

# The professional elite of the future: how to educate?

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**Abstract.** The relevance of the research lies in the need to analyze the situation in the higher education sector in terms of training highly qualified personnel. The purpose of the article is to analyze the conditions for educating the modern professional elite. When conducting the analysis, the authors relied on the data of sociological studies, as well as statistics of both Russian and international companies. When determining the key categories, the authors referred to the normative documents and opinions of leading scientists in the education sector. Forming the professional elite has been considered in detail on the example of the implementation of various forms of education, including distance learning. The methodological basis of the research was made up of theoretical methods, such as the synthesis method, used in the course of studying the problematic area of the higher education system, as well as a combination of descriptive and comparative and historical methods. Based on the conducted analysis, the authors have concluded that it is necessary to maintain an integral system of universal competencies, as well as to develop the experience of independent professional activity. The research justifies the need to continue the development of Russian higher education exactly in this direction.

**Keywords:** professional elite, professional competencies, universities, higher education system, expansion of education, international cooperation.

## 1 Introduction

In contemporary society, starting from the scientific and industrial complex and ending with the spiritual realm, there is a need for the education of the professional elite. The issue is not limited to the training of the labor aristocracy, i.e. high-class tool men, and all-round lathe operators. It is necessary to educate scientists, politicians, doctors, teachers, lawyers, economists, and representatives of the creative bohemia.

The French word elite means the best, the chosen [1]. The elite are those who set themselves super-tasks. This implies not to earn a billion and enjoy the power, but to change this world for the better.

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The professional elite involves the specialists who set society the highest standards and the samples of professionalism. In this regard, the key task of higher education should be the training of such an elite.

The issue of forming an elite was relevant for any society. But the British were the first in Europe to take care of the issue of centrally managed training of the elite. The English system of education was essentially different from the “continental” system, the German, in the first place. The British considered that the main quality necessary for the elite was a strict code of values, purposefulness, and character.

The training of the military and political elite of the British Empire was carried out in educational institutions, such as Eton, Oxford, and Cambridge, not accidentally called the forge of gentlemen. These were public schools with full board, i.e., future gentlemen who were separated from their families lived there all the time (except for summer holidays) [2].

In Russia, the political elite was formed by the beginning of the 19th century. The nobility made up 90% of the officer corps and 75% of the total number of class officials [3].

## **2 Methods**

The research was based on the philosophical and cultural methodological approaches adopted by foreign and domestic scientists. They were distinguished by focusing directly on the communication process, as well as by dependence on socio-cultural experience, knowledge, ideas, concepts, norms, and values that had historically developed in each culture, in particular, in the culture of the language of its native speakers.

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of cross-cultural interaction, specific approaches could be required to investigate this phenomenon within each individual scientific branch. At the moment, three methodological approaches have been formed: explanatory, critical, and functional.

## **3 Results**

The modern world, engulfed by global processes, is characterized by the continuing democratization of education, the blurring of fundamental human values, and their seeming relativity. An information society is forming as a new reality – the reality of information networks, new forms of interaction, where human consciousness appears in the center of influence rather than the material world. Society needs to learn how to live, work, and educate young people in a new reality.

In the new conditions, the attitude to the education of the elite is also changing. In the 21st century, the closeness, i.e. the elitism of educational institutions is manifested not only in following the traditions of isolation of students from their parents’ home but to a greater extent in creating certain educational conditions.

## **4 Discussion**

Today, elite schools and universities are beacons of education and sites for methodological experiments. Graduates of such scientific schools become a reserve, replenishing the staff of leading companies, research institutes, and universities, which means that their corporate image also increases.

Spectacular examples can be the export of education or the search for talented young people, who are being sought with extreme activity all over the world, while the field of activity does not matter [4]. There is a real hunt for future politicians and businessmen,

scientists, and representatives of creative professions which results in an outflow of qualified young professionals from the countries of the second and third world [5].

For example, according to the data reflected in the report of the US Department of Homeland Security, as of March 2018, 1.2 million students with non-immigration status from 229 countries were enrolled in various universities of the country in the framework of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP). Almost half of them (925,349) came from Asia. The number of students from Europe, including Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus amounted to 85,094, the number of students from North and South America was 63,380 and 61,895, respectively, and from Africa – 54,000 [6].

Returning to the issue of exporting educational services, it should be noted that with the emergence of the Internet, distance learning has become popular, opening up new opportunities for self-education [7]. Due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a need to switch to distance learning. In the face of a new epidemiological threat, there was no time to discuss whether new forms of education were possible or impossible, as well as what were their pros and cons.

In 2001, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) became a pioneer in the field of creating mass open courses, which made most of its educational materials publicly available, giving rise to the term Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) which appeared in 2008. Today, one of the major MOOC providers is the Coursera Platform [8]. This platform offers educational courses from the world's best universities, including Stanford University, Princeton University, and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland [9].

The policy of working with personnel, i.e. with potential applicants, brings its benefits. The absolute leader in the ranking of countries in terms of the number of Nobel laureates is the USA, with some of the US laureates hailed from other countries, mainly Germany, France, and the United Kingdom.

As of 2014, the USA has 385 Nobel laureates, the UK – 133, Germany – 108, France – 69, Sweden – 32, Russia/the USSR – 31 [10].

The world is witnessing the transformation of contemporary universities into corporations that apply such management practices, whose effectiveness is reduced to optimizing the learning process, improving the management system, and reducing costs to make a financial profit rather than to improve the quality of education [11, 12].

At the same time, there is an intense global relationship, where cultural patterns, scientific achievements, works of art, new forms of social or political life are transmitted and assimilated within a fairly short time throughout the entire civilizational space [13]. This results in the rejection of native culture, its norms, and traditions, the loss of civilizational identity, which determines the change of the value paradigm.

Quite interesting are the results of various sociological studies confirming this idea.

Thus, the majority of respondents are not afraid of the threat of losing their national identity. Some of them are not afraid to stop feeling themselves Russians. For them, the absence of borders and restrictions is more valuable [14]. This raises the issue of the factor uniting young people. Most often, young people talk about their ability to resist the older generation, which has lost its trust and authority. Students are convinced that adults are not interested in their opinions. They only teach and impose their standpoints. This pushes them communicating through the Internet, where there is an opportunity to speak out and find mutual understanding without edifying speeches.

## **5 Conclusion**

Basic values and attitudes in the minds and souls of young Russians are substituted currently by new beacons, which have acquired an international character [15, 16], and guide today's youth.

In the course of education, students should form an integral system of universal competencies. In turn, professional knowledge and skills can be formed when the emotional and volitional sphere of the personality structure is involved in cognitive activity, when there is a subjective motivation to perceive knowledge, when the information received has not only a conceptual meaning but also significance.

This can be achieved only if an interdisciplinary approach and the principle of humanitarization of education are implemented that will allow students to develop a vision of the relationship between basic research, technology, industrial and social needs, and the ability to think outside the box and evaluate the effectiveness of innovations, as well as, the most important, to implement them in practice.

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