

# *The Survey as a Tool to Assess the Educational Organization's Reputation*

—based on the study conducted at the RUDN University in December 2016

Yulia N. Zemskaya

Institute of World Economy and Business  
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN  
University)  
Moscow, Russian Federation  
zemskaya\_yun@pfur.ru

Anna V. Glagoleva

Institute of World Economy and Business  
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN  
University)  
Moscow, Russian Federation  
glagoleva\_av@pfur.ru

Evgeniya A. Kuznetsova

Institute of World Economy and Business  
Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)  
Moscow, Russian Federation  
kuznetsova\_ea@pfur.ru

**Abstract**—In December 2016 the authors conducted a survey of the bachelor and master's degree students of the Institute of World Economy and Business of People Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University). The aim of the study was to determine the evaluation of the reputation of the RUDN University by the target audience, the strengths and weaknesses of the education from the point of view of the students. The study made recommendations for optimizing the learning process, improvement of the educational program. At the result of the study there was started the development of corporate communication strategy to improve the organization's reputation in the specific target audience - an audience of consumers of educational products.

**Keywords**—survey, reputation, public opinion, university, education

## I. INTRODUCTION

On the one hand the globalization of the education leads to unification of the quality standards of the educational services and with other hand increases the level of competition between educational institutions. Creation of the international ratings such as The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), QS World University Rankings, THE World University Rankings and others reflects these processes. One of the key positions of the Universities ranking is a reputation. This is an assessment that people, who are directly or indirectly associated with the university, give during a survey. And although the final position in the ranking gives some idea of the reputation of the university in the references groups, nevertheless it doesn't explain the reasons for such assessments. It doesn't allow identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the educational institution in specific categories of research or activities. In this regard in December 2016 we conducted a survey of students of the Institute of World Economy and

Business of the RUDN University in order to assess its reputation by these target audiences and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the education in terms of students. This will allow the optimizing of the educational process, the improvement of the educational program, the development of a strategy for corporate communications organization and as a result a positive impact on the reputation for the target audience - the consumers of the educational product.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### A. The selection of respondents

In December 2016, 170 students of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year of the bachelor's degree and the 2nd year of the master's degree studying the Advertising and Public Relations participated in the survey. The absence of 1-st year bachelor's and master's degree among respondents is due to the fact that they don't yet have full information during the 3 months after the beginning of studies at the university and they didn't form a clear opinion on the educational program.

### B. The structure of the questionnaire

They were asked to answer anonymously the questionnaire, which included several meaningful modules, including the motivations in choosing the place of study and educational program, the satisfaction with the knowledge obtained in the learning process, the evaluation of various aspects of the educational process. In addition, the questionnaire contained traditional blocks: the introductory part explained the goals and objectives of the study, and also included instructions for completing the questionnaire; the common part included information on the respondents' demographic characteristics and we included the part with the expression of gratitude for

the attention. The questions included in the survey were different types: open, closed and semi-closed.

### III. RESULTS

After data processing received at the result of the questionnaires of the bachelor's degree and the master's degree students of Advertising and public relations of the Institute of World Economy and Business of The RUDN University were fixed the results that allow us to assess the motivation for the choosing of the university and the educational program, the level of satisfaction with the education and the view of the future profession, etc.

The formalization of the received answers is given the following picture:

#### A. The question "How did you make the choice of your future profession?"

This closed question involved choosing one of 3 possible answers.

- The option "I purposefully chose advertising and Public Relations" selected 109 respondents. This is 64.1% of the total respondents.
- The option "It happened by accident" has chosen 54 respondents. This is 31.8% of the total number of the respondents.
- The option "Parents decided instead of me" was chosen by 5 respondents. This is 2.9% of the total number of respondents.
- 2 students were unable to choose the answer. This is 1.2% of the total number of the respondents.

#### B. The question "Are you satisfied with the quality of the obtained education?"

This closed question involved the choice of one of the four possible answers.

- The option "Yes, absolutely" has chosen 10 respondents. This is 5.9% of the total number of the respondents.
- The option "Probably, yes" has chosen by 110 respondents. This is 64.7% of the total number of the respondents.
- The option "Probably, no" selected 30 respondents. It is 17.6% of the total number of the respondents.
- The option "No, not satisfied" selected 17 respondents. It is 10% of the total number of the respondents.
- 3 students were unable to choose an answer. This is 1.8% of the total number of the respondents.

Our research group thinks that at that time it is very important to trace the correlation between the motivation for choosing an educational program and the assessment of its quality.

These data are summarized in Table 1. The number of answers of the respondents with the same motivation is placed vertically and the data on the number of respondents' answers with the same assessment of the quality of the education is horizontally:

TABLE I. THE CORRELATION OF THE SATISFACTION OF THE EDUCATION AND THE REASONS FOR CHOOSING A PROFESSION

<i>The answers to the question "Are you satisfied with the quality of the obtained education?"</i>	<i>The number of answers segmented by the response to the question "How did you make the choice of your future profession?"</i>		
	<i>"I purposefully chose advertising and Public Relations"</i>	<i>"It happened by accident"</i>	<i>"Parents decided instead of me"</i>
"Yes, absolutely"	6	3	1
"Probably, yes"	74	32	3
"Probably, no"	19	11	0
"No, not satisfied"	10	6	1

In this way the percentage of each group with the same motivation in choosing the future profession and the assessing the quality of the education is distributed as follows:

- The percentage of the respondents who purposefully chose education in Advertising and public relations from the total number of the respondents included: 5.5% are completely satisfied with its education, 67.9% are rather satisfied, 17.4% are rather dissatisfied and 10% was not satisfied.
- 5.6% of the students, who decided accidentally to study Advertising and public relations, are absolutely satisfied with the received education, among them 59,3% are probably satisfied, 20.4% are rather dissatisfied and 11% was not satisfied. Some respondents found it difficult to answer.
- Among the respondents, there the parents did a choice of future profession, are 20% completely satisfied with the education, 60% rather satisfied, 0% rather dissatisfied and 20% not satisfied.

#### C. The question relating to the previous "Why do you think so?"

This question was open, so as a result a various answers were received, which were grouped according to the content of the arguments. Those respondents, who were absolutely satisfied the quality of the education, gave as the most popular argument the professionalism of the teaching staff (for example, "a lot of cool teachers", "good and professional teachers", "university invites competent teachers" and others). In addition, the students noted a variety of subjects, high-quality specialization (for example "the expanded a broad outlook and gave the choice in which direction to move forward") and balanced combination of theory and practice.

The respondents, who are rather satisfied, gave as the most popular positive argument of studying the quality of the education and the professionalism of the teaching staff (for

example "qualified teachers", "excellent teachers with a lot of knowledge"), the completeness and usefulness of knowledge (e.g. "teachers provide clear information that is useful in practice", "during the education I received a lot of useful information", "high level of education, like that the teacher's staff includes working specialists"), also the interestingness and variety of many disciplines (for example, "enough interesting, a lot of information from the professional sphere, advanced learning conditions"). However, the same group of respondents formulated those needs that were not fully met. First of all, we are talking about the insufficient practical orientation of the educational program in terms of students (for example, the "theory is taught well, but not enough practice", "I got a good knowledge, but few practical skills", "on the 4th year of education I can confidently say that I am a beginner PR specialist, but have not enough practice"). Besides they marked the ambiguity and variability of the educational programs, the high speed of her obsolescence related to the transience of the changes occurring in the sphere of communications, the crossing the content of some courses and lack of awareness of students on organizational issues. They expressed also the private requests (for example, "there is no such course as video editing", "I would like more activities related to the layout and websites").

Those respondents, who are rather or totally not satisfied with the quality of the education, mentioned as the key disadvantage of the educational program the lack practical orientation (e.g., "not enough practice", "insufficient practical workshops, which would give real knowledge. We are sitting in the "paddling pool" and don't know the real cases", "lack practical skills", "a lot of subjects are taught only in theory. I consider the practice at the end of the semester is not enough"). In addition, they noted the organizational shortcomings and claims to the teaching staff (for example, "some teachers due to their age give irrelevant information"). Besides the number of respondents, who are more dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied with the quality of the education, said of the mistake when made a choice of future profession (for example, "this is not what I want to do" or "don't like my specialty").

At the same time the research group examined separately negative arguments of those respondents, who have purposefully chosen the direction of education Advertising and public relations, as well as the positive arguments of those respondents who became the students of the Institute of World Economy and Business of RUDN University adventitiously or by decision of their parents. In the first case the dominant arguments were a lack of practice in the educational program, as well as a personal disappointment (for example, "didn't live up to expectations"). In the second case, the key positive arguments in proving their assessment were the professionalism of the teaching staff, as well as the amount and quality of the knowledge obtained.

*D. The question "What is the most fairly characteristic of the work in the field of advertising and PR, in your opinion?"*

This semi-closed question suggested the choice of 3 options and the possibility to propose own answer. In this case, the proposed options were positive and negative and they characterized the educational activity and its product.

The result presented in the next ranking of the answers that describe the future profession by the point of view of the students of the Institute of World Economy and Business of RUDN University:

- The option "Interesting projects" selected 122 respondents.
- The option "Creativity" selected 110 respondents.
- The option "Possibility of self-realization" has chosen 80 respondents.
- The option "Unregulated long working hours" has chosen 51 respondents.
- The option "Analytics" selected 48 respondents.
- The option "Creating large-scale events" has chosen 40 respondents.
- The option "Professional development" selected 39 respondents.
- The option "Constant stress" has chosen 22 respondents.
- The option "Effective time management" selected 21 respondents.
- The option "High income" selected 16 respondents.
- The option "Routine" selected 12 respondents.
- The option "High competition" selected one respondent.

2 people found it difficult to choose the answer.

At the same time the research group considered to study the relationship between the negative characteristics of future professional activity and the motivation for choosing an educational program and assessing its quality.

In the first case the results were distributed as follows:

- 26,6% of the respondents, who purposefully chose education in Advertising and public relations, believe that the future profession involves long working hours. 6,4% of those group of respondents convince that the activities in the field of advertising and PR are accompanied by constant stress. 2.8% see it as routine.
- 37% of the respondents, who are accidentally among the students studying in the direction Advertising and public relations, believe that the future profession involves non-normalized working hours. 30% believe that the activities in the field of advertising and PR is accompanied by constant stress. 14,8% see it as routine, and 1.9% note high competition in the industry.
- 40% of the respondents, for which the parents made the choice of future profession, believe that the future profession involves long working hours. 20% are sure that the activities in the field of advertising and PR is accompanied by constant stress. 20% see it as a routine.

The results in the second case were not less interesting:

- 20% of the respondents, who are completely satisfied with the quality of the education, believe that the profession chosen by them is accompanied by constant stress.
- 30,9% of the respondents, who are rather satisfied with the quality of education, believe that the future of the profession involves unregulated long working hours. 9.1% of this group of respondents believe that the activities in the field of advertising and PR is accompanied by constant stress. 4,5% see his future profession as routine.
- 36,6% of the respondents, who are rather not satisfied with the quality of the education, think that future profession involves long working hours. 20% believe that the activities in the field of advertising and PR is accompanied by constant stress. 2.8% see this profession as routine.
- 35,3% of the respondents, who are completely satisfied with the quality of the education, believe that the future profession involves long working hours. 23,5% are confident that the activities in the field of advertising and PR is accompanied by constant stress. 29,4% see this profession as routine and 5.9% note high industry competition.

#### IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Summing up the research, we can draw a series of conclusions that are interrelated and constitute a single complex.

##### A. Assessment of the quality of education

This research demonstrated how useful and meaningful a survey can be as a tool for assessing the quality of education.

1) *The results of the survey give a qualitative overview of opinions and assessments on the current situation.* They allowed to identify and to describe:

a) *The reasons for choosing a profession by the bachelor's and master's degree students of the Institute of World Economy and Business of RUDN University.* The majority of the respondents made this choice their-self and consciously (64.1% of the number of the total respondents).

b) *The degree of satisfaction with the quality of the education:* the majority of respondents satisfied with the quality of the education obtained in the Institute of World Economy and Business of RUDN University (70.6% of respondents).

c) *The advantages and disadvantages of the educational process and the educational program:* the key disadvantage of the educational program in the Institute of World Economy and Business of RUDN University is the lack of its practical component, and the main advantages are the professionalism of the teachers and the quality of the knowledge obtained, according to the students opinion.

2) *The results of the survey have allowed to identify a group of external factors that are not related to the quality of education, but effect on it.* These includes:

a) *The motivation for choosing a profession, the direction of education and the educational program:* the low level of awareness in the decision on this issue raises the level of dissatisfaction with the quality of education.

b) *The notion about the future profession:* Then they attribute the more negative features to their future professional activity, they feel more disappointed in it, and the level of dissatisfaction with the quality of the obtained education is higher.

##### B. Evaluation of the educational organization's reputation

The estimation of reputation in its modern sense [1], [2] is directly related to understanding the need for its management [3]. In this regard it is important to include the following:

1) *Current rating:* the general conditional indicator satisfaction of the quality of education received by the bachelor's and master's degree students of the Institute of World Economy and Business of RUDN University is 70.6% that indicates that public opinion has developed in this target audience. The current reputation of the Institute of World Economy and Business of RUDN University can be assessed as positive and stable.

2) *Risk management:* however, despite the external reasons it is obvious that the indicator of dissatisfaction in 29.4% requires active work on the one hand with the wishes of the students identified in the study and on the other a set of measures to instill their corporate culture values [4].

3) *Improvement of corporate strategy:* according to the results of the study, the recommendations for the development of corporate communications strategy of the Institute of World Economy and Business of RUDN University have been performed with the aim to have a positive impact on its reputation in the specific target audience - an audience of consumers of educational products.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The research group is grateful to all the students who took part in the study, as well as to the leadership of the Institute of World Economy and Business of RUDN University for supporting the scientific initiative and interest in its results.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] C. Fombrun, Reputation: Realizing Value from the Corporate Image, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA, 1996, p. 72.
- [2] J. Larkin, Strategic Reputation Risk Management, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2003, p. 43.
- [3] A. Griffin, New Strategies for Reputation Management: Gaining Control of Issues, Crises and Corporate Social Responsibility. Kogan Page, London and Philadelphia, 2008, 176 p.
- [4] R.J. Alsop, The 18 Immutable Laws of Corporate Reputation, Creating, Protecting, and Repairing Your Most Valuable Asset. Wall Street Journal Books, 2004, 320 p.