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Cluster Approach in Professional Education in the Field of Traditional Artistic Crafts

Abstract: Traditions of artistic crafts in Russia have a centuries-old past and are inextricably linked with the history and culture of our country. Today, in the world of digitalization, the issue of continuity and transfer of accumulated artistic experience from generation to generation remains relevant. This article examines the current state of the sphere of traditional artistic crafts, assessing whether application of an educational-industrial cluster approach in this area and the formulation of the definition of “cluster approach” in professional education in the field of traditional artistic crafts. The author concludes that traditional culture can become the basis for the formation of the national identity of the younger generation in modern society.

Keywords: traditional artistic crafts, education, educational cluster, cluster approach.

Introduction

Traditions of artistic crafts in Russia have a centuries-old past and are inextricably linked with the history and culture of our country. Today, in the world of digitalization, the issue of continuity and transfer of accumulated artistic experience from generation to generation remains relevant. One of the most effective tools, which, as the study of world practice shows, is not given enough attention, can be a cluster approach in professional education in the field of traditional artistic crafts. The cluster structures that allow to organise effective interaction of key elements within a particular environment, has been introduced in various fields including agriculture, tourism, sports, medicine, and education. There is a need to apply this approach in the process of professional training in the field of traditional artistic crafts taking into account all the existing features.

Results

In modern dictionaries, the interpretation of the concept of ‘cluster’ is as follows: “a group of some objects that are distinguished in a large aggregate by one or another common feature for this group.” (*Krysin, 2008*) The necessity to form clusters is emphasized, particularly, in the disposal of the Government of the Russian Federation from 17.11.2008 № 1662-R *About the Concept of Long-term Socio and Economic Development of the Russian Federation for the Period till 2020*, which is explained including the importance of full use of the resource potential and the presence of the community of interests within the cluster of actors in attaining their goals as factors that

can positively affect results of activity of the interacting parties and the productive development of the specific environment in general.

Turning to the history of clusters, you first need to get acquainted with the research activities of the English economist of the second half of the 19th century, the founder of Neoclassicism *Alfred Marshall*, since the study of the basic foundations of clustering was carried out, in particular, in the economic sphere. The scientist identified three reasons why adjacent groups of firms in a particular industry are more productive: the market for skilled labor, specialization of suppliers, and the exchange of ideas, or the overflow of knowledge (*Marshall, 1993*). This list was subsequently supplemented with a number of additional provisions that stimulate the emergence of a cluster: entrepreneurship, dependence on the previous stage of development, culture, and local demand (*Cortright, 2006*).

A significant contribution to the formation of modern views on the cluster approach was made by the American economist *Michael Eugene Porter*, professor of business administration at the *Harvard Business School*. According to his position, a cluster is a group of close, geographically interconnected companies and organizations cooperating with them that work together in a certain type of business activity, complement each other and are characterised by common areas of activity (*Porter, 1998*). After analysing the development of a number of industrial countries, the economist found that clustering is an integral part of the industrialisation process, which helps to strengthen and combine the advantages of interacting entities. In addition to economic clusters, other types of clusters including educational ones have become widespread, which is logical, given that the education system inherently assumes the presence of interactions between its structural elements and the actors acting within it.

There is also the concept of “educational cluster”, which is currently interpreted in various ways. The definition of this type of cluster was proposed by such researchers as *N.I. Vakebrusheva*, *M.V. Zburavleva*, *N.A. Korchagina*, *R. Timan* and others. By analyzing scientific papers and combining the proposed approaches, we can formulate the following: the essence of an educational cluster is to create a system of interconnected educational structures (universities, specialized schools, research organizations and centers operating on a specific territory), which allows to combine the activities of its constituent entities and their resources in order to create high-quality educational services.

In general, “educational cluster” is a broad concept. In this article, it is advisable to consider the concept of “innovation and education cluster”, which implies the association of teachers, entrepreneurs funding organisations, researchers, and other interested parties (families, non-profit organisations, local authorities) in a community in order to support the innovative system of teaching and learning in the region. These partners working together form a cluster network that has unique opportunities to design, launch, replicate, and distribute breakthrough learning methods and tools (*Komarova, 2019*).

It should be noted that the current legislation of the Russian Federation in the field of education and modern research does not define the concept of “cluster approach” in relation to professional education in the field of traditional artistic crafts. At present, we can say that there are studies of only certain aspects related to the application of the cluster approach in the educational industry as a whole. In particular, on the basis of the cluster approach, it is proposed to develop students’ cognitive interest (*I.A. Kiseleva*), to organize project activities (*N.V.*

Malyshev), implement design in the system of education (*D.Y. Trutnikov*), manage the quality of general education in the regions (*M.V. Goremyko*).

The above provisions address the topic of the cluster approach in education emphasizing the need to apply this approach in the process of professional training of students. However, as noted earlier, these works do not cover the issues of professional education in the field of traditional artistic crafts, taking into account all the existing features.

The relevance of the cluster approach in the field of interest is emphasized in the work of doctor of pedagogical sciences, professor *V.F. Maksimovich*. According to the author's position, the economic reforms, performed in Russia over the past decade, have led to the closure of many artistic crafts enterprises, the appearance of low-grade counterfeit products, the discrediting of a whole layer of national culture and domestic traditions, and the formation of an inadequate attitude to both traditional applied arts and professional education in this area (*Maksimovich, 2011*). With the change of epochs and generations, it is necessary to ensure the continuity and preservation of traditional national cultural values in the conditions of deformation of ideological orientations, which will reduce the risk of mass manifestations of national cultural nihilism and spiritual impoverishment.

Thus, the application of the cluster approach in professional education in the field of traditional artistic crafts can become an effective tool to increase the prestige of this field.

The Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation has developed *A Strategy for the Development of Artistic Crafts for 2015–2016 and for the Period up to 2020* (Order of the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation), aimed at preserving artistic crafts as an important tool for the development of modern national culture and the basis of ethnic and cultural self-identification, activating the creative potential of the peoples of the Russian Federation, determining ways to solve problems, priority areas for the development of artistic crafts at the present stage and forming appropriate design solutions. The Strategy calls increasing the attractiveness of the industry for young professionals as one of the priority areas of state support in the field of artistic crafts.

It should also be noted that in 2020-2021, the interregional project *Youth Expedition of "DNA of Great Peoples"*, which fully corresponds to the *Concept of Long-Term Social and Economic Development of the Russian Federation for the Period up to 2020* (*Decree..., 2008*), will be implemented. The youth expedition consists of four routes that include such localities as Moscow, Ivanovo, Vladimir, Msta, Fedoskino, Sergiev Posad, Gorodets and Semenov. The project is particularly relevant due to the gradual loss of connection of the younger generation with the centuries-old artistic traditions and spiritual values of our country, and the low interest in the field of artistic crafts among the population.

During the implementation of the project, sociological surveys will be conducted, discussion meetings will be organized with artistic craftsmen and specialists in the production of artistic-art products. Participants including volunteers, bloggers, opinion leaders and experts will visit educational institutions, museums and enterprises in the field of artistic crafts in order to further highlight their activities, which will promote the unique cultural heritage. As a final event, there will be an open lesson, for which a separate methodological guide on artistic crafts will be developed. It is also important that all the information received will be posted on a separate online platform to increase public awareness and engagement.

Conclusion

Today, traditional culture can become the basis for the formation of the national identity of the younger generation in modern society. Challenges that arise through events and phenomena occurring in the modern world create the need for active application of the cluster approach in professional education in the field of traditional artistic crafts, which can be defined as a system of interrelated educational, industrial, social and other structures that allow to combine the activities of its constituent subjects in the field of artistic crafts and their resources in order to preserve national and cultural specifics, increase the prestige of professional education in this field, organization of active interaction between educational and industrial processes, training of highly qualified specialists in demand, increasing the number of jobs and labor productivity, and progressive development of traditional artistic crafts in the future.



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