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## Assessment of Students' Well-Being Condition in Higher Educational Institutions

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### Abstract

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The article presents the parameters of the welfare of students during their education in a higher school. It is dealt with features of higher education in Russia. Data are given about the surveys regarding students vision of their future well-being. It is formulated the problem of economic security of the University during the work with students. The article deals with conditions for securing economic well-being of the student.

We believe that the state of well-being of the student is one of the basic conditions for excellence. Upon reaching the state of personal well-being of the student more conscious approach to the development of the educational process, respectively increase the percentage of mastering the curriculum. Correspondingly, according to the results of such training the student is the most competitive in the labor market. We highlight several factors that determine the state of well-being of the person that may affect the student's study: financial, social, physiological, psychological, emotional.

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### 1. Introduction

High educational level of citizens is one of the main factors providing growth of the society welfare, its ability to quickly integrate the achievements of scientific and technical progress into the daily practice, to make its own contribution to the society development. Supporting and enhancing the student experience (academic, social, welfare and support) of government and university have critical



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to success in well-being today for both the student and the institution. Financial support for students (Bursaries and scholarships, loans for tuition fees , postgraduate support) is considered more depth .

Well-being is a multi-factor structure, which constitutes a complicated interrelation of cultural, social, psychological, physical, economical and spiritual factors. There are different kinds of well-being:

- Social well-being means personal satisfaction with your social status and current condition of the society, which you refer yourself to. It includes satisfaction with interpersonal communications, a status in the micro-social environment as well as a feeling of community etc.
- Spiritual well-being means a feeling of belonging to the spiritual culture of the society, development of understanding of the human essence and destiny; awareness and contemplation of the sense of your life; capability for free demonstration of your religious beliefs.
- Physical (bodily) well-being means good health, bodily comfort, feeling of health and satisfactory personal physical tonus.
- Financial well-being means satisfaction with the financial side of your existence (accommodation, meals, leisure...), wealth and stability of financial income.
- Psychological well-being (peace of mind) means synergy of psychic processes and functions, feeling of integrity, internal balance and personal harmony.

Problem statement:

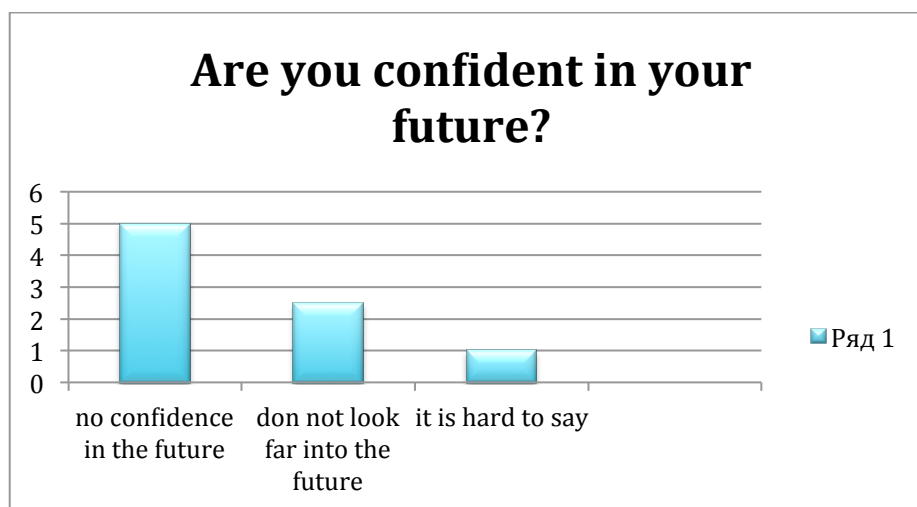
- To show discusses the structure of the higher educational institution's economic potential and the major directions of its economic security.
- To formulate the problem of economic security of the University during the work with students.
- To give the data about the surveys regarding students vision of their future well-being.
- To present the parameters of the welfare of students during their education in a higher school.

## **2. The results of a survey of students about the vision of their well-being in the future.**

The survey has been conducted among the students who simultaneously study at institute and work, mostly have established professional interests and values. This conclusion has been made on the basis of responses to one of the questions in the questionnaire:

“Are you going to work within your speciality after you graduate from the higher educational institution?” 120 people (52.90 %) have responded that their choice has been conscious, and they are going to work within their speciality in the future. 17.34 % are not likely to work within their speciality. 16.09 % entered the economy higher educational institution not on the basis of choice of the speciality, but they might have developed the interest in the course of studies, and they are not eager to change their preferences. 7.94 % do not associate the speciality they will obtain in the higher educational institution with subsequent professional choice. There are only 5.36 % of those who have difficulty deciding on their future for sure.

Almost 60 % of young specialists are very pessimistic about their future when emphasising prestige and significance of their education for economic development of the region (such education may be applied almost in any area”). About a third of the students have no confidence in their future at all, and approximately 20 % prefer to avoid thinking about what future holds for them. More than 7 % have difficulty saying something about their future. In the opinion of the respondents to the survey, financial well-being is the thing, which helps assert yourself in life and create a kind of a safety buffer in the current situation. More than 52.90 % are inclined to move to other regions to get a better-paid job whereas approximately 20 % are ready to change their place of residence within their region. Only 16.5 % do not suffer from “a distressful trait, eagerness to keep moving”. They are probably satisfied with everything as for now. Unfortunately, almost 50 % would like to leave their Motherland if they had such an opportunity.



**Fig. 1.** Are you confident in your future

Despite the fact that financial well-being and related life success define the preferred focus area for majority of the respondents, it cannot be said for sure that the youth definitely choose the capitalistic economic system. Most of them believe that the most preferred future workplace for them is a government-linked company (35.86 %) and government authorities (27.04 %). 25.25 % would prefer to work for private companies, and only 0.37 % intend to be self-employed.

When it comes to the most prestigious areas respondents would like to work in, finance leads by a significant margin (33.80 %). Industry comes next (16.39 %), followed by the services (14.92 %), government and municipal administration (14.33 %), agriculture (9.33 %), science and education (7.35 %). Construction, commerce and psychology have also been mentioned.



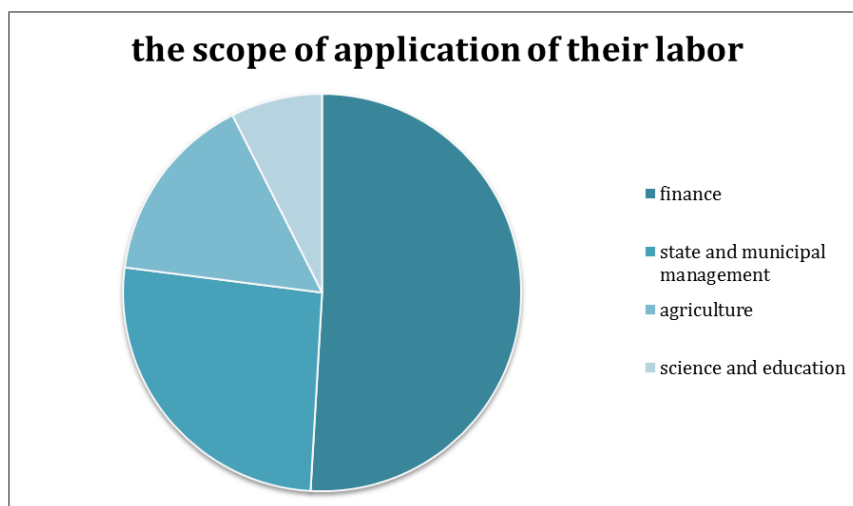
**Fig. 2.** Wishful workplace.

The youth perceive corruption as one of the serious obstacles on the way to their own business. It has infected the society and dented the citizens' confidence in the state to such an extent that only 18.74 % believe it may be overcome. When symbols of financial well-being and entrepreneurial spirit are aggrandised in the society as the ones claimed to be common for the entire population, and the applicable rules and regulations are restricted, or access to legal ways to achieve these values is fully blocked for the major part of the population, corruption cannot be rooted out (it is an opinion of 29.83 %). 40.19 % suppose that this threat can be dealt with only partially whereas 26.82 % take part in corrupt practices and deem it acceptable to give a bribe as they cannot achieve the necessary result in a legal manner.

The second obstacle is lack of financial possibilities to start your own business. That is why when asked "What would you do with one million dollars?" 40.26 % of the respondents said they would start their own business.

Although they have prestigious education, regularly advance their qualifications and work honestly, the students doubt they will succeed in life on their own. They are sure a lot depends on your ties with the right people and authorities. It is the third obstacle on the way to the confident future.

The respondents also have a faint hope for government support both at present and in the future. The youth believe you have to prepare yourself for retirement in advance. In order to live your old years decently, you have to save money (47.47 %) or join a pension co-financing programme (41.51 %). In addition, a quarter of the respondents believe they will have to work even after they retire.



**Fig. 3.** The scope of application of their labor.

To sum up this very topical research into the interests and values of the students, it can be said that its results demonstrate the image of the Russian middle class in the future. The current young generation is preoccupied with the internal issues of survival despite the fact that today they are the centre of political attention and object of the state social policy. The current students' generation has a great educational, professional and personal potential to take active part in subsequent reformation of the society. However, even brief analysis of the data gained from the project demonstrates that the youth cannot find themselves in the Russian "modernisation" environment.

### **3. Features of higher education in Russia**

Market relations and competition among higher educational institutions have resulted in the need to pay more attention to the economic security of the higher educational institution, its economic protection against external and internal threats. It is affected by such factors as economic instability of the society, unclear conditions of operation of higher educational institutions with no budget financing, absence of the mechanism for insurance of management decision risks in the educational area, imperfection of laws (for instance, incompliance of the tax regulations with budget accounting), welfare mentality of staff of higher educational institutions, multi-directionality of interests and inefficient operation of structural subdivisions which traditionally exist in higher educational institutions.

Nowadays a modern educational institution is not just an educational establishment. It is a multi-functional structure designated not only to train highly-qualified and innovation-oriented specialists demanded by the employer and the society in general, but also to support their health as a main element of the human resource. The student age is the period of life when personality is actively formed. The data of the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Russian Federation demonstrate that only 30 % of students are relatively healthy whereas 70 % have medical issues. Rapid growth of such addictive behaviours as alcohol abuse, game and drug addiction etc. among students and youth in

general not only destroy health of future specialists, but also put national security of Russia under threat.

It entails the need for development of a set of social services aimed at maintenance of students and employees' health for the entire period of education and work, as a rule, a set of social services of the higher educational institution includes a sports center, a health and recreation resort, sufficient number of high-quality meal stations and medical aid centers. The developed set of social services also provides for establishment of a kind of business centers with the services related to the educational process. Availability of a sufficient number of computer classes with Internet access, print and copy centres, stationary shops and many others. Creation of the basis for steady economic and spiritual development of Russia, provision for high life standards and national security are some of the main strategic purposes of education, which are closely related to the development issues of the Russian society.

Changes in the higher professional education system have been caused by modernisation of the Russian education focused on joining the world educational environment. The educational paradigm is changing; new approaches, contents and relations are appearing in the higher school, which is playing a more and more important role in the social transformation and re-assessing its approaches to understanding of the supreme human value. Significant attention is paid not only to educational issues, but also to upbringing of future specialists. Contents of the higher professional education including the fundamentals of sciences, skills, system of knowledge, skills shall be implemented in the process of personalised pedagogical interaction designated for development of socially important students' traits for their professional establishment by (Demidov, 2007).

Dichotomous thinking, intolerance to other opinions, emotional distress, especially during examination periods, thrive for radical actions are typical both of students and youth in general. Serious attention is paid to physical and psychological well-being of students, which is considered to be one of risk factors of behaviour of young students deviating from social standards. A way of thinking and lifestyle of students are largely defined by existence of their own subculture by means of which standards, values and behavioural patterns, which are often different from regular social standards, are developed.

The scope of activity of higher educational institutions is also broadened owing to establishment of business structures. Development of entrepreneurship among students and staff of the higher educational institution within the framework of formation of the innovation economy is deemed to be one of top-priority directions of innovation activities of the higher educational institution. This direction is getting more and more topical owing to the Federal Law "On Amending Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation on Establishment of Economic Entities for Practical Application (Introduction) of Deliverables of Intellectual Activities by Budget Scientific and Educational Institutions" adopted on 2 August 2009. The federal law grants budget educational and scientific institutions the right to establish economic entities for practical application (introduction) of deliverables of intellectual activities the exclusive rights to which are held by the above-mentioned institutions, on their own, i.e. without consent of executive authorities exercising development of the state policy and statutory regulation by (Barkhatov et al., 2009).

This very aspect, multi-functionality of the higher educational institutions, focus on development of scientific and technical activities, establishment of business structures, development of a set of social services, forms and develops its economic potential on the one hand, whereas extension of the scope of activities obliges the administration of the higher educational institution to provide for its economic well-being, including staff and students, on the other hand. The economic potential formed in the higher educational institution depends on the aggregate and development level of the following factors:

- human resource effecting educational and scientific and research activities;
- infrastructure, including and first and foremost production facilities;
- social infrastructure as one of the conditions to maintain working capacity and stabilisation of the staff;
- organisational and economic mechanism for administration of the higher educational institution and financial flows.

The foregoing enables making a conclusion that provision for the student's economic well-being in the higher educational institution in the current context is a very complicated task as it depends on solution of numerous and various problems where activities of the staff and students take a leading position.

#### **4. Opportunities and conditions conducive to the wellbeing of students.**

In the economic literature, the term "student's economic well-being" has not been clearly defined yet. The student's economic well-being seems to be his or her ability to provide for his or her economic independence of the one hand, and formation of his or her economic potential, competitiveness after graduation from the higher educational institution of the other hand.

Therefore, the process for management of the economic security of the higher educational institution shall include a set of measures providing for formation of such potential.

Management of the student's economic well-being is a package of methods and techniques designated for establishment of favourable conditions for development and activation of the creative potential as well as provision of his or her economic independence for the period of studies in the higher educational institution.

On the basis of the idea that the student's economic well-being is provided for by a package of methods and techniques forming his or her economic independence for the period of studies in the higher educational institution, the administration of the latter shall plan and implement a set of measures preventing both external and internal threats and factors by means of timely and efficient re-organisation of the structure and operation of the higher educational institution. Herewith the goals set must be achieved by means of various measures and tools in the short, medium and long term by (Perminov, 2007)

The student's economic well-being system is multi-aspect and includes a set of various components.

First of all, it is efficient use of the potential of the higher educational institution which is a basic element, the basis which determines the capability for his or her studies in the higher educational institution for quite a long period of time. It includes payment of scholarships, different kinds of

financial aid, possibilities of free of charge or privileged use of the infrastructure developed in the higher educational institution (reading rooms and libraries, computer classes and technical laboratories, sanitary institutions and sports clubs etc.).

Very important elements of the student's economic well-being are creation and maintenance of stability, social climate and social protection system in the higher educational institution. A social component of the economic well-being is designated for unity of all employees (including students) to solve common issues. In fact, it develops the internal organisational environment in the higher educational institutions and promotes reduction in the number of destructive conflicts in the staff. As a result, students take active part in implementation of the economic well-being programme and grant necessary support and understanding to the administration of the higher educational institution.

An important element of the student's economic well-being system in the higher educational institution is an efficient anti-corruption system.

Unfortunately, students face corruption quite often: when they enter the higher educational institution, skip lessons, take exams and tests, protect their course works and theses and get a degree.

One of the main causes making a basis for corrupt practices in the educational area is growth of a number of social risks against the background of formation of new social and economic relations and appearance of negative tendencies. Parents already have life experience with their own hardships and problems, so they try to protect their child against them and not only participate in formation of the corrupted environment, but also push their children into the same hole and encourage development of such traits of character as parasitic attitude, lack of initiative, laziness, desire to circumvent rules and regulations established in the higher educational institution. Therefore, the corruption scale in higher educational institutions has taken on dangerous proportions lately.

Another cause is lack of impetus to maintain the impeccable reputation of the higher educational institution, low salaries in the educational area, human resource aging, and lack of resources for establishment of the decent image of the educational establishment.

Each of the interacting parties of the educational process has their own purposes: some students are eager to gain knowledge whereas others want to get a degree; some teachers treat their work as a reason to live while for others it is just a source of income. Participants of the process are always able to achieve consent to satisfy their needs. Students may escalate an issue to a dean of the faculty, a vice-rector for academic affairs or a rector. They may even seek legal redress. However, if we take into account the fact that corruption is a reflection of our society to a certain extent, fighting this phenomenon may seem to be useless. Students must combat this as representatives of the young generation. In order to change something in this well-established system the focused strategy must be used, creative purposes must be supported, and destructive ones must be eliminated.

In the set of measures, forming the student's economic security system, the key role is played by employment opportunities during studies as well as post-graduate re-training and advanced training. Both elements form the basis of the student's financial well-being and competitiveness on the employment market and establish conditions to combat external threats and eliminate danger of loss of his or her economic independence.

High efficiency of solution of this problem is confirmed by the Centre for Assistance in Employment and Career Development (CAECD), which was established with order of the rector No. 79/od dated 06.08.2014 by re-organisation of the department for undergraduate training arrangement and employment. The Centre operates to establish and develop the efficient system for corporate interaction of structural subdivisions of the Tomsk Polytechnic University with enterprises and organisations in order to increase competitiveness of graduates of the Tomsk Polytechnic University on the global employment market (Resnick, 2011)

## 5. Conclusions

Therefore, it can be concluded that the student's economic well-being may be provided for only by the set of protective measures designated for his or her economic independence during studies in the higher educational institution and, what is more, following graduation. In the new social, economic and institutional context identification of risk factors, hazards and threats, development of counteraction techniques, tools and methods is an important task for provision for the economic security of the higher educational institution in its interaction with students.

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