

SCIENTIFIC REVIEWS. OPINIONS

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Monograph “The Young People of Russia at the Turn of the 21st Century: Education, Employment, Social Well-Being”. D.L. Konstantinovskii, E.D. Voznesenskaya, G.A. Cherednichenko. Moscow: TsSPiM, 2014. 548 p.

Since the 1950th the youth has been attracting attention not only of politicians, but also scientists. However, the key issues: “Young people, what features do they have? How do they live? What do they strive for?” have not lost their relevance nowadays. The researchers study aspects related to expectations and preferences of the youth, socialization, motivation and professional self-determination. The monitoring has been conducted since the 1960s. The considerable expertise and analytical information are accumulated and the extensive databases are formed. This involves numerous publications devoted to the socio-economic situation of young people, such as the studies of D.L. Konstantinovskii (“Youth of the 1990s: Self-Determination in the New Reality”, 2000), G.A. Cherednichenko (“When the Time to Choose Comes. Aspirations of the Youth and First Steps after Graduation, 2001), Yu.A. Zubok (“Phenomenon of Risk in Sociology: Study of the Youth, 2007), Z.A. Danilova (“Deviant Behavior among the Youth”, 2008), I.M. Il’inskii (“Youth and Youth Policy”, 2001).

We would like to particularly highlight the collective monograph edited by

D.L. Konstantinovskii, which presents the results of the long-term research projects (since the 1960s) determining the impact of demographic, educational, economic subsystems on values and behavior of young people. It is the unique research, as it gives the opportunity to trace the transformation of individual characteristics of young people under the influence of external environmental changes. Many myths are already disproved, for example about equal opportunities and accessibility of educational services for different categories of the population; the problems of youth unemployment are raised.

The research of the team of authors under the supervision of D.L. Konstantinovskii is summarized in the monograph “The Young People of Russia at the Turn of the 21st Century: Education, Employment, Social Well-Being”. The systematic approach, it is based on, allows us to study the position of different groups of the youth (rural and urban, workers and students) in terms of educational, professional and career trajectories and issues related to social health.

This study substantiates the transition to the new model of educational behavior

and employment. According to the authors, it is characterized by the expansion of the educational sector due to various forms of lifelong education, earlier transition “study – work”, change of the stages of learning and work throughout life and prevalence of different forms of non-standard employment. We believe, the implementation of these conditions will help overcome the discrepancy between the education sector and the labor market and will contribute to the more effective use of human capital.

The monograph raises the issue about the impact of education on people’s satisfaction with their life situation. The financial situation is considered as an indicator of success and effectiveness of the educational trajectory. The authors’ approach to calculation of the weighted average index of the material situation of various youth groups is innovative. It helps identify the growth of welfare due to the increase in the educational level.

The considerable attention is also paid to the strategies of formation of human capital of the youth, identification of the links between the level of accumulated human capital and the population’s subjective estimates of their social and professional situation. There is an interesting phenomenon associated with the fact that more educated young people are more interested in additional professional education.

We cannot but agree with the authors’ version of the reasons for this situation,

caused by the conditions on the labor market. In particular, it is believed that young people with higher education often have jobs with high requirements for education and training. In this regard, additional training can ensure complete compliance with job requirements. The socio-professional status is one of the factors affecting the results of training. According to the study, the higher it is, the more often young people seek additional training and this training has a different effect on the change in the position of employees.

This study has an undoubted advantage over similar ones: the extensive database provides the opportunity to interpret the results in dynamics and consider socio-economic characteristics of the youth (qualification, job position, income, etc.). It seems reasonable to use the interviews results in order to obtain qualitative assessments of the youth’s potential and the reasons for changing educational and career trajectories.

The interviews results underline the approach to the typology of the youth’s professional trajectories and the identification of 2 main directions, such as the change in the professional trajectory due to the increased educational level and the maintenance of the same trajectory. The employment factors, as well as the spheres of youth employment in each case are described. The authors find out that the second trajectory (the education level is maintained (e.g., vocational secondary) includes 2 directions – horizontal (the

professional position is consistent with the education level) and downward (people choose jobs that require lower levels of education).

Relying on the data obtained during the interviews, the researchers make reasonable, meaningful conclusions that the success of the professional trajectory is largely determined by the demand on the labor market and the employee's education level. It is shown that in most cases higher education involves a higher level of qualification and a more stable position of a worker on the labor market. In addition, profession obtained at the earlier stages of learning influences the choice of professional trajectory and the desire to increase the qualification level, and the effectiveness of learning increases when the second and subsequent education corresponds to the first.

We support the authors' attitude to the evaluation of the role of professional self-determination and value orientations of the youth in the formation of educational and professional trajectories. We would like to highlight the results of the motive typology based on several indicators: depending on the importance degree and the impact nature (external and internal). The study also presents the structure of factors influencing educational trajectories of the youth by the indicators, such as stratification of professional education, belonging to families different in culture and education, academic performance, motivation and dependence in decision making on external influence.

There is an interesting section of the monograph devoted to the relationship of educational and professional trajectories. The authors raise the problem of the difficulty of their separation due to the experience accumulated in the form of knowledge, skills and professional practices throughout the life cycle. The monograph introduces the authors' interpretation of these concepts. It presents the approach to the study of educational and professional trajectories, taking into account their specificity, the definition of stability (instability) and the evaluation of job satisfaction as a result of the implementation of one or another trajectory.

At the same time, the monograph contains some statements, which are ambiguous and require further development. So, the conclusions about the high competitiveness of secondary school leavers and the sufficiency of higher education for professional development are rather debatable. In practice, every fifth in medium and large Russian companies considers the shortage of skilled personnel as a barrier to innovative transformations. And, according to the study "Global Innovation Barometer 2012", more than 40% of the managers in Russian enterprises and more than 50% in the BRICS countries believe that innovative development requires personnel with a higher level of education.

The research of D.L. Konstantinovskii has convinced us that young people, in general, can adapt to changes easily, but their position is largely determined by the

socio-economic situation in the country and in the region. Besides, there is significant differentiation within this population group according to social, educational, cultural and material conditions. It is reasonable to develop targeted public policy measures aimed at effective reproduction of youth potential.

The monograph contains interesting factual material, reasonable results of long-term research conducted by the team of authors. It is valuable among scientists

and readers interested in the issues of educational and youth employment policy.

Let us note that at the regional level similar studies are conducted, in particular, in the Vologda Oblast in 2015 the sociological survey devoted to the socio-cultural values will be carried out among the youth. It seems interesting to compare the results presented in the monograph and those that will be obtained, identify similar trends, problems and mechanisms of their solution.

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