On the issue of analyzing the university strategy in the framework of digital distance learning

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Abstract. The qualitative and quantitative changes taking place at the present stage of the Russian educational services market development have led to a shift in the emphasis on the competition between higher education institutions and their educational services. Universities are improving the educational services quality by promoting novel or more competitive products in an increasingly tough competition for applicants. The authors suggest that to improve the promotion effect of the university educational services, it is necessary to carry out monitoring of the existing program efficiency, whose first stage is to analyze the existing strategy within the framework of digital distance learning, as the most popular learning method in contemporary conditions, which is gaining increasing popularity. A sociological survey (questionnaire) was chosen as a research method. The respondents were 250 students and teachers of the Russian State Social University (RSSU). The study has revealed that the vast majority, namely, about 87% of respondents, refused to fully switch to digital distance learning. However, 80% of undergraduate students and 75% of graduate master's students of the extramural education department (75%) supported the use of digital distance learning in the educational process. At the same time, the low quality of training programs used in digital distance learning and the lack of individual adaptation of educational materials to the requirements and capabilities of the student require introducing interactivity into the materials and creating competent content of training programs, which is one of the indicators that affect the choice of an educational institution by potential consumers of educational services.

Keywords: educational services, performance monitoring, digital distance education (DDE), distance learning.

1 Introduction

In the context of globalization and digitalization of the international educational space, as well as a market economy that tends to change rapidly, one of the important factors in improving the competitiveness of the university is its potential to promote educational services in the target markets of the country and abroad. The digital transformation of

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universities consists in the transition towards using the latest technologies in the educational process [1–4].

This article is aimed at reflecting the results of large-scale monitoring of the efficiency of the educational services promoting the program of higher education institution, whose first stage is analyzing the existing strategy of the university within the framework of digital distance learning. To find out the main reasons for the negative/positive attitude towards digital distance education (DDE), a questionnaire was developed for surveying teachers, as well as a questionnaire for surveying students, who were involved in the survey [5–8].

2 Methods

The survey of teachers and students using questionnaires was conducted in mid-May 2020. Bachelor students of the 1st – 4th-years, and master's students of the 1st – and 2nd-years of the full-time and extramural departments of the university were asked to fill out an anonymous questionnaire.

A total of 250 students studying at the Law and Economics faculties were interviewed.

Each of the questionnaires consisted of 30 questions formulated based on the conceptual thesaurus of DDE. The questionnaires developed for students and teachers are presented below.

Questionnaire for teachers	Questionnaire for students
1. Did you use DDE before working at the RSSU?	1. Do you like to learn using DDE?
2. In your opinion, is DDE suitable for full-time education?	2. Are you ready to completely switch to distance education?
3. Can all disciplines be taught using DDE?	3. Are you fully equipped with the technical means for the DDE?
4. In your opinion, can DDE be used in all areas of training?	4. Are you more likely to attend classes held within the framework of the DDE?
5. Can all forms of methodological work be employed by teachers using DDE?	5. Can all disciplines be taught using the DDE?
6. Can all subjects be taught using the DDE in the framework of inclusive education?	6. Is it possible to teach using DDE in all training areas?
7. Can all forms of methodological work be used by teachers within the framework of inclusive education?	7. Can all forms of methodological work be used by teachers in the framework of inclusive education?
8. Do you conduct chat classes?	8. Can all disciplines be taught using DDE in the framework of inclusive education?
9. Do you conduct web classes?	9. Are you satisfied with the quality of the DDE platform at the RSSU?
10. Do you conduct teleconferences?	10. Would the inclusion of online technology in the process of conducting classes improve the quality of the DDE at the RSSU?
11. Do you conduct telepresence?	11. Do you work in the electronic library system (ELS)?
12. Has student attendance improved when using the DDE?	12. Do you search for additional literature on the studied subject in the ELS of the RSSU?
13. Do students turn off the video signal?	13. Do you use paper media (books, brochures, etc.)?
14. Do students turn off the audio signal?	14. Do you often use the electronic environment to search for literature on the discipline you are studying?
15. Do you maintain audio and video communication with *all* students throughout the *entire* class session?	15. Have you participated in the chat classes?
16. Do you administer tests/exams via video communication?	16. Have you participated in web classes?
17. Do you ask the student to present a passport to identify their identity?	17. Have you participated in teleconferences?
18. If so, is the passport presented in an open form?	18. Have you participated in telepresence?
19. Do you use online technologies to conduct classes?	

20. Do you use offline technologies to conduct classes?	19. Do you prefer full-time classes to online classes?
21. Are students motivated to learn when using the DDE?	20. In your opinion, are there more advantages in the DDE technology than in traditional training?
22. Has there been an increase in motivation to learn caused by using the DDE?	21. Would you like to take tests, exams, and defend the final coursework in the framework of the DDE?
23. Did the students speak out against the use of the DDE?	22. Do you think that full-time training is better than distance learning in terms of quality?
24. Do students associate the application of the DDE with a temporary necessity?	23. Would you like to stay in full-time training?
25. Are you ready to work permanently within the framework of the DDE?	24. Do you have more free time due to DDE?
26. Are you satisfied with everything in the DDE?	25. Do you spend more time preparing your homework?
27. Are you satisfied with the quality of the DDE platform at the university?	26. Do you view the video materials of the past lesson?
28. Would the inclusion of online technology for conducting classes improve the work of the DDE at RSSU?	27. Do you always take part in classes using the DDE?
29. Do you create videos of lessons?	28. Do you combine university studies with work?
30. Do you save videos in cloud storage?	29. Are you a full-time employee?
	30. Are you satisfied with the quality of the DDE?

3 Results

The results of the responses to the questions asked have shown in general a positive attitude of the trainees towards DDE; however, in the comments, they often indicated their unwillingness to study permanently based on DDE. Several typical responses are given below:

- This is an interesting experience, but I like live communication more.
- I like distance learning, but at that, the level of socialization decreases.
- Electronic options are practical but they have a detrimental effect on the retina.
- I prefer classes directly in the university building; I like to contact the teacher.
- In general, yes, but in my opinion, attending classes in person is much better.
- Sometimes some interruptions interfere with full-fledged work.
- All spare time is spent on preparing homework and studying disciplines.
- No, online communication will never replace real-life communication.
- Categorically against replacing full-time learning with online education!

The first question, "Do you like to learn using DDE?" was answered in the negative by the overwhelming majority of respondents (95%). About 47% of the respondents (undergraduate students) were ready to fully switch to the DDE. These were mainly full-time and part-time students. But at the same time, undergraduate master's students receiving extramural education were in favor of full-time education (87%), since it was better than distance education (84%) in terms of quality. The same indicators were demonstrated by the survey of full-time students – 91% and 78%, respectively. Almost 100% of students of the Faculty of Economics were technically better equipped for digital distance learning, while at the Faculty of Law, according to the answers to the questionnaire, only 67% of students had necessary technical equipment.

4 Discussion

At the RSSU, students and teachers have fully mastered the digital learning system; however, one cannot state that it has been successfully implemented in the educational process in full. First of all, this is due to failures in the very system, which each time requires a certain configuration that sometimes leads to data loss. Secondly, the need to duplicate reports on the work done at all stages of the teaching process does not reduce but increases the teacher's working time by an order of magnitude, exhausting him with repeated entries of the same information in different resources and taking away his time for scientific work and social life. In practice, the working time of each teacher increased since implementing video conferencing as a type of class session. Preparing for video conferences and conducting them in a high-quality manner requires more time; therefore, the vast majority of teachers consider it premature to switch to the DDE since this teaching mode has much more disadvantages than the traditional form of education.

Students were divided almost equally: concerning learning using DDE at the university, there was a small preponderance (8-10%) towards a positive response, as well as in answering the question of whether there were more advantages in the DDE system than in the traditional learning system. This indicates a gradual reorientation of the students and getting used to the new learning system. However, to the question "Would you like to pass tests, exams and defend the final course work in the framework of the DDE?" students at the Faculty of Economics gave twice as many positive responses as negative ones, while the results were the opposite at the Faculty of Law.

Thus, the intervention of digital technologies into the educational system, which began with the implementation of the first computers, rebuilds the very platform of the educational system, making changes in the social component of both the teacher and student [9–15].

5 Conclusion

The authors of the article believe that the presented research on monitoring the efficiency of the university's educational services promotion program should be continued, and, as it seems to the authors, the following issues should be considered further:

1. Conducting monitoring of the efficiency of the university's educational services promotion program and conducting a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the performance indicators of this system will allow identifying and correcting the shortcomings of the university's educational services promotion program in Russia and abroad.

2. The conducted research may result in the development of new effective areas of the university activities in the framework of the program on promoting educational services and the corresponding roadmap for attracting applicants.

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