



Selective Support for the Development of Regional Vocational Education Services: The Russian Experience

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ABSTRACT

The paper relevance is reasoned by the optimization of management of regional vocational educational services. Russian regions differ from each other very much by social and economic indicators, as well as the climatic and geographical conditions. The Russian government initiated a number of reforms aimed at ensuring of equal access to vocational educational services and infrastructure across the country. One of the important components of such reforms is a targeted selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services. The paper aims to find out the specifics of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services. The leading method is the method of action research, providing new information on the management of vocational education in the region and proposing methods for development of regional vocational educational services. The paper presents a selective mechanism to support the development of regional vocational educational services. Principles (consensus and initiative) are defined and methods (legal-regulatory, financial-economic, socio-political, information-communication, private-entrepreneurial, civil-initiative) are identified of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services. It is found that the selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services is a component of the socio-economic development of the region and the imperative to improve the quality of life of the population. Article Submissions can be useful for research and teaching staff of vocational education, specialists of education authorities and regional authorities.

Keywords: Management of Vocational Education, Selective Support, Vocational Educational Services, Socio-Economic Development

JEL Classifications: H11, I21, I28

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Relevance of the Study

It is repeatedly stated in the analytical report of the World Bank on social and economic development of Russia that the provision of regional development is a challenge for the largest country of the world by area (World Bank in Russia, 2015; UIS Russia, 2015). Russian regions differ greatly from each other by socio-economic indicators, as well as climatic and geographical conditions. The Russian Federation government initiated a number of reforms aimed at ensuring of equal access to social services and infrastructure along the country (Larina, 2000). One of the

important components of such reforms is to provide targeted selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services (Irismetov et al., 2013; Lunev and Pugacheva, 2013; Shaidullina et al., 2015a; 2015b). The purpose of the paper is to find out features of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services.

1.2. The Essence of Vocational Educational Services

It is established that, on the one hand, the educational activities are oriented towards human development, which cannot be subject of sale, and its goals, ways of achieving them and the results are not to be interpreted in terms of the market economy. But on the

other hand, commercialization of educational activities related to the reproduction of the labor force, led to the positioning of vocational education services in the labor markets in the form of goods, regardless of the funding source and ownership forms of the manufacturer (Mishchenko et al., 2014; Masalimova et al., 2014; Pugacheva et al., 2014). In consequence of this, vocational educational services can be considered as the results of labor, which have the shape of goods and are the subject of sale.

1.3. The Essence of Selective Support

It is found that in scientific literature there are three main approaches to the essence of selective support: (1) Which is identified with the regional economic policy of the state and also aimed at creating of common prerequisites for regional development. Measures of this policy do not have a selective purpose and should uniformly affect all regions of the country, forming the economic, organizational and legal environment of their independent activities (Larina, 2000); (2) which is considered as an integral part of regional economic policy of the state (Leonov and Sidorenko, 2011; Ivanov et al., 2014; Aleksandrov et al., 2015); (3) which is represented as the integration of the two separate types (system-wide and component) the essence of which is the conscious activities of public administration bodies, which consists of the selective influence on certain regions, with the aim to achieve efficient and/or uniform distribution of economic activity along the country (Mikheeva, 2000). In our opinion, selective support is an independent type of state policy, reasoned by the regions' development model ("efficiency"/"equality"), selected by the state for this socio-economic stage, and characterized by transparency and binding social, targeted, purposeful focus (Pugacheva et al., 2014a). Therefore, the selective support facilities are particular sectors of the economy, including the sphere of vocational education services, inter-industry complexes located in especially needed regions and their populations.

1.4. Principles of Selective Support

It is found that the selective support is based on the principles of nodal and social justice, that is, that environment development of the economy, which doesn't only provide a reduction of interregional disparities in social and economic status of the region and the quality of life of the population, creation of equal opportunities for citizens and promotion of the development of human potential, but ensures global competitiveness of the regions.

1.5. Types of Selective Support

It is found that in practice, there are two types of selective support:

1. Polarized, aimed at the planning of a network of growth poles of different levels (international, Federal, County) that have competitive advantages in the long term, and are of potential interest for investors.
2. Leveling, which can be (a) stimulating, manifested in the promotion of inward investment in needy regions and providing financial assistance to the latter; (b) restraining whose objects are the metropolis to maintain their economic growth in the seizure and redistribution of their resources (Table 1). Leveling, which can be (a) incentive, which is manifested in promoting of investment in needed regions and the granting of financial assistance them; (b) constraining,

the objects of which are the cities to maintain their economic growth with the allocation and reallocation of resources (Table 1).

1.6. The Main Stages of the Implementation of Selective Support in the World

It is found that in the world practice selective support as a separate type of regional policy of the state had several stages different by tasks, objects, methods, and types (Table 2).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Methods of the Study

During research the following methods were used: Analysis of normative documents, the action research method, expert evaluation method, observation and questionnaire.

2.2. Experimental Base of the Study

Experimental work was conducted on the basis of vocational educational institutions of the Republic of Tatarstan in Russia. In the experimental work participated 138 heads of institutions of vocational education, 210 specialists of education management bodies.

2.3. Stages of the Study

The study was conducted in three stages:

- The first stage was devoted to the analysis of the current state of the problem in the literature and practice of educational management; a research program was developed.
- The second stage was connected with a selective mechanism's development to support the development of regional vocational educational services; definition of the principles and methods' identification for selective support of the development of regional vocational educational services.
- The third stage was related to the systematization, interpretation and synthesis of the research results; refining of theoretical conclusions; performing of processing and registration of the results of the study.

3. RESULTS

The main results of this study are: (1) Selective support mechanism for the development of regional vocational educational services; (2) the principles of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services; (3) methods of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services.

3.1. The Mechanism of Selective Support for the Development of Regional Vocational Educational Services

It is found that the mechanism of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services is aimed not only at ensuring of worthy living conditions of citizens through the creation of a balanced system of special institutions and the formation of their sustainable competitive advantages, but also on the growth of human capital.

Table 1: Comparative characteristics of the types of selective support

Features	Kinds		
	Polarized selective support	Selective levelling support	
		Stimulating	Retaining
Principles	Modality	Social justice	
Goal	Increasing global competitiveness of the country through effective use of economic potential of regions	The decrease of interregional differentiation in the level and quality of the social environment and the income of the population, the convergence of living standards between Metropolitan regions and the province, large cities and small towns, urban and rural population	Balanced socio-economic development of regions
Objects	The largest metropolitan area with the most dynamic economic growth, ensuring the flow of population and investment	Backward and depressed regions, the areas of new development, peripheral areas	Congested city agglomeration-megacities
Tools	Prognosis; monitoring of the territory’s development and its strategic planning; clustering; the creation of special economic zones; education and development of tourist and recreational zones; development of huge transport and logistics and manufacture junctions within the formation of the support national transport network possessing the necessary potential of throughput and ensuring the integrity of the relationship between the centers of economic growth, with its gradual integration into the developing world transport systems ;creation and development of science cities, innovation and manufacture centers, industrial parks, educational and scientific centers; government order	various types of inter-budget transfers taking into account territorial differentiation; comprehensive programs of socio-economic development; coordination of infrastructure investments of the state and business investment strategies taking into account the priorities of environment development and resource constraints; correction of revenue sharing between regions	Expansion of the area of advanced economic growth outside the metropolitan area with the maximum use of the advantages of its market, with the implementation of potential of historically built regional specialization of regions and innovative diversification of their economies; the formation of the environment of harmonious development by creating conditions for the successful development of human capital and improvement of living standards, the formation of a comfortable living environment and efficient economy; the introduction of “certificates of industrial development;” removal of state enterprises outside the metropolitan area; stricter legal standards of land use, environmental protection
	Social transfers; targeted financial support; program funding; state procurements; promotion of economic development through the creation of new centers of economic growth in the regions on the basis of competitive advantage; development of infrastructure security of areas and creation of conditions to improve the competitiveness of the regional economy, including increased availability of transport areas; improving of the mechanisms for regional authorities’ stimulating in order effectively to fulfill their mandates and create the most favorable conditions for the comprehensive socio-economic development of regions		

It is found that the formation of mechanism of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services is mediated by the integration of two counter processes:

1. “Top-down” in which governments authorities form the institutional parameters of the development of vocational educational services.
2. “Bottom-up,” in which specific factors produce personal-behavioral parameters of the development of vocational educational services taking into account the local context and capacity.

The integration of these processes leads to the relationship of direct and hard impact on objects of regional vocational

educational services by indirect methods, aimed at strengthening of non-governmental responsibility for their operation and development (Figure 1). It is found that the institutional order provides stability of constantly reproducing socio-economic relations in regional vocational education services, proving its worth by the official legitimation; institutional environment is the formation and development of vocational educational services consumers’ value systems; institutional structure is the creation of a set of institutions and institutional relationships, ensuring the effectiveness of the traditional and the formation and development of innovative entities of regional vocational educational services (Pugacheva, 2009).

Table 2: The main stages of selective support in the world

Stages	Tasks	Objects	Methods	Kinds
Stage 1 (1920s-mid of 1950s)	The economic recovery in the most affected areas after the economic crisis of 1929-1932	Peripheral and least developed regions; structural crisis areas with high unemployment; undeveloped territory	The development of large regional programs of backward regions	The formation of selective support
Stage 2 (mid of 1950s-early 1960s)	Alignment of the level of economic and social development of the regions	The selection of the types of problem regions: Underdeveloped, depressed; congested urban areas; areas of new development	The development of large-scale programs of the territories' organization on the basis of poles' growth, centers and development axes	Levelling selective support
Phase 3 (1960-early 1970s)	Stimulating for efficient environment organization	Selection of priority areas of assistance, the removal of restrictions in urban areas	Encourage for maximum use of the inner potential of problem regions (the creation of entrepreneurial zones, industrial and science parks, development of small and medium business, etc.) Development of local programs of land management The empowerment of local authorities	Levelling incentive Support
4 stage (1970-1980s.)	The alignment of the level of economic and social development of the regions through incentives or deterrence	A differentiated approach to the regions The selection of priority areas of assistance	Diversification of the tools of regional policy Stimulating of the development of inner areas of major urban agglomerations The increase of investment attractiveness of problem areas	Leveling stimulating or retaining support
5 stage (1990-present time)	Achieving effective and/or uniform distribution of economic activity across the country	The differentiated approach to the regions. Selection of priority areas of assistance. Growth poles	Financial and economic support for entrepreneurs that are located in problematic areas, within the framework of target programs Financial support of problematic regions from funds Public procurement	Polarized support

3.2. Principles of Selective Support for the Development of Regional Vocational Educational Services

It is found that the mechanism developed of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services can be based on the principles of:

- Consensus, ensuring compatibility of institutional and personal-behavioral parameters of the development of regional vocational educational services, building of relationships of public-private partnership.
- Initiative, determining the development and implementation of socially-significant and private- entrepreneurial and civil initiatives to address the problems of regional vocational educational services, dialogue of civil and state institutions.

It is determined that the implementation of these principles in practice allows, on the one hand, spread the centers of power and responsibilities among institutional structure horizontally and vertically, and on the other - to develop public and private initiatives in the management of the organization of the regional vocational educational services.

As it is known, the nature of the development of regional vocational educational services is determined by the composition of its main actors and the type of relationship between them,

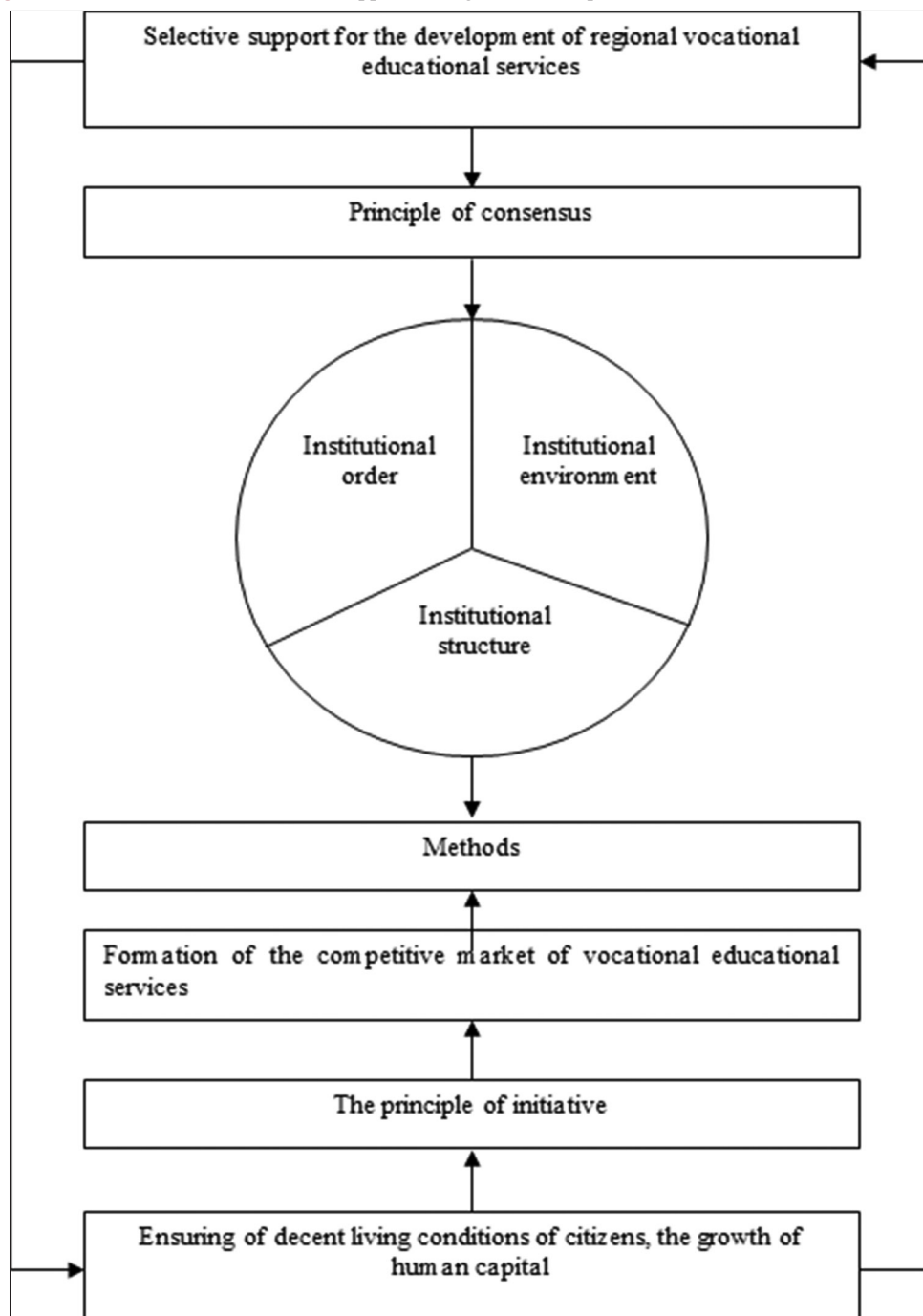
which in turn predetermines the goals and basic directions of development. Thus, the selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services within the institutional structure of the economy of the region involves the identification of possible and permissible actions of all its entities to increase the increasing returns of its facilities.

3.3. Methods of Selective Support for the Development of Regional Vocational Educational Services

It is found that the methods of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services take into account the development strategies of the region and allow create a balanced system to ensure its specialized institutions. Methods of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services can be divided into two types - the administrative and participative, each of which is represented by several types, including direct and indirect methods groups.

3.3.1. Administrative kind of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services

It is established that the administrative kind of methods of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services brings together legal, financial-economic, socio-political, information and communication types, including direct and indirect methods.

Figure 1: The mechanism of selective support for regional development of vocational educational services

3.3.1.1. Normative-legal methods

This type of methods include direct and indirect methods groups:

- Direct methods: Regulatory ensuring of concretely targeted support, grant activities, public-private partnerships, public examination of the quality of services, the civil initiative, volunteer activities, inter-regional differentiation of providing services' cost.
- Indirect methods: Effective decentralization of powers of public entities; management of audit over budget spending, setting of the measures for breaking of the budgetary legislation: Normative-legal support of accreditation and licensing.

3.3.1.2. Financial and economic methods

This type of methods include the direct and indirect methods' groups:

- Direct methods: State targeted programs, orders and contracts; special organizational-economic actions; specifically-targeted support; grants; inter-regional differentiation of providing services' cost; investing of the construction in the sphere of vocational educational services.
- Indirect methods: Providing of incentives to increase the revenue base of objects in regional spheres of vocational educational services, as well as regional and local budgets; improving of the system of expenditure obligations' delamination between the levels of the budget system in the

sphere of vocational educational services; grants and subsidies on equalization of budgetary security of objects of regional vocational educational services; enhancing of the quality of financial governance and financial sustainability of objects in regional vocational educational services; the introduction of program-targeted tool to improve the efficiency of budget expenditure with a subsequent transition to the program structure of regional budget expenses in the sphere of vocational education services; development of small and medium-sized businesses.

3.3.1.3. Social-political methods

This type of methods include the direct and indirect methods' groups:

- Direct methods: PR-campaigns; formation of social traditions, regional brands; foresight projects;
- Indirect methods: Institutional guarantee of program-target organization of regional vocational educational services' activities; protection of property rights and the freedom of economic activities of regional vocational educational services; adoption of plans of combating against corruption; promotion of features of regional vocational educational services.

3.3.1.4. Information and communication methods

This type of methods include the direct and indirect methods' groups:

- Direct methods: The creation of universal information and payment portals; promoting in the exchange of information and knowledge about the regional vocational educational services at the local, national, regional and international level; creation of variable information sites for public and transparent interaction of entities of regional vocational educational services with authorities and organizations on the development of vocational education services.
- Indirect methods: Compliance with the requirements of the Federal legislation regulating relations in the sphere of vocational education services; informational openness and transparency of objects of regional vocational educational services.

3.3.2. Participatory kinds of methods: Private-business, civil-initiative kinds

It is established that participatory kind of methods brings together private-entrepreneurial, civil-initiative types, including direct and indirect methods' groups.

3.3.2.1. Private-entrepreneurial methods

This type of methods include direct and indirect methods groups:

- Direct methods: The participation of private sector in the implementation of projects for the development of regional vocational educational services; concession agreements; fundraising company; social investment; Venture philanthropy; social and charitable programs of business structures.
- Indirect methods: Organization of quasi integration structures; creation of the objects' image of the regional vocational educational services.

3.3.2.2. Civil initiative methods

This type of methods include the direct and indirect methods' groups:

- Direct methods: Observation of social organizations for protecting of the rights and legitimate interests of citizens in the regional spheres of vocational educational services; public examination of quality of provided services; volunteering.
- Indirect methods: Legislative proposals; calls; the establishment of civil associations and unions.

3.4. Implementation Stages of the Mechanism of Selective Support for the Development of Regional Vocational Educational Services

The mechanism's implementation of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services assumed the following experimental stages: Ascertaining, forming and control.

3.4.1. Ascertaining stage

The purpose of ascertaining stage was to identify the attitude of scientific and pedagogical workers of vocational education's system, specialists of education management bodies and regional authorities to selective support of the development of regional vocational educational services. At this stage, from the number of the heads of professional educational institutions and specialists of education management bodies target groups were formed for the implementation of the mechanism of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services. The target groups' participants developed special programs that include activities and timelines.

3.4.2. Forming stage

Within the forming stage selective support's methods were implemented for the development of regional vocational educational services: A package of regulatory-legal acts, ensuring the development of innovation activities of vocational educational institutions for the training of technical specialists was developed; a complex of measures on development of public-private partnership in the sphere of vocational educational services was developed and implemented; the procedure for decentralization of public legal entities to manage institutions of vocational education was regulated; state programs to support the national research universities were developed; financial and economic mechanisms for the equalization of budgetary security of objects of regional vocational educational services were developed and implemented; programs to promote brands of the leading universities in the region were developed and implemented.

3.4.3. Control stage

In the control stage the analysis of the effectiveness of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services was made. It was found that the selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services led to the formation and development of the vocational educational services' market, based on diversity of ownership forms and funding sources. The essence of the market of vocational educational services is in economic relations between different

actors regarding the sale and purchase of these services, reflecting the competitiveness of service providers and the level of training of service recipients.

4. DISCUSSIONS

Important theoretical and practical significance for the study has the works by Leksin and Shvetsov (2004) on state regulation of territorial development and selective state regional policy (Shvetsov, 2009; Pugacheva and Baranov (2013); Tatarinova et al. (2012) on industry clustering, Pugacheva on the modernization of the vocational educational system for regional labor market (Pugacheva, 2009). However, the analysis of scientific works shows that the problem of management education in the region is debatable. The literature does not address the issue of the mechanism of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services.

5. CONCLUSION

It is found that the characteristics of the selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services are as follows. Firstly, the integration of direct and hard impact on objects of regional vocational educational services by indirect methods, aimed at strengthening of non-governmental responsibility for its operation and development. Secondly, the selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services is a component of the regional socio-economic development and the imperative to improve the quality of life of the population.

Article Submissions can be useful for research and teaching staff of vocational education system, specialists of education authorities and regional authorities for the strategies' development in the development of regional vocational education.

Taking into account the obtained results of this study a number of research challenges and promising directions that require further consideration can be allocated: The mechanism of state regulation for the development of regional vocational educational services; scientific and methodological support of management of professional education in the region; development of algorithms for state-public management of professional education in the region; organization of network interaction of vocational education's institutions with the aim to increase their competitiveness in regional and international markets of educational services, to improve the quality of professional training of highly qualified specialists.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is found that the efficiency of selective support for the development of regional vocational educational services will increase under condition of its transparency, mandatory targeted and focused direction.

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