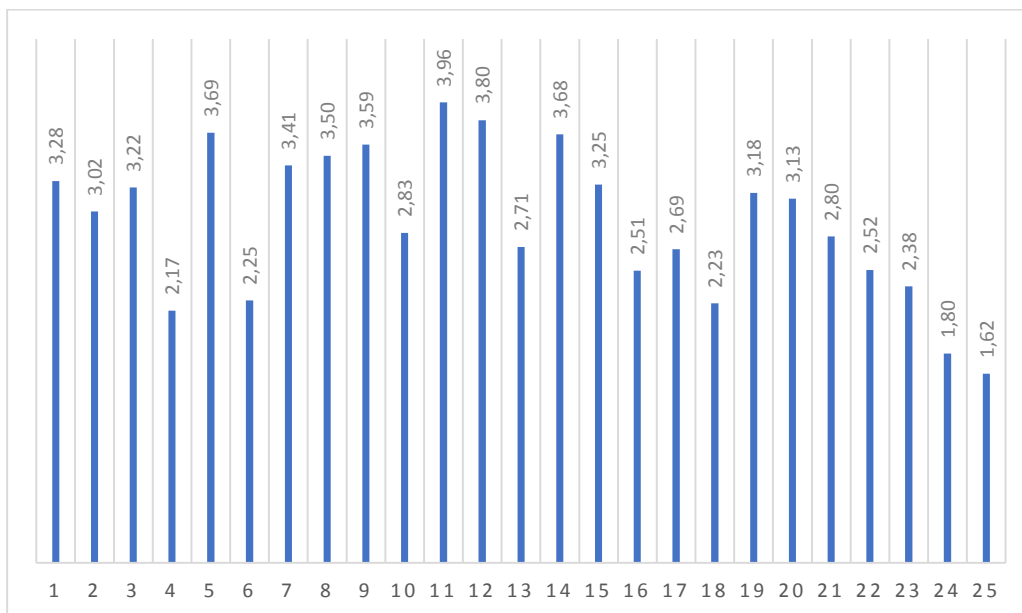The degree of importance of the characteristics of professional activity is shown in Image 3.

Image 3. The importance of characteristics of professional activity. The importance of characteristics of professional activity according to the degree of influence on the choice of profession (average scores): 1 - Requires communication with different people, 2 – Parents like

it, 3 - High sense of responsibility, 4 - Requires moving to a new place of residence, 5 – Corresponds to my abilities, 6 – Makes it possible to confine oneself to the existing equipment, 7 – Makes it possible to help people, 8 – Contributes to mental and physical development, 9 - Is highly paid, 10 – Makes it possible to work close to home, 11 - Is prestigious, 12 – Makes it possible to develop one's professional skills, 13 – Is the only possible under the circumstances, 14 – Makes it possible to realize one's leadership skills, 15 – Is attractive, 16 - Close to one's favorite school subject, 17 – Makes it possible to immediately obtain good results of work for others, 18 – Is chosen by my friends, 19 – Makes it possible to use professional skills outside of work, 20 - Gives great opportunities to show creativity, 21 - Satisfies with moderate tuition fees, 22 – I was attracted by the name of the specialty, 23 – To get a diploma of education (profession is not important), 24 – To avoid.

It should be noted that students' choice of specialty depends on other factors. The choice was influenced by such statements characterizing the profession as "it is prestigious", "it gives opportunities for the growth of professional skills", "it is highly paid". The respondents' assessment of the importance of statements characterizing the profession according to the degree of influence on their choice is shown in Image 4.
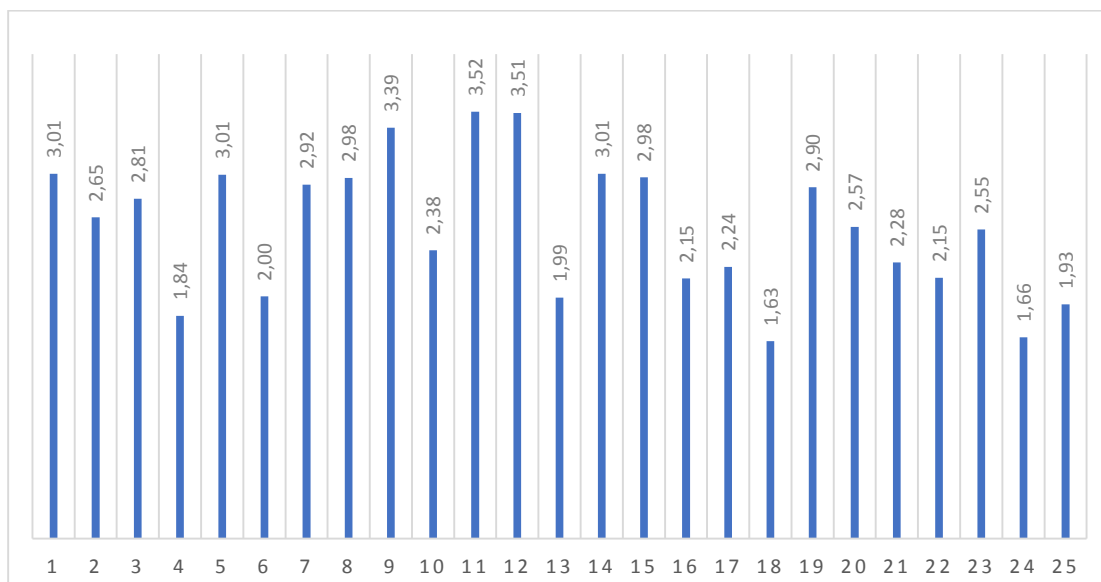

Image 4. Importance of characteristics of professional activity

The study made it possible to identify the respondents' attitudes toward obtaining secondary vocational education in general. After entering a secondary specialized educational institution after the 9th grade students associate the secondary vocational education primarily with an acquisition of the working profession (69,43%) and personal formation (19,43%). A similar pattern is observed for the applicants (57,79%) and (12,34%).

The objective factors include the level of training. From the point of view of the applicant, high-quality education is a high level of knowledge (54,49%) and a diploma of a prestigious educational institution (20,51%).

Students also appreciate a high-quality education, which consists in obtaining a high level of knowledge (67.43%). Unlike applicants, the most important thing for students is an acquisition of high-demand occupations (20.57%).

The opinions about quality education are different among students and applicants. Applicants believe that the most important thing is the professionalism of teachers (26,30%) and teaching methods (18,51%). Students believe that the methods of teaching (27%) and the quality of curricula (19%) have a decisive influence on the quality of education.

We will present the obtained data in tabular form (Tables 3, 4).

Table 3
Aggregate data of the applicants' answers about the factors affecting the quality of education (in %)

Factors affecting the quality	%
Availability of the necessary literature and free access to it	8,77
The quality of training programs	16,88
Teaching methods	18,51
Professionalism of teachers	26,30
Work practice	14,61
Practical experience of teachers	9,74
Different answer	5,19

Table 4
Aggregate data of the students' answers about the factors affecting the quality of education (in %)

Factors affecting the quality	%
Availability of the necessary literature and free access to it	6,33
The quality of training programs	19,00
Teaching methods	27,00

Professionalism of teachers	18,00
Work practice	17,00
Practical experience of teachers	11,00
Different answer	1,67

Evaluating the methods, technologies and forms that should be used in training in order to obtain a profession, both the applicants and the students in the first place put practical training, classes in specialized laboratories and workshops, active forms of training sessions (role-playing and business games, trainings), however, for applicants the rating system of progress assessment is twice more important than for students. Students prefer multimedia technologies (educational audios, videos, computer simulations, etc.) (see Tables 5, 6).

Table 5
Aggregate data of the applicants' answers about the methods and technologies that should be used in training (in %)

Factors affecting the quality	%
Rating system for assessing the students' progress	16,46
Active forms of conducting training sessions (role-playing and business games, trainings)	29,75
Multimedia technologies (educational audios, videos, computer simulation, etc.)	12,03
Practically oriented classes, classes in specialized laboratories and workshops	34,81
Different answer	6,96

Table 6
Aggregate data of the students' answers about the methods and technologies that should be used in training (in %)

Factors affecting the quality	%
Rating system for assessing the students' progress	8,23
Active forms of conducting training sessions (role-playing and business games, trainings)	24,62
Multimedia technologies (educational audios, videos, computer simulation, etc.)	17,95
Practically oriented classes, classes in specialized laboratories and workshops	44,10
Different answer	4,10

Answering the question "What should be given more attention when organizing an independent work of students?" students prefer that their independent work is based on the access to the Internet (32,77%). For applicants it is almost equally important to have access to the Internet (28,95%) and the consultations of teachers (27,63%). Both students and applicants

note that the main difficulty in the learning process is a big teaching load (46,63% of applicants) and (39,58% of students).

No less interesting are the characteristics of graduates of specialized secondary educational institutions and potential specialists, who are in demand on the labor market. An average applicant is more likely than a student to associate his future work with the specialty (working profession) he receives (68,19% - applicant) (60.69% - student). Choosing between high salary and interesting work during employment both applicants and students choose uninteresting work with high salaries (36,42%) and (41,62%), respectively. Applicants believe that secondary vocational education gives students exactly what they need to know for successful employment (45,58%). According to students, secondary vocational education is not enough and for successful employment higher education is necessary (53,85%).

The conducted theoretical analysis and empirical research significantly expand the characteristic of the sociological portrait of a student who studies to receive the most popular specialties and professions (TOP-50) and those applicants entering these specialties.

Investigating certain aspects of the sociological portrait applicants and students: professional self-determination, value orientations, characteristics of the educational process and life plans, we came to the following conclusions.

The majority of applicants and students consider their choice of profession to be conscious, based on the personal interest and the opportunity to get a secondary education and a profession. In the minds of both applicants and students the prestige of their future profession and the of professional growth play an important role.

The study showed that value orientations of applicants and students have insignificant differences: for both applicants and students abstract values prevail over specific values and the values of professional self-actualization prevail over the values of personal life.

The opinions about the quality of education are different for student and applicants. Applicants believe that professionalism of teachers and teaching methods are the most important. Students believe that teaching methods and the quality of curricula have a decisive influence on the quality of education. An average applicant and an average student put practice-oriented classes and active forms of training on the first place, however, when describing the factor that influences the quality of the educational process students indicate the use of multimedia technologies while applicants mention the rating system of student evaluation. In organizing

independent work both students and applicants say it should be based on the access to the Internet. Applicants also refer to the consultations of teachers.

High levels of labor compensations are more important for students than for applicants for whom it is more important to realize their ability of managerial work. Choosing between high salary and interesting work during employment both applicants and students choose uninteresting work with high salaries. Applicants believe that secondary vocational education gives them exactly what they need to know for successful employment. According to students, secondary vocational education is not enough and for successful employment higher education is necessary.

Conclusion

The results of the research outlined some promising new areas for further study of this problem. Along with the comparative analysis of the sociological portrait of applicants and students of the secondary vocational education the comparative analysis of applicants, students and graduates is important. In our opinion, it would be interesting to conduct an analysis of the age and gender specifics. A logical continuation of the research would be the development of a map of perceptions, expectations and preferences of applicants, students and graduates. The results of the research will be presented in methodological recommendations to institutions of secondary vocational education for conducting career guidance work and organization of students' admission giving them the most perspective and promising professions.

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