

## RESEARCH ON THE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE TRAINING QUALITY IN THE FIELD OF "CULTURE AND ART" WITHIN DISTANCE LEARNING FORMAT

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**Abstract:** During a turbulent period of coronavirus pandemics, the system of education has undergone major changes. Most educational organizations faced the external challenges, which affected the density of learners, and the quality of educational services. Within the frames of this research, we interviewed the consumers of educational services represented by students of Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University and Glinka Nizhny Novgorod State Conservatoire to find out their opinion about the quality of training in "Culture and art" within distance learning format. The analysis of the obtained data exposed the most acute problems mainly related to the specifics of studied disciplines, their creative orientation, and helped to identify the possible solutions.

**Keywords:** learners, postgraduate students, quality of education, training program, creative fields of training.

### 1 Introduction

The modern realities arising out of the events in spring 2020 in the Russian Federation predetermined a need for all institutions of general, secondary and higher education, as well as all additional education facilities, to switch to the distance learning format (Sizova et al., 2020). This led to major complications not only organizational, but also educational, didactic and personal.

The system of higher education in the Russian Federation is governed by the regulatory documents (Sizova & Starostina, 2019). Federal law On Education in the Russian Federation dd 29.12.2012 N 273-FZ (the latest revision) (2012) the Federal State Standard of Higher Education in the fields of training 53.03.06 Music and Applied Art and 44.03.01 Pedagogical Education (2016), the Regulation on Organizing and Implementing Educational Activities under the Higher Education Programs - Bachelor's, Specialist's and Master's programs as approved by the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation dd April 5th, 2017 N 301 (2017) assure the high quality of education in the field of "Culture and art" (Medvedeva et al., 2019; Sizova & Starostina, 2019). However, a crucial role in maintaining the quality at a proper level belongs to ensuring compliance with applicable norms and regulations, ensuring the comprehensive training process locally at the level of each educational facility.

It is important to note that during the pandemic a decrease was observed in the number of applicants within the admission campaign in 2020. In particular, in the system of higher education in Nizhny Novgorod region, the analysis of admissions statistics at Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University (2021) showed that there was a significant drop in the number of applicants in the field of "Culture and art", while students' dissatisfaction with the learning process increased. More and more often the opinion is expressed that the quality of educational services does not correspond to the imperatives of our times.

In this connection, it seems appropriate to study the consumers' perception of the quality of educational services on the example of "Culture and art" field of training. Finding out the opinions of students on the quality of obtained education makes it possible to identify the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the training for

creative specialties. Analysis of the data obtained during the interviews will be helpful in determining the strategy for developing effective training programs in the field of "Culture and art", and in choosing the most adequate tools to overcome the existing contradictions.

### 2 Literature Review

A large number of scientific works in sociology, economics, pedagogy, and professional education are devoted to the problem of exploring the quality of educational services. A. I. Subetto and N. L. Selezneva (1997) directed their efforts to assessing the quality of training programs. The authors examine the process of managing the quality of education, which they see as the purposeful influence rendered by a control subject on the processes of ensuring, maintaining and sustaining the high quality of objects in their life cycle and in the chain of life cycles and collection of the feedback (control, evaluation, analysis) in accordance with the set goals and established norms. They developed a concept of the teaching process aimed at managing the quality of education. The authors have identified the following complementary components: didactically organized knowledge, educational and scientific literature, laboratory, computer and other material and technical resources, funds, finances, land, personnel. A. A. Avetisov (1996) describes a systemological approach to the quality management in education. The author comes to the conclusion that all changes in education are manageable, controllable and have a certain dynamic. The educational systems are presented as adaptive systems of education quality management with feedback and all the systemological attributes peculiar to functional systems.

In the field of sociology, there are also scientific works that explore the problems of quality of educational services. S. V. Koplík (2015) in his dissertation research raises a question of the essence and specific features of educational services provided by non-state universities in the modern Russia from the angle of sociological analysis. The author concludes that educational services provided by non-state higher education institutions satisfy the educational needs of certain groups of people to develop their intellect. N. V. Strebkova (2009) considers the phenomenon of education quality assessment through the lens of sociological aspect. The author argues that the educational system should be studied through the prism of society. The researcher points out that education is a socially predicated phenomenon and in this connection, the study into the quality of education should be based on the study of public opinion. From the author's point of view, the education system should cater to the needs of modern society.

I. K. Koshcheeva (2003) investigates qualitative characteristics of non-state higher education through the prism of sociological approach. Among the works on the stated problem, we may single out studies in the field of economics. A. A. Abramkina (2011) investigates the process of evaluating the competitiveness of educational services provided by universities. The author argues that defining the approach to assessing and identifying a set of parameters reflecting the competitive advantage of an institution over its competitors is a highly relevant research goal keeping up with the times. The existing developments on the problems related to assessing the competitiveness of educational services are not exhaustive, and ramp up the demand for active scientific search. M. I. Gomboeva and N. I. Spandershvili (2018) in their work study the process and distinct features of implementing additional professional training programs in the field "Culture and Art" in Transbaikal Territory and the Republic of Buryatia. The authors conclude that the main objectives of such programs are to upgrade competencies of employees in this sphere, regulate the labor market, implement professional standards, adapt graduates to the changing requirements of production, generate new knowledge and build new competencies that meet the demands of a system of the future.

The aforementioned driving forces become the powerhouse of innovation, optimization of scale and cost reduction.

Researcher in the field of cultural studies I. I. Irkhen (2012) discussed the problems of the system of education in the Russian Federation in the field of "Culture and art" through global and regional dimensions. The author expresses the opinion that education in culture and art is an institutionalized process of transmitting, assimilating and preserving the spiritual values of the society aimed at inculturation of a person, acquisition of a package of competences, development of the inner world, creative potential, intellectual and emotional wealth, fueling progressive development of the society. The researcher asserts that education in the field of "Culture and art" is an integral part of the cultural policy of the state.

### 3 Research Methodological Framework

The purpose of this research was to find out the generalized opinion of students about the quality of teaching in "Culture and art" within distance learning format.

In order to achieve the goal of this research, the following objectives were set:

- to systematize and analyze scientific literature, as well as regulatory documentation governing implementation of educational programs in the field of "Culture and art" in the conditions of distance learning;
- to make an interview guide for researching the perception by students of the quality of education in "Culture and art" field of training in the distance learning format;
- to interview students, summarize and present the obtained results.

This research employed theoretical and empirical methods, such as analysis and systematization of scientific literature on the research problem, analysis of regulatory documentation governing educational process, and the method of interview. The interview survey covered 63 1st-year Bachelor's program students from Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University and 37 respondents from Glinka Nizhny Novgorod State Conservatoire studying their 1st year under the Bachelor's and Specialist's programs. In total, there were 100 respondents. The survey of the students' opinions was conducted during the second semester of the academic year 2020/2021, from February to June.

### 4 Results and Discussion

Retention of students is one of the most important challenges facing the universities. During admission campaign, when enrolling students for creative specialties and fields of training, additional creative tests are conducted (auditions, essays), which allow the subject committee to get an idea about the creative abilities of future students (Sizova & Ulyanova, 2020). Such approach to enrollment significantly reduces the number of "accidental" applicants in these fields of training (Sizova & Okuneva, 2020). Throughout the training, it is highly important to retain the enrolled students, as it is one of the indicators of efficiency and competitiveness of the educational program. We believe that for this purpose it is important to monitor the opinion of students, to get their feedback.

The shift to distance learning in 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years has recalibrated the work of teachers with students, including in creative specialties and fields of training. According to our observations, the scope of direct interactions between a teacher and a student decreased dramatically, the motivational focus in creative activities has shifted, and the quality of teaching in the new conditions has become controversial. This gave rise to the need to conduct interviews with students, who are direct participants of the educational process and consumers of educational services. Students were interviewed with the help of the author's interview guide (Table 1), which contains general questions and clarifying questions. The clarifying questions were asked only when

needed, if the respondents had difficulties in answering the general questions.

Table 1 Interview Guide

General Questions	Clarifying Questions
Why did you choose this field of training?	Was it your parents' advice? Would you like to find self-fulfillment in creative activities? Is this the only thing you know how to do well? Were you allured with the level of potential earnings?
Did you study in the institutions of additional education on the programs of artistic and creative orientation?	Was it a pre-professional institution of artistic and creative orientation? Was it an institution that offers exclusively programs of additional education and developmental nature with artistic and creative orientation?
Are any of your acquaintances engaged in the field of "Culture and art"?	Do you keep in touch with them? Do they represent the role models of success for you?
How do you feel about the distance learning format for educational programs in "Culture and art" field of training?	Do you need a personal interaction with the teacher? Do you feel you need to perform concerts on stage? Do you find the mobility of a distance format comfortable?
If you were offered different training formats, would you choose the distance learning format for creative specialties?	If you answered Yes, explain why. If you answered No, explain why.
How do you feel about theoretical disciplines being taught with the use of distance technology?	For what disciplines, in your opinion, a shift can be made to a distance format? Will it save time? In your opinion, will it affect the quality of training in these disciplines?
How do you feel about the idea to teach creative and practical disciplines only with the use of distance technologies?	For what disciplines a shift can be made to a distance format? Will it save time? Will it affect the quality of training in these disciplines?
Would you advise your acquaintances to pursue studies in creative specialties and fields of training?	If you answered Yes, explain why. If you answered No, explain why.
Do you have plans to continue studies in the chosen specialty at the next level of education?	If you answered Yes, explain why. If you answered No, explain why.
Are you going to find a job in the field of your specialty?	If you answered Yes, explain why. If you answered No, explain why.

Source: the authors

The interview survey revealed the following:

To the question about the reasons for choosing their field of training, 80% of respondents "wanted to find self-fulfillment in creative activities", 15% of students gave preference to this field of training because they have no other competencies, 5% of respondents said that they were allured by the level of potential wages.

100% of respondents also responded that they received training in institutions of additional education in the field of artistic and creative orientation, of which 80% were trained under the programs of pre-professional education, and the remaining 20% were trained under the programs of additional general education.

90% of the respondents indicated that there are people among their acquaintances who are engaged in the field of "Culture and art", the remaining 10% do not have people of these professions in their circle. Out of 90% of respondents who have among their acquaintances the people working in the field of "Culture and art", 88% noted that they have regular communication with these people and pointed out that they see these people as the role models.

To the questions relating to the quality of the distance format of learning, 98% noted that "personal interaction with a teacher is important" and only 2% of respondents did not point to a need for personal interaction.

62% of trainees would prefer the classroom format of training, explaining it by the benefits of direct interaction with a teacher. At the same time 38% of respondents would study remotely, explaining it by convenience and economy of time as well as material costs.

93% of respondents noted that for theoretical disciplines a shift can be made to a distance learning format, which will ensure maximum optimization and saving of time, 7% of respondents would prefer the classroom learning, including in relation to the theoretical disciplines. At the same time, 99% of respondents indicated that creative disciplines should be delivered only in the classroom format. 98% note that the quality of training in creative disciplines is significantly deteriorated when the distance format is used, and only 2% have an opinion that the quality of education in this format remains the same.

The last three questions are intended to reveal the students' readiness to recommend creative specialties and their willingness to continue studies in this field. The results were as follows: 90% of respondents are ready to recommend their friends to pursue studies in these specialties, explaining it by high interest in the professions in culture and art, 10% would not recommend training in creative specialties and fields of training, commenting that they would not want to further find self-expression in the field of "Culture and art".

To the question "Do you have plans to continue studies in the chosen specialty at the next level of education?": 78% of students answered affirmatively, explaining it by the need for further creative development, 22% of respondents do not plan to continue studies in these fields of training, explaining that they do not see any career prospects in this field, and that's why they are looking into the possibility of acquiring other professions, more promising in this regard, for example, in the field of economics and management.

To the question: "Are you going to find a job in the field of your specialty?" 94% of respondents intend to seek employment in the field of their specialty, namely in the field of "Culture and art", explaining it by the opportunity to find self-fulfillment in this field and to discover new creative qualities, and 6% of respondents don't want to work in this field, alluding to the low demand for professions in culture and art, difficulties in finding a job, as well as low wages.

## 5 Conclusion

Drawing on the revealed opinions, we can conclude that the students' choice of creative specialties is conscious, and students who participated in the study have a certain level of training and amount of knowledge, as evidenced by the additional education or pre-professional education received by them.

This may be regarded as a career-related self-determination. When entering the university to study in the indicated specialty, an applicant sees own self, first of all, as a creative personality.

During training, special attention is paid to the study of special creative disciplines. This conclusion has been validated with the survey results, most of respondents attach special importance to the study of special creative disciplines, pointing to the impossibility of teaching such disciplines exclusively with the use of distance technologies, due to the difficulties, which in future may have a detrimental effect on the quality of training in creative disciplines.

In our opinion, when planning the educational process in "Culture and Art" field of training, it is necessary to combine both distance and classroom learning. In this connection, the most optimal format of learning, which allows accommodating the opinions of teachers and students, can be a blended learning, with theoretical disciplines delivered through distance learning and creative disciplines taught exclusively in the traditional classroom format.

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