

Dorozhkin Y. M.,

Zhuravleva L. A.,

Snegov V. A.

**PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT:
THE SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

Abstract. The paper reveals the sociological research findings reflecting the development problems and prospects of the Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University. A survey, conducted in March 2013, demonstrates positive dynamics of the university prestige, rank and popularity index compared to the year 2003. The academic staff tends to recognize the unique competitive advantages of the given university: status of the Russian higher school and leading vocational pedagogical institution; professional quality of human resources, variety of prestigious specializations, existence of the Educational Methodology Association, Dissertation Board, etc. Although the respondents point out some factors adversely affecting the university image and public opinion, the criticism helps to identify the problematic units and corresponding contradictions of the university development.

The research outcomes can provide the background for strategic development programs of Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University for the nearest future; and help to promote the university brand as the leading, dynamic and competitive educational centre at the regional, federal and international levels.

Keywords: sociology studies, strategic management, development problems, university image.

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