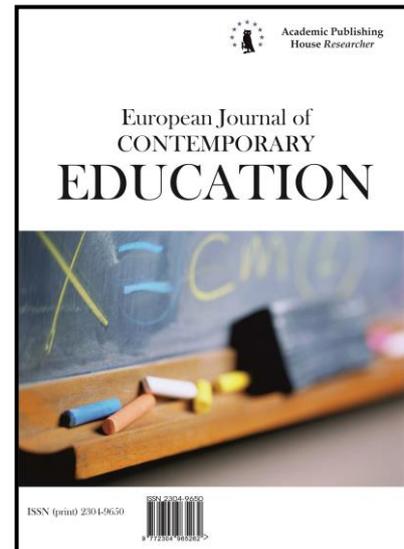




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## Key Milestones in the Development of Reputation Management in Russian Universities

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### Abstract

The development of the modern higher school is characterized by a number of trends that cannot always be called positive. The recent reforms in the sphere of higher education in Russia increase uncertainty of the conditions, in which institutions of higher education currently function. The topicality of the problem makes it necessary to study the problem of reputation management of the higher school, to consider various approaches to creation of reputational responsibility and positive reputation of a university as important tools to improve the university's operating efficiency, and to achieve competitive advantages in the higher education market.

The purpose of the article is to consider approaches to the problems of reputation management of a higher education institution based on studying the processes of creating a positive reputation of a university by increasing its reputational responsibility, identifying reputational risks and other factors. In particular, the authors examine theoretical aspects of the reputation management in a university, analyze the results of studying characteristic features of creating the university's reputation and its reputational responsibility.

**Keywords:** university, higher education institution, reputation, reputation management, reputational capital, reputational responsibility, reputational risks.

### 1. Introduction

The trends in the development of the higher education system in Russia are related to the new operational conditions of higher education institutions, which are influenced by a number of factors:

- State policy in the field of higher education;
- Unfavorable demographic situation in the country;
- High level of competition in the market of educational services and its increase, caused by a number of reasons, which largely influenced regional universities;

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- Instability of the external environment of higher education institutions;
- Reduced budgetary funding of education institutions, which particularly affected economic and managerial educational spheres;
- Increase in independence of education institutions as a result of the above factors;
- Increase in responsibility of the university's administration for the effectiveness of their activities, etc.

Taking into account the high level of competition in the market of educational services, improvement of the university's reputation is one of the most important tasks of its administration and the entire staff. When implementing the university's development strategy, the administration of the education institution shall identify, forecast and evaluate possible reputational risks of the university, and manage them in a timely and competent manner.

## **2. Relevance**

The professional community of Russia started to pay special attention to reputation issues upon introduction by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of the practice of monitoring the effectiveness of Russian higher education institutions in 2012. Based on its results, "effective" institutions and institutions "showing signs of ineffectiveness" are identified and named, which yield to serious reputational losses for the latter ones. As a result, the reputation of many Russian universities (including a number of the oldest education institutions) and about a half of branches suffered.

Despite a debatable nature of the above processes (Shkolnikov, 2014), compulsory monitoring of state and private universities in the country makes it possible to monitor the results of their activities, which, in its turn, is intended to improve the quality of the domestic higher education, and to allow Russian universities to enter international ratings. Heads of higher education institutions are forced to think more seriously about the positions their universities occupy in the market of educational services, what measures must be taken to avoid falling into the list of "ineffective" institutions, to preserve and enhance the reputation of their education institution.

## **3. Materials and methods**

The methodological bases of the study are the works of Russian and foreign scientists in the field of reputation management in organization and universities. The paper used methods of system, comparative analysis, as well as the statistical analysis method, methods of questionnaire and expert survey.

## **4. Discussion**

The reputation management is a fairly new direction in management. At least in Russia it has been actively developed only in recent years.

Foreign and domestic scientists, such as G. Dowling, R.J. Alsop, K. Petzoldt, V.G. Aliev, K.S. Buksha, I.V. Vorobyova, S.V. Gorin, S.V. Dokholyan, E.V. Zmanovskaya, A.B. Lapshov, I.V. Oleynik, V.E. Reva, I.I. Reshetnikova, L.S. Salmnikova, V.L. Semikov, L.V. Smolina, V.A. Spivak, V.M. Shepel, etc. have been engaged in studying the problems of creating and managing a company's reputation (including higher education institutions).

The reputation management is most often seen as taking measures aimed at building and maintaining a positive attitude of the society towards the organization. According to A. Lapshov and G. Oleynik (Oleynik, Lapshov, 2003), important properties of the reputation management include its "strategic nature, which ensures a transition from local solutions (relating to the attitude of the society to the organization) having a short-term effect to the multi-step logic of a consistent and sustainable progress towards the goal".

The larger the university, the more important it is to ensure good reputation. The size of the institution, the degree of its diversification and internationalization significantly affect the needs in its reputation management. However, even small universities shall take care of increasing their reputation, on the basis of which they can more actively solve current and strategic problems. This will allow the education institution to improve its competitiveness, to occupy a more stable position in the market of educational services.

In addition, a university, which occupies a leading position in a region or city, cannot but maintain its reputation, since it is always in the center of attention and any negative information can significantly harm it, which, in its turn, will negatively affect the reputation of the region as a whole.

Authors propose various approaches to the definition of the concept “reputation”. In general, reputation is seen as opinion of the society about the quality, advantages or disadvantages of someone, something, person, organization or product.

Speaking specifically about an institution of higher education, its reputation is seen as a public evaluation, an opinion about the university, which is created under the influence of various factors of its external and internal environment.

The reputation of a higher education institution can be divided into external and internal:

- External reputation – evaluation of the university’s activities by representatives of its external environment;

- Internal reputation – opinion of the teaching staff, personnel, graduate students, applicants, doctoral candidates and students of the university about such a university.

This classification is based on the division of the university’s environment into external and internal one.

The university is an open system, since it performs its activities through interaction of internal opportunities with the needs of the external environment, including the labour market. To achieve the main goal of the university – to meet the needs of the society and its individual citizens in high-quality educational services - effective work of the university’s employees and departments as a whole is needed, which yields to creation of positive reputation. To achieve this, the mechanisms of reputation management must be used.

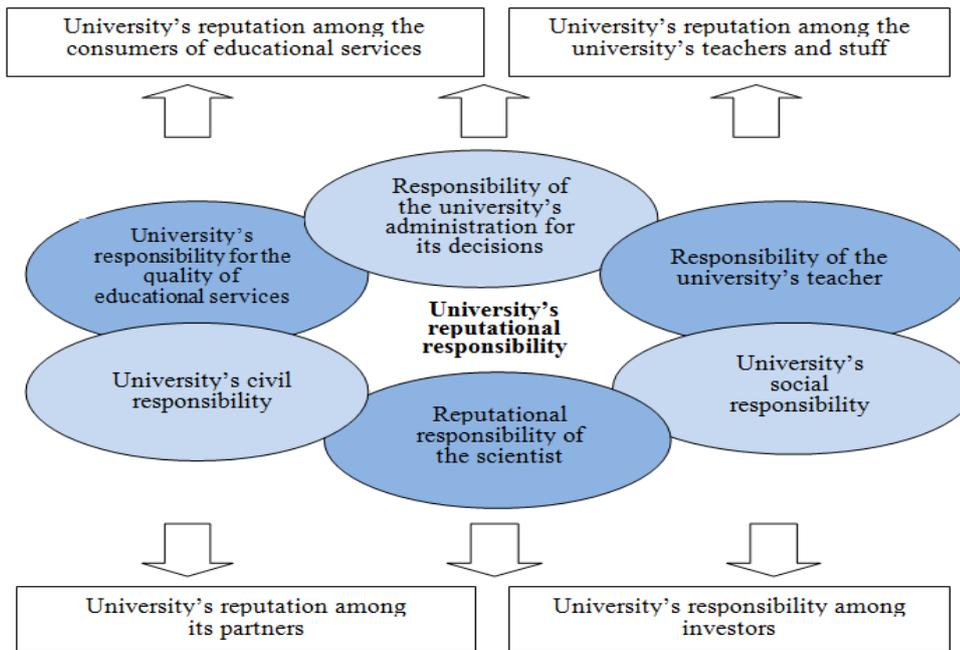
In spite of the fact that the notion of the university’s reputation is rather subjective to a certain extent, it becomes more and more important, helping to attract the best talents among students and professors to education institutions with good reputation, attracting investments and ensuring high positions in Russian and even world ratings of leading universities.

Many scientists and practitioners have recently talked much about the increasing role of reputational responsibility for modern Russian universities.

Speaking about the degree of development of the said problem, it is necessary to single out contribution of the following scientists to the study of certain issues of the reputational responsibility of commercial organizations and education institutions: A.N. Chaplina, E.A. Gerasimova ([Chaplina, Gerasimova, 2014](#)), A.P. Shatrova ([Shatrova, Chaplina, 2014](#)), V.M. Filippova ([Filippov, 2013](#)), E.A. Neretina ([Neretina, 2014](#)), S.D. Reznik and O.A. Sazykina ([Reznik, Sazykina, 2016](#)), N.I. Arister ([Arister, Reznik, 2011](#)), etc.

In our opinion the reputational responsibility of a university must mean its responsibility to the target consumer audience for the results of its activities and development, the responsibility of the university’s administration and staff for the decisions made, the results of managerial and teaching activities, the way of life, their reputation.

The structure of the university’s reputational responsibility presupposes presence of the following components ([Figure 1](#)):



**Fig. 1.** Structure of the university's reputational responsibility (Reznik, Yudina, 2015)

The responsibility of the university's administration for the decisions made means its responsibility to all target audiences, to the representatives of all levels of management of the higher education system in the country, to the university's teachers and staff.

The teacher's responsibility is conditioned by the fact that the high qualification of the teaching staff is a guarantee of high-quality education, which should be realized both at the level of the university's top management and at the level of each teacher.

The university's social responsibility is embodied in implementation of socio-cultural and educational work among students.

Reputational Responsibility of a scientist. Scandalous events taking place in the scientific community and their vigorous discussion in the media challenge the public's confidence in scientists, and influence the reputation of the Russian science as a whole.

University's responsibility for the quality of educational services. Universities need to take care not only of how to attract entrants, but also how to ensure a worthy quality of educational services and high rates of employment of their graduates.

The university's civil liability means its responsibility as a legal entity to the state, since it has a number of duties, and in case of its failure to fulfill such duties it shall be responsible in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation.

In the process of managing the university's reputation, it is necessary to take into account the likelihood and consequences of various risks that may arise in the course of its activities.

Unfortunately, characteristic features of managing the organization's reputational risks, regardless of the scope of its activities, have been studied insufficiently. There are only a few works relating to higher education institutions, whose authors draw attention to this problem and attempt to identify and classify reputational risks of a university, and to give some recommendations for their management. Let us consider approaches that allow us to fully understand the nature of a reputational risk.

E. Griffin defines the organization's reputational risk as a real or potential threat to its business reputation - a threat that "if not properly controlled, can lead to a disastrous crisis to the reputation" (Griffin, 2009). The key point of this approach is the need to monitor reputational risks.

An interesting approach is suggested by A. Zaman, who defines the reputational risk as "a result of a comparison made by interested parties between how the company and its employees should behave according to expectations and how they behave in reality" (Zaman, 2008).

I.S. Vazhenina, S.A. Pestrikov, and T.R. Sharipov define the organization’s reputational risks as a probability to lose its business reputation (fully or partially) due to the influence of various external and internal factors that entail a reduction or complete loss of its reputational assets’ value, as well as financial damage (in the form of losses or lost profits) and/or a drop in the organization’s liquidity (Vazhenina et al., 2011).

Based on the approaches discussed, the reputational risks of a higher education institution will be interpreted as a threat for the university to lose its reputation or a drop in its reputation, which can result in a decrease in the number of applicants wishing to enroll in this institution, its competitiveness, attractiveness for various target groups, the overall performance of the university as a whole, the personnel’s loyalty and, as a result, the financial stability of the education institution.

The main feature of the reputational risk is, in our opinion, that it cannot be reduced to zero. One can only reduce the likelihood of its emergence by means of timely evaluation and competent control, including, by means of effective reputation management.

We have studied the problems of reputation management in relation to higher education since 2011. The results of our studies are reflected in scientific works supported by the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Fund, as well as in our publications. Thus, in 2012–2013 we implemented a project of the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Fund called “System of reputation management in a regional higher education institution” (state registration number 01201261564), in 2014–2015 we implemented a project called “Methods of forming the reputational responsibility system in a higher education institution (on an example of Penza universities)” (state registration number 01201465109), and currently we are working on a project that was supported in one of the competitions of the Russian Foundation of Fundamental Research, called “Improving the Efficiency of Reputation Management in the Russian University” (2018–2019).

*Analysis of statistical data on the higher education school’s performance indicators*

As is known, the main goal of the higher education institution is to organize the educational process and provide consumers with high-quality educational services. When studying the problems of reputation management in a university, special attention is paid to identification and monitoring of consumers of its services.

The main categories of consumers of the education institution’s services are as follows: undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students. Analysis of statistical data on distribution of the Russian population by age allows us to trace some negative trends in the development of the demographic situation in our country. At the same time, the age category we are interested in is represented by three groups according to official statistics: 15–19 years old, 20–24 years old and 25–29 years old (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Distribution of the Russian population by age groups (as of January 1, thousand people) (Russia in Figures...)

	2002	2010	2014	2015	2016	2017
The entire population	145167	142857	143667	146267	146545	146804
Including of the following age:						
15-19	12801	8389	6956	6829	6731	6689,9
20-24	11466	12169	9971	9293	8445	7827,7
25-29	10613	11982	12522	12620	12412	11878

In accordance with the data given in Table 1, we can conclude that the Russian population in the above age groups continues to decline annually. Thus, for example, the population aged 15 to 19 (that is, first of all, potential applicants, future students) in 2016 was 6731 thousand people, and decreased by 98 thousand people in comparison with 2015 (the change rate is 98.6 %), by 1658 thousand people in comparison with 2010 (80.2 %), and by 6070 thousand people in comparison with 2002 (52.6 %, i.e. almost twice).

The number of people in the age group from 20 to 24 varies similarly (potential undergraduates or graduate students of the university). The dynamics of the population at the age

of 25–29 remained positive until 2015, but it had reduced by 742 thousand people by 1.01.2017 (the change rate is 94.1 %).

Note that the age group of 15–19 is the smallest among the analyzed ones. The share of this group in the total population of Russia was only 4.56 % in 2017, and a similar situation has been observed over the past years since 2010, based on the data shown in [Table 1](#). The largest proportion of the three age groups in the total number of the country's population belongs to the group of 25–29 years old (8.09 % in 2017), given that in 2002 the situation was the opposite.

As the statistical data show ([Table 2](#)), the competitive struggle of universities for potential students is increasing, and it is developing, first of all, between regional education institutions. Leading universities do not actually feel any negative influence of the “demographic hole” in which our country has found itself in recent years, and which has become the main reason for increased competition between universities.

**Table 2.** Number of students taking educational programs of primary, basic and secondary general education (as of the beginning of the academic year) ([Russia in Figures...](#))

	2005/06	2010/11	2015/16	2016/17
Number of students taking educational programs of primary, basic and secondary general education, thousand people	15630.9	13569.0	14770.4	15219.0
Number of students who received a certificate of secondary general education, thousand people	1466.0	789.3	647.8	635.2

Based on the data given in [Table 2](#), it should be noted that despite the positive dynamics of the total number of students studying in general education institutions that has been observed since 2011, the number of students who have received the certificate of secondary general education continues to decline steadily. Namely, this indicator has decreased from 1466 thousand people in 2005 to 635.2 thousand people in 2016 over the last ten years, i.e. more than twice. In 2016 this indicator was only 43.3 % of its level in 2005.

Thus, the above described trends make it possible to characterize the demographic situation in Russia as very difficult for higher education institutions of our country. Moreover, according to experts' forecasts, this situation will continue until 2020.

On the basis of statistical data about organizations of higher education in Russia ([Table 3](#)), the number of higher education institutions in our country is being decreased. Thus, in the 2016–2017 academic year the total number of universities in Russia amounted to 818; their number decreased by 78 in comparison with the 2015-2016 academic year. A similar negative trend is observed every year.

**Table 3.** Higher education institutions (as of the beginning of the academic year) ([Russia in Figures...](#))

	1990/91	2000/01	2010/11	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
All higher education institutions	514	965	1115	950	896	818
State and municipal Higher education institutions	514	607	653	548	530	–
Private higher education institutions	–	358	462	402	366	–

The recent reduction in the number of higher education institutions was due to the state policy in the sphere of Russian higher education, which was characterized by reorganization and unification of higher education institutions in order to increase their efficiency and establish basic educational institutions.

In addition to the reduction in the number of higher education institutions, the number of university students has been constantly decreasing. The statistical data confirming this trend are shown in [Table 4](#).

**Table 4.** Number of students studying under the bachelor's, specialist's, master's programs (as of the beginning of the academic year) (Russia in Figures...)

	1993/94	2000/01	2005/06	2008/09	2010/11	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Number of students, thousand people	2613	4741	7064	7513	7050	6075	5647	5209	4766	4399
Number of students studying in education institutions in proportion to 10000 people of the population, people.	176	324	493	529	493	424	393	356	325	299

According to the data shown in Table 4, the number of university students increased until 2008–2009, when it was 7513 thousand people. Since the 2009–2010 academic year, an annual decrease in the number of students was observed, which reached 4399 thousand people in 2016–2017. The rate of decline of this indicator amounted to 41.4 % in 2016 as compared with 2008. Of course, such a trend is the result of the recent deteriorated demographic situation in our country.

The number of students admitted to higher education institutions over the past ten years has a negative dynamics (Table 5).

**Table 5.** Admission to study under the bachelor's, specialist, master's programs and bachelor, specialist and master graduates (Russia in Figures...)

	1993	2000	2007	2010	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Students admitted, thousand people	590	1292	1682	1399	1298	1247	1192	1222	1158
Bachelors, specialists and masters graduated, thousand people	445	635	1336	1468	1397	1291	1226	1300	1161

As can be concluded from Table 5, the largest number of students in the analyzed periods, namely, 1682 thousand people entered universities in the academic year of 2007–2008. According to the statistical data, the rate of admission of students to higher education institutions fluctuated annually and reached 1158 thousand people by the 2016-2017 academic year, which was 524 thousand people, or 31.1 %, less than the number of students admitted in the 2007–2008 academic year, when this indicator had the maximum value for the entire period studied.

A very important activity of any university is attraction of foreign students, the number of which is considered by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation as an indicator characterizing the efficiency of the education institution. In an effort to meet the established performance indicators, Russian universities of any level are pursuing an active policy of attracting foreign students, which, as the statistics show (Table 6), is quite successful.

**Table 6.** Number of foreign students studying under the bachelor's, specialist, master's programs (as of the beginning of the academic year) (Russia in Figures...)

	2000/01	2005/06	2015/16	2016/17
Number of foreign students studying in state and municipal higher education institutions, people	58992	78139	195551	207356
Proportion of foreign students studying in state and municipal higher education institutions as compared to the total number of students, %	1.4	1.3	4.8	5.3
Number of foreign students studying in private higher education institutions, people	–	–	46947	37241
Proportion of foreign students studying in private higher education institutions as compared to the total number of students, %	–	–	6.7	7.1

According to the data presented in Table 6, the total number of foreign students studying in Russian state, municipal and private higher education institutions amounted to 244597 people in 2016, having increased approximately thrice over the period from 2005 to 2016. The growth rate of this indicator of university activity in 2016 reached 313 % of its level in 2005.

It should be noted that the positive dynamics of the education institutions' work aimed at attracting foreign students contributes to the development of international contacts of Russian universities, their prestige, formation of their image and reputation in foreign countries, and increases the probability of achieving a higher position in the ratings of domestic universities, as well as entering into world ratings.

*National and world university ratings*

The leading universities of Russia occupy a leading position in the ratings of Russian universities: the Moscow State University named after M.V. Lomonosov, the National Research Nuclear University “MEPhI”, the St. Petersburg State University, the Higher School of Economics, etc. Regional higher education institutions find it difficult to enter even national ratings, since the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation sets performance indicators that are quite high for many ordinary education institutions. The overall rating of Russian universities in 2017 (the top ten) is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7.** National rating of Russian universities in 2017 (National Rating...)

Rank	Name of the university	Value
1	Moscow State University named after M.V. Lomonosov	1000
2	National Research Nuclear University "MEPhI"	856
3	St. Petersburg State University	735
4	National Research University Higher School of Economics	734
5	Novosibirsk National Research University	727
6	Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology	722
7	Saint Petersburg State University of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics	715
8	Tomsk National Research University	707
9	Peoples' Friendship University of Russia	706
10	Tomsk National Research Polytechnic University	680

A more complex situation concerning the reputation and recognition of Russian universities has developed at the world level. The leading university of our country, Moscow State University named after M.V. Lomonosov was assigned only the 188th place in the rating of 2017, and only two or three other Russian education institutions were included in the first five hundred.

The compilers of the world best universities ratings, the British company “Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings”, evaluates universities using six indicators: research activities, teaching, opinion of employers and career potential, number of foreign students and

teachers. The QS Rating pays attention to the university's reputation in the academic environment. Many years, leading positions in the rating have been occupied by the universities of the United States and Great Britain.

Russia occupies very high positions in another world rating of universities. In the BRICS QS rating, emphasis is made on the indicators that reflect common features, which are characteristic of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa and highlight strong qualities of higher education systems in these countries.

In 2017, the rating included top 300 universities of the BRICS countries, with 68 universities representing the Russian higher school. This rating also included 94 Chinese universities, 61 Brazilian universities, 65 Indian universities and 12 universities of South Africa. Leading University of Russia - Moscow State University named after M.V. Lomonosov – returned to the top five and took the fifth place (Table 8).

**Table 8.** Russian universities in the QS BRICS world rating 2017 (Ten Universities of Russia...)

No.	Name of the university	SIZE	RES	AGE	Rank 2013	Rank 2014	Rank 2015	Rank 2016	Rank 2017
1	Moscow State University named after M.V. Lomonosov	XL	VH	5	3	3	4	7	5
2	Novosibirsk State University	M	VH	4	22	18	19	20	11
3	Saint-Petersburg State University	L	VH	5	14	12	15	20	13
4	Tomsk State University	M	VH	5	58	47	44	43	26
5	Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology	M	VH	4	55	52	45	47	28
6	Moscow State Technical University named after N.E. Bauman	L	HI	5	33	36	35	38	33
7	National Research Nuclear University MEPhI	M	VH	4	65	57	51	50	35
8	National Research University Higher School of Economics	L	VH	3	50	58	63	62	39
9	Moscow State Institute of International Relations	M	MD	4	37	35	39	44	40
10	Tomsk Polytechnic University	M	VH	5	71	67	64	64	49
SIZE	<b>Category as per the number of students</b>	RES	<b>Category as per the level of research activities</b>	AGE	<b>Category as per the age</b>				
XL	≥ 30000 – Very large	VH	Very high	5	≥ 100 years – Historical				
L	≥ 12000 – Large	HI	High	4	≥ 50 years – Mature				
M	≥ 5000 – Medium	MD	Medium	3	≥ 25 years – Recognized				
S	< 5000 – Small	LO	Limited	2	≥ 10 years – Young				
HD	No data	HD	No data	1	< 10 years – New				

In general, the results of the analysis of several statistical indicators of the universities' activities, as well as data on world and national university ratings make it possible to conclude that

the current demographic situation and state policy in the sphere of education in our country do not currently allow us to call the conditions for the development of Russian universities as easy. Many regional education institutions are forced not only to continue the struggle for entrants, the best of which are striving to enter the capital's universities or other large universities that occupy high positions in the ratings, but also to fight for their "place in the sun". The problems of reputation management do not just continue to remain relevant for higher education institutions today, but are becoming more and more acute and demanding special attention.

*Analysis of the practice of forming and managing the reputation of Russian universities*

In order to study the above problems from a practical point of view, we conducted a study of the processes of forming and managing the university's reputation, the results of which allowed us to make certain conclusions.

In the opinion of 35 % of experts, formation and management of the university's reputation should be a responsibility of the administration and deans; 30 % of experts believe that these problems should be solved by all departments of the university; 15 % – these issues shall be solved directly by the Marketing Center or the Public Relations Department (10 %); 10 % – to solve the issues of reputation management in the university, a special unit should be established.

In our opinion, the university's reputation as a whole depends on conscientious and efficient work of each department and each unit of the education institution, each teacher, manager and employee.

As the research results show, the graduates' employment indicator is the main factor influencing the university's reputation to a large extent. It was this indicator, which was awarded the first rank by 21.8 % of experts. Qualification of the teaching staff is the next most important factor, according to 21.5 % of experts. The third place was given by 12 % of experts to the quality of educational activity of the education institution.

According to the results of the study, 89 % of the interviewed representatives of the universities' administration and teachers noted that their institution is working to promote the employment of graduates. 68 % of the respondents answered that there is an Alumni Association in their university, 37 % noted that they keep in touch with alumni to inform them about possible employment.

The main drawback of university training, as evidenced by the results of another study (Reznik, Sochilova, 2010) is a lack of practical experience of teachers, according to 88 % of the employers. In the opinion of 80 % of the respondents, the educational process of individual universities is focused on passive perception of the material by the audience; there is an attempt to give additional knowledge (sometimes redundant). 82 % of the employers believe that the universities give insufficient attention to practical training of students, and 78 % of the respondents say that theoretical knowledge lags behind the reality (Table 9).

**Table 9.** Drawbacks of the university training

Drawbacks of the university training	Number of responses,%
Theoretical knowledge lags behind the reality	78
The amount of theoretical information is excessive	48
Little attention is paid to practical training of students	82
The amount of theoretical information is insufficient	36
Lack of practical experience of teachers	88
Education programs are focused on passive perception of the material by the audience	80

Most likely, such a situation is characteristic of many regional universities in Russia. The main point here is not in a lack of aspiration for self-education among university employees, but in a heavy workload of teachers (the need to combine teaching, methodological and scientific activities), and in the absence of financial support from the university's administration. All this imposes a negative impact on the quality of educational services, lack of practical orientation, low rates of employment of graduates or lack of jobs in this sphere at all, etc.

In general, the results of the studies made it possible to identify the following features of the practice of forming and managing the reputation of higher education institutions: a lack of a reputation management system in a university; insufficient attention of the education institutions' managers and teachers to improvement of their skills; a lack of practical orientation of the educational process; inconsistency between the level of graduates' training and the employers' requirements; low rates of employment of graduates in individual universities.

The above trends and peculiarities of the development of Russian higher education institutions should be taken into account when determining the mechanisms for managing the university's reputation, which will make this process purposeful and more effective.

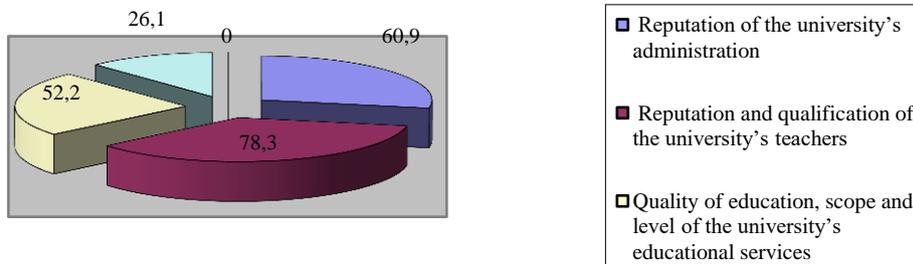
*Characteristic features of forming and increasing the university's reputational responsibility*

In general, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the process of reputation management in a university should first of all include the tools needed to form and enhance its reputational responsibility.

Within the framework of the project of the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Foundation "Methods of forming the reputational responsibility system in a higher education institution (on an example of Penza universities)", a survey (Reznik, Yudina, 2015) was conducted. The respondents included representatives of the administration and the scientific community of universities in Moscow, Saransk, Volgograd, Kazan, Saratov, Penza and other cities.

According to the research results, the university's reputational responsibility shall be considered using a system approach. According to the opinion of 47.8 % of experts, the reputational responsibility system of a higher education institution should mean a combination of elements and values, based on the university's obligation to bear responsibility for its actions, as well as their consequences, aimed at increasing the interest of target consumer groups, including in the long term.

The university's reputational responsibility system includes such elements as reputation and qualification of teachers (78.3 % of experts), reputation of the university's administration (60.9 % of experts), quality of education, range and level of educational services (52.2 %) and scientific achievements of the university (26.1 %) (Figure 2).



**Fig. 2.** Elements of the university's reputational responsibility system, %

High reputational responsibility of universities promotes their positioning as full-fledged, competitive doers of a state; determination of leading universities, whose activities promote integration of education, science and production at various levels; inclusion of Russian education institutions in world ratings. At the same time, those universities that neglect maintenance of their reputational responsibility bear certain losses associated with emergence and high impact of reputational risks in their activities.

**5. Conclusion**

Within this article, we considered the content of the university's reputation, which is an intangible, but no less important asset of any organization. In the modern world, this is a phenomenon, which can and should be managed. To do this, there is reputation management aimed at developing and implementing a long-term development strategy for the university.

The need to carefully study and take into account the external environment is an important aspect of reputation management, which will allow the university administration to determine advantages and disadvantages of its activities, including in comparison with other higher education institutions of the same level. The use of reputation management is aimed at obtaining results in the long term. All of its components contribute to improving the state of the university, and the efficiency of the reputation management mechanisms depends on the professionalism of the university administration.

Effective mechanisms for managing the reputation of a higher education institution, according to the requirements set by the labour market for education institutions, include the following ones, which are the most significant ones in our opinion.

Studying approaches to the process of managing the quality of the university's educational services allowed to develop some tools allowing to implement the following reputation management mechanism - *Development and implementation of the quality management system in the university*.

High-quality education is impossible without qualified teachers and competent administration. In this regard, *Improvement of professional competence of the university's administration and teachers* is an important mechanism of reputation management.

The level of employment of the students and graduates form a basis for a comprehensive assessment of any institution's activities. Previously, the state was engaged in employment of its graduates; currently universities are forced to solve this issue on their own. *Development of a system of career guidance, employment and adaptation of graduates* is another mechanism of reputation management.

Increased requirements of the employers to the knowledge and skills of university graduates requires not only improved quality of theoretical education in education institutions, but also strengthened practical orientation of the educational process, as well as some measures that promote self-expression and self-fulfillment of students. The foregoing reflects the content of the next mechanism for managing the university's reputation - *Formation of values, needs and abilities of individual self-realization in the student environment*.

Effective reputation management mechanisms should be implemented, among other things, within the development and implementation of the university's reputation strategy as a general strategy for its development, which must be supported by functional strategies in accordance with the types of activities. At the same time, the heads of the university's functional services should participate in justification of its basic development strategy. Only then implementation of reputation management mechanisms will bring positive results to the university, both social and economic.

Managers and the entire staff of the university should know how it looks in comparison with other players in the market of educational services, since its competitiveness is a guarantee of obtaining high educational, scientific and economic performance indicators, which will help the university to survive in the current conditions of reforming the Russian higher education system.

As the results of our studies show, the following items should be mentioned as key milestones in the development of reputation management in the university: improving the quality of education, strengthening work on graduates' employment, forming and increasing the university's reputational responsibility, and managing its reputational risks.

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