

## A Social Portrait of the Russian Trainer

Vitaly A. Kopnov<sup>a</sup>, Tatiana V. Permyakova<sup>a</sup>, Alexander G. Kislov<sup>a</sup>,  
Olga I. Vlasova<sup>a</sup>, Vitaly S. Kuimov<sup>a</sup>, Maria A. Dremina<sup>a</sup> and  
Anastasia N. Blinova<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University, Ekaterinburg, RUSSIA

### ABSTRACT

The purposes of this paper are to survey Russian trainers to create a social portrait of the professional group and to identify features, which could be arranged as a foothold for transforming this group to a new level given the demands of the modern economy. This study integrates the use of quantitative and qualitative social research strategies to obtain, aggregate, and analyze data characterizing the professional group of trainers in the Russian vocational education and training (VET) system. The basic research was provided by questionnaires in all federal districts (as recognized by international law) of the Russian Federation. The quantitative poll of trainers was conducted by representative two-level sampling. A number of tables and charts provide a social portrait of the Russian trainer. The statistical data reveal the current level of trainers' education as well as their length of service, distribution of vocations, and other significant features. The overall conclusion from these findings indicates that a typical representative of this professional group is a woman of average or slightly advanced age with a family, who has a VET or higher education, has served as a training officer for not less than 10 years, and who has either been recruited as a highly skilled worker or as a specialist. A typical representative feels the need to change something in the life and teaching of the young people that she knows. The research into trainers as a professional group was conducted first because of their uniformity, and secondly, their typicality as a pedagogical group. In many respects, the main characteristics of the social portrait are similar to characteristics of other professional groups in the Russian education system, such as secondary and post-secondary school teachers, and VET teachers. The study is based on one country. It is the first and only survey of its type in the Russian Federation. The paper provides a unique analysis of the situation with trainers in the VET system of the Russian Federation.

### KEYWORDS

Social portrait, trainers, VET system

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## Introduction

Among various professional groups formed in the Russian Federation in the twentieth century trainers were not paid a great deal of attention by the mass

**CORRESPONDENCE** Vitaly A. Kopnov ✉ [kopnov@list.ru](mailto:kopnov@list.ru)

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media, government, or science. Nowadays, we observe the closing of whole segments of industry and the appearance of other professions that are not connected directly with industrial production. This provoked a crisis in the system of initial vocational education oriented specifically to the reproduction of Russia's labour force.

The strategy of development of the VET system and the applied qualifications required by the Russian Federation for the period until 2020 determined the priorities of state policy in the field of training skilled workers and employees over the long term. The lag effect of this system and its slow rate of creating a new paradigm in vocational teaching and learning are referred to as internal factors exerting an impact on the status and development of the VET system's responsiveness to the challenges of post-industrial society. The ageing teaching staff in educational institutions and the lack of a significant proportion of teaching staff competencies required for the modernization of education were highlighted in WorldSkills Russia (Kopnov & Sokolova, 2015).

The public sector of the vocational education system in 2013 united more than 4,400 VET providers implementing training programmes for mid-level specialists and high-skill workers, as well as 200 public institutions of higher education implementing post-secondary vocational education programmes. The total number of students amounted to 313,850 in 2012 (Tkachenko, 2014). The Russian education system has a significant number of educational organisations that implement programmes of initial, secondary, and post-secondary vocational education. Their role is particularly important at the start of Russian youths' professional life.

Vocational education and training (VET) of learners with certain vocational and personal competences to meet the needs of modern production cannot be realized without good trainers (Zolotareva, 2013). In other words, to train a modern worker, it is first necessary to train the trainer (Fransson, Lakerveld & Rohtma, 2009) who knows not only about modern technology and equipment but also has appropriate pedagogical and psychological competences (Dorozhkin et al., 2016).

The social portrait of the Russian trainer described below is necessary to provide data and information on the situation for trainers working in the public Russian VET system as well as for governors and policy-makers. Social portraits help in identifying the challenges we face in ensuring that the resources of government are used to best effect in achieving social development (Callan et al., 2007).

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation asked the Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University (RSVPU) in 2013 to study the current situation with Russian trainers and to construct a social portrait of them. The relevance of the study is identified by the social and economic realities of modern Russia, where industrial production is still the foundation of economic development and determines the requirement to train highly skilled workers. Cooperation between trainers and learners acts as the basis for introducing a future worker to a real production process. The result of the trainer's work is reflected in the qualifications of a worker and his/her professional competency.

The authors of this study have faced quite expected issues: the social and economic position of trainers has become extremely unreliable, and becoming a

trainer has been doubtful in the context of its existential prospects; its reproduction by the Russian educational system and industry has been spontaneous and unstable.

In order to identify perspectives for the development of this professional group and specify pathways for decision-making by the Russian Ministry of Education and Science, the researchers of RSVPU (Ekaterinburg) undertook a large empirical, sociological research study related to the analysis of the social portrait of a group of professional Russian trainers during 2014–2015.

### Literature Review

Social portraits are one of the most relevant kinds of research undertaken nowadays and may include almost anything; most aspects of life can be rendered socially relevant (Norris, 1964). Initially, the social portrait was a part of social reporting, the first attempt of which was made in 1954 when the United Nations requested an expert commission to explore the possibilities of conceptualizing and measuring what was then called the “standard of living” (United Nations, 1954). Nowadays, we may note that creating social portraits has spread worldwide. The role of the U.S., which has influenced this topic considerably must be underlined as it can be called the invention and innovation centre of this form of research (Rothenbacher, 1993). During its development, and owing to the huge variety of dimensions involved, the social portrait has become an independent topic for research. Many efforts have been undertaken to acquire data and construct different social portraits in various countries (Watson & Nolan, 2011; Gottlieb & Peters, 1991; Social “portrait” of Belarusians: Gender aspect, 2010). Overviews were made of different social groups such as the ‘Socio-demographic portrait’ by L. Rochette, D. St-Laurent & C. Plaziac (2004) and ‘A social portrait of people of working age in Ireland’ (Callan et al., 2007). Specific groups of people have also become objects of interest, including for example ‘To be a facilitator of in-service learning: Challenges, roles and professional development’ (Fransson, Lakerveld & Rohtma, 2009) or ‘A sociodemographic portrait of the intermountain west’ (Schewe et al., 2011). Of course, there are some topics, which are always popular, and attract researchers’ attention over the years. One of these, which many authors have addressed, is gender division of labour division (Saxena, 2015; White, Cox & Cooper, 1997).

Social data are becoming an essential ingredient of statistics, politics and science in Russian social portrayals where this methodology is also becoming popularly used in research studies such as the ‘Russian mortality crisis and the quality of vital statistics’ (Gavrilova et al., 2008) or ‘Social portrait of Siberian regions’ (Vavilina, 2013). Some attempts to design sociological research of this kind have also been applied to study work experience internships through the eyes of technical university students (Myagkov et al., 2015).

The social portrait of a professional group provides the most objective characteristics of the group because these have been developing over a long period of time, and are a consequence of long-term social and other processes (Kislov, 2014). Administrative or any other subjective intervention in the social status of a professional group has an impact only over the long term, and this is often offset by the interference of other factors and their unpredictable interaction. Identification of the main social characteristics of the professional group reflects the history of its present state, its social context, and the



immediate and possibly long-term prospects for the development and transformation of the group, its counterparts, and in some respects, the state of the country. That is why the social portrait of the professional group is so important.

In this survey, there is a particular emphasis on the historical and social context of trainers' positions. As with the 'Social portrait of Europe' (European Commission, 1995), the authors would like to bring the problems of trainers to the attention of politicians and citizens, and help them get to know the problems of the country's development, improve their understanding of social and economic changes, and thus arrive at a better assessment of the implications of social policy.

During the study, it was important to correctly identify the traditional social demographics of a professional group (age, sex, marital status, education, etc.) and describe the group by using social theory to anticipate and accompany the empirical study. A professional group is treated here as a complex of social and cultural phenomena, reflecting, on the one hand, the effects of the professional structure of the society, and on the other, the group of professionals included in this society (Kostina & Vlasova, 2014). The concept of a professional group is based on the definition of the fundamental concepts of 'social group' and 'profession'.

The social group is 'a set of people having a general social feature, who performs a socially necessary function in the general structure of the public division of labor and activity' (Encyclopaedic, 1995). Social groups strongly differ from each other and should be classified accordingly.

In the context of this research, the professional group was chosen because it entailed a community of professional activities designed to perform specific functions, and it was backed by specific knowledge and skills obtained through either education or professional experience. This group demonstrates a professional identity and a focus on professional autonomy and independence. Trainers, as representatives of this professional group, reveal these characteristics and at the same time are expected to show a reduced degree of autonomy and orientation to professional independence because of their inclusion in the education system, an 'open' realm of activities.

### **Materials and Methods**

The overall aim of the research to survey Russian trainers to create a social portrait, motivation and other related issues of the professional group and to identify features, which could be arranged as a foothold for transforming this group to a new level given the demands of the modern economy. This will be very helpful in identifying an organisational model that provides preservation of a professional group of trainers; it is embedded in the changing economic and educational conditions, and further long-term development. The initial part of the research is presented here and focused on the creation of a social portrait of this professional group, i.e. it takes into account the state and assessments of trainers' prospects as a professional group in modern Russia according to parameters including age, sex, marital status, education, and vocation.

Ascertaining and especially assessing prospects, first of all, relies on social and demographic parameters as the most objective and verifiable evidence (Popper, 1968). Without support, or at least, without an account of these

parameters, measurement of other state parameters concerning a professional group cannot be scientifically well-founded. Without taking them specifically into account, any attempt to assess the development perspective of this group does not make objective sense. Given that the assessment of these prospects is representative of prospects for the industrial and economic development of the country, they can be extrapolated, with certain corrections, to estimate the future of Russian economy.

The research project employs general scientific methods. The study integrates the use of quantitative and qualitative social research strategies to obtain, aggregate, and analyze data characterizing the professional group of trainers in Russia's VET system. Basic research was provided by questionnaires in all of the federal districts (as recognized by international law) of the Russian Federation. The quantitative poll of trainers was conducted by two-level representative sampling.

The sample consisted of 413 persons for the quantitative poll. Representative two-level sampling was ensured and provided reliable information that allows extrapolation from the data to the total population, which is approximately 40 thousand persons (Zolotareva, 2013). The error of selection has a standard deviation within 5%.

## Results and Discussions

Among the total research participants, 44% were male and 56% female. That women are overly weighted in the sample is typical of all levels of Russian education. In comparison, in the system of primary and secondary education, women make up 84%, 80% in VET, and 56% in higher education generally (Women and men of Russia, 2015).

### Age and sex distribution

Trainers of different ages took part in the research. The age distribution of respondents is presented in Figure 1.

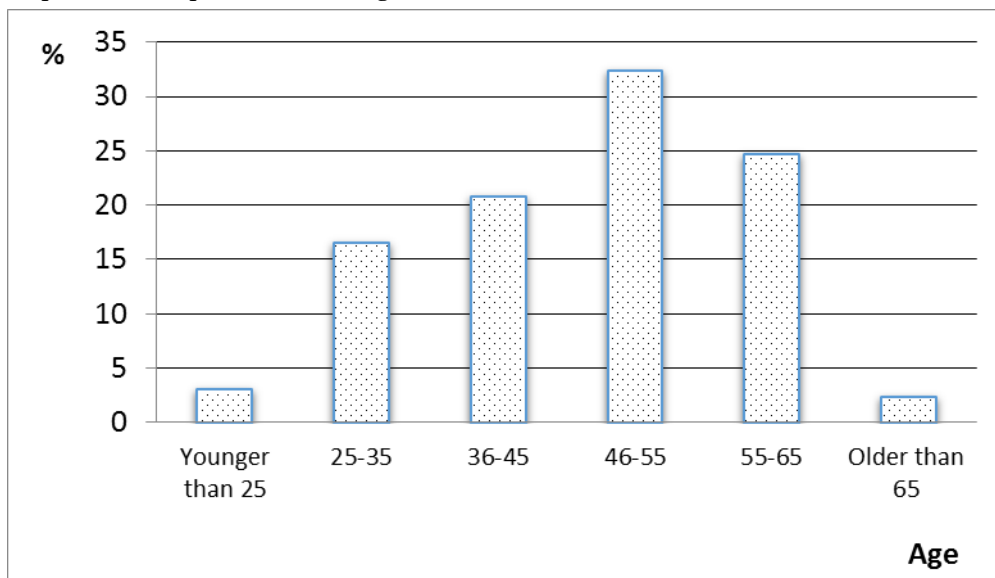
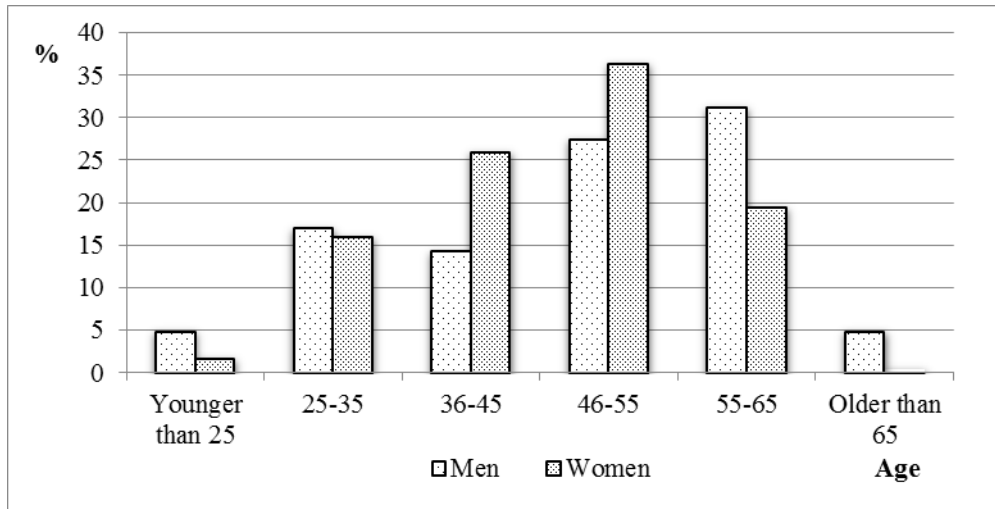


Figure 1. Age distribution of trainers as a percentage of all respondents



As seen in Figure 1, about a third of the total is made up of trainers of the 46–55 age group. There are almost 27% who are at pre-retirement age (men) or are pensioners. Approximately identical numbers represent youth (up to 35 years). Thus, the overweighting of trainers towards the senior age cohorts is obvious: nearly 60% of trainers are more than 45-years old.

The interrelation of gender and age of the trainers questioned is shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Interrelation of gender and age by percentage of men and women

It is apparent from the data that male trainers, more than female trainers, are presented in both the youngest and oldest age groups whereas the women prevail in the 36–55 age cohorts. This is very typical of the Russian education system generally: a certain proportion of male teachers come to work in educational institutions, but over time, because of low wages, they leave to go to more profitable opportunities, and education is left to women. Moreover, the tendency towards ageing staff, which generally characterises Russian education is also characteristic of this professional group. This causes concern that eventually there will be few left to teach the professions.

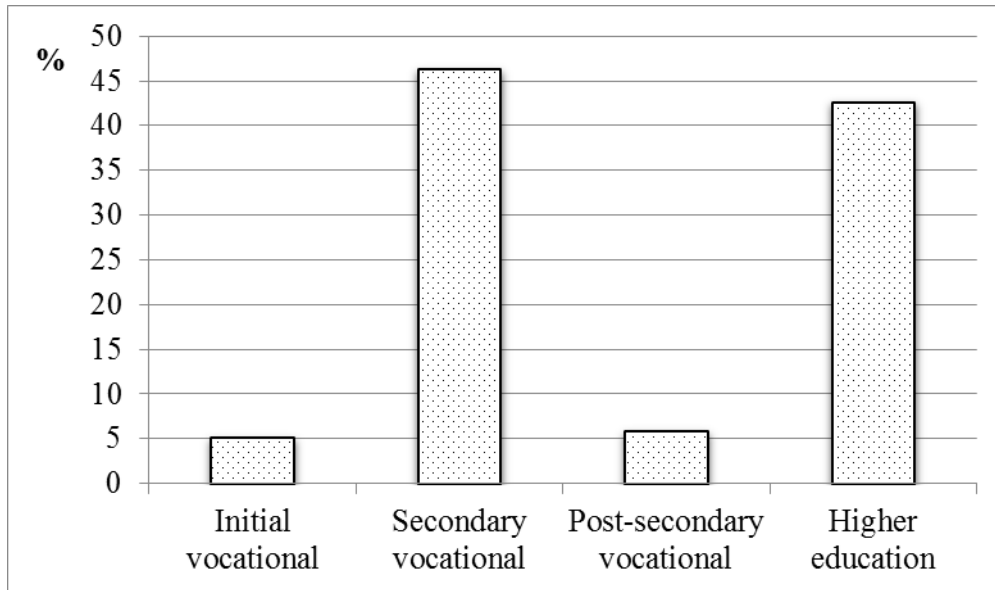
### **Marital status**

Marital status is a necessary element of a social portrait. In this research, it was important to know not only the marital status, but to provide an answer to a question defining social well-being according to whether respondents live alone or with a family. According to the survey, the vast majority of the trainers questioned (89.3%) live with families, while the others live alone. Among those who live alone more than half (59.2%) are trainers older than 46. Considering the high death rate of men of working age, it is possible to assume that a considerable part of this group is made up of widowers whose adult children live separately. The situation is rather typical for a demographic picture of Russia. About a quarter of trainers who live alone (22.75%) are still fairly young – the 25–35 age group. Among them, there are probably those who are not yet suited to family life for various reasons and also those who are divorced. Depending on the sex, the situation is also very typical: women are one and a half times more

likely to live alone than men (12.6% and 8.2% respectively). Living alone and widowhood appear to be the destiny of women in Russia.

### Education

Education level acts as the most important characteristic of a social portrait of any group. The chart describing the education level of training officers is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Education level of trainers by percentage of all respondents

As seen in Figure 3, the trainers are concentrated in two, approximately identical, levels of education: 46.2% of respondents have secondary vocational education and training, and 48.4% have post-secondary vocational and higher education. Such a distribution reflects the internal discrepancy of this professional group, a discrepancy caused by the transitional period for the VET system that came into force on September 1, 2013 during which functions on personnel training were transferred under the Federal Law 'About Education in the Russian Federation'.

The analysis of the interrelation of age and education level (see Table 1) shows a rather accurate dependent relationship: young trainers and others who are generationally representative have higher education levels.

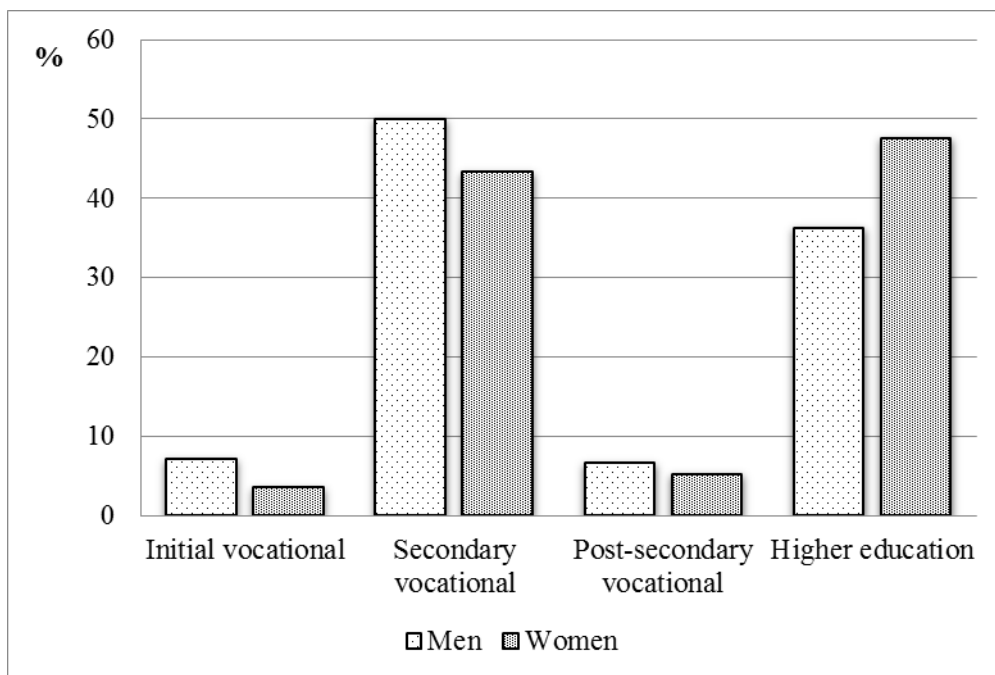
**Table 1.** Interrelation of age and education level of respondents (percentage by a column)

| Education level             | Age             |       |       |       |       |               |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|
|                             | Younger than 25 | 25-35 | 36-45 | 46-55 | 55-65 | Older than 65 |
| Initial vocational          | 0.0             | 1.5   | 1.2   | 6.0   | 10.8  | 0.0           |
| Secondary vocational        | 46.2            | 33.8  | 37.2  | 50.7  | 55.9  | 50.0          |
| Post-secondary vocational   | 0.0             | 8.8   | 7.0   | 6.0   | 2.9   | 10.0          |
| Higher vocational education | 53.8            | 55.9  | 53.5  | 37.3  | 30.4  | 40.0          |



|       |     |     |     |     |     |     |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

It shows, first, the unbiased process of a gradual increase in the educational levels of this professional group in the course of alternating generations; second, it shows the necessity of recruiting from the group of youth representatives because of its higher education level. The analysis of the received results has confirmed the all-Russian tendency to have more women with higher education: nearly a half of the female trainers but only every third man has obtained higher education. Male trainers (Figure 4) prevail among those who have a secondary vocational education.



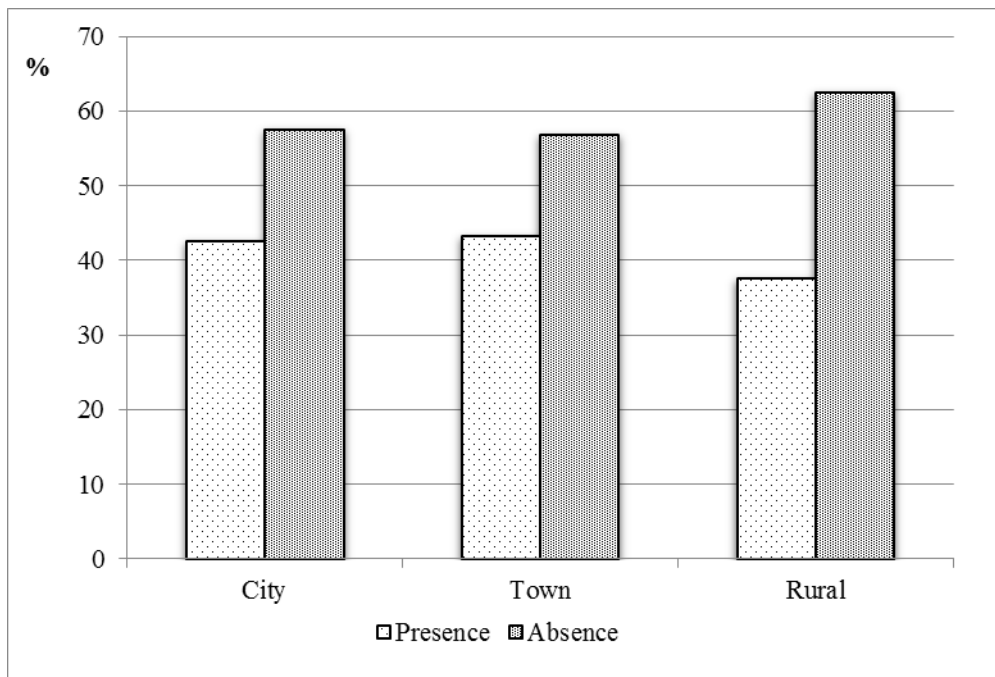
**Figure 4.** Interrelation of sex and education level by percentage of professional group

### ***Pedagogical education***

When characterizing the education of trainers it is necessary to pay attention to the absence of pedagogical education for most. As the survey shows, only 42.1% of trainers obtained pedagogical education while 57.9% did not. The presence of pedagogical education does not depend on age in practice but is to some extent connected with sex: 48.9% of women have a pedagogical education as opposed to 33.5% of men; this again confirms the Russian situation where teaching is a female profession. The presence of pedagogical education correlates with the available education: the higher the level of professional education, the more often it is pedagogical. If, among trainers with secondary vocational education, the share having pedagogical education is 36.6%, then a half (50.6%) has pedagogical education among trainers with higher education. The results allow the conclusion to be drawn that higher education rather than VET 'delivers' qualified teachers to this professional group.



This conclusion is confirmed also by the fact that the trainers living and working in cities as VET providers have a pedagogical education more often than their colleagues in rural areas (Figure 5). Higher education institutions including those with a pedagogical focus, as we know, concentrate in city settlements where graduates try to remain after completion. The unwillingness of young specialists to come back to small, rural homelands after completing a higher education degree is also a typical Russian tendency.

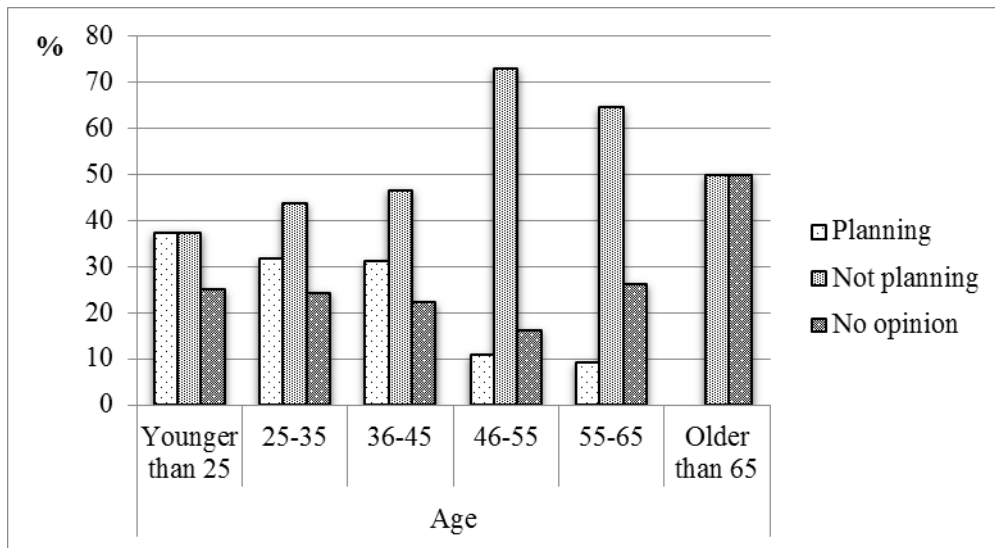


**Figure 5.** Presence of pedagogical education depending on settlement type by percentage of settlement group

### ***Plans for receiving pedagogical education***

The lack of pedagogical education for most of the trainers inevitably generates a natural question: whether there are plans for those who have no pedagogical education to receive it? The vocational activity of a trainer includes training and education of youth; therefore, the existence of the corresponding pedagogical competences is necessary.

The research results demonstrate that for those who have no pedagogical education only 18.4% of trainers plan to obtain it. Trainers answering this question who are not going to obtain it account for 59% of respondents, while 22.6% had not thought of it and therefore could also testify to a lack of educational plans. Education is ordinarily a prerogative of youth, while the older generation obtains further education much less often. From all the evidence, the data obtained during the research confirm the message that the older the trainers, the less likely they are to be planning further study (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** The influence of age on obtaining pedagogical skills by percentage of the age group

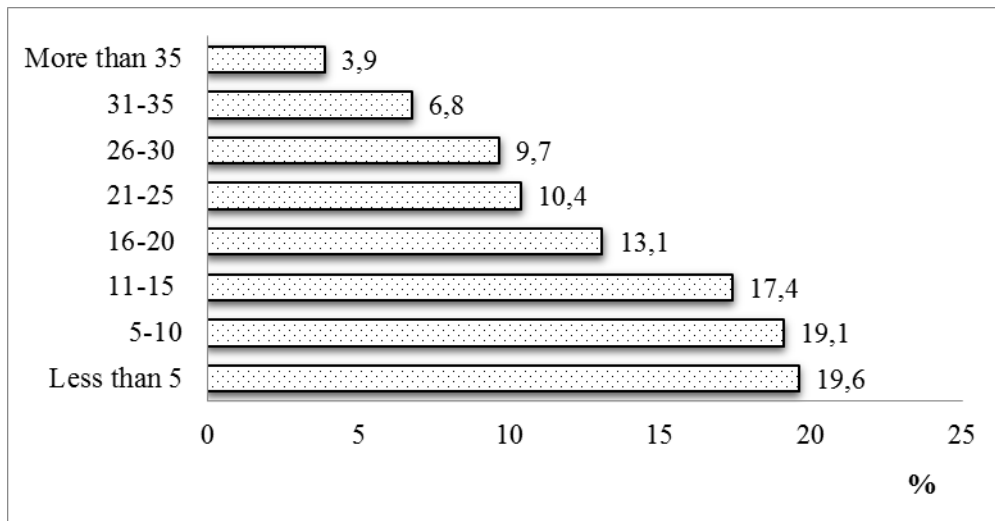
As seen from Figure 6, it is mainly youth and trainers in the average age group who plan to receive a pedagogical education.

### **Work experience**

Why are trainers not puzzled by receiving profiles of their educational qualifications for undertaking teaching activities? Do they consider that owing to their experience they have the necessary knowledge and skills? Do they not see any opportunity to study owing to age? Do they not want to spend time acquiring 'book' knowledge?

It will be apparent from the subsequent analysis that they are satisfied with opportunities to receive new knowledge and professional development. The analysis of data on length of service as trainers, perhaps, will give answers to these questions (Figure 7).

As the data indicate, only every fifth respondent has a short length of service as a trainer; other respondents have considerable lengths of service in this position. More than half (61.3%) have more than 10 years of work experience, and nearly a third (30.8%) have more than 20 years of experience. On the other hand, the data confirm a reduction in the number of trainers when experience grows. This suggests that not everyone is capable of remaining at this work for a long period of time.



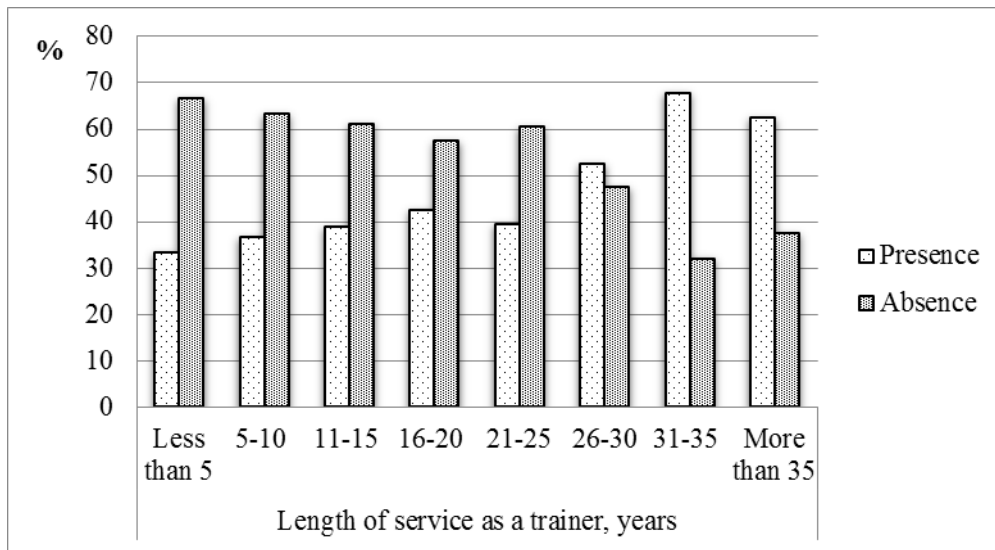
**Figure 7.** Years of work experience of trainers by percentage of the sample

The length of service of the trainer accurately correlates with age: an increase in age is also an increase in the length of service as a trainer, with only very insignificant deviations (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Interrelation of age and length of service of trainers (percentage by a column)

| Age             | Length of service (years) as a trainer |      |       |       |       |       |       |              |
|-----------------|--|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
|                 | Less than 5                            | 5-10 | 11-15 | 16-20 | 21-25 | 26-30 | 31-35 | More than 35 |
| Younger than 25 | 14.8                                   | 0.0  | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0          |
| 25-35           | 37.0                                   | 26.6 | 19.4  | 3.8   | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0   | 0.0          |
| 36-45           | 17.3                                   | 36.7 | 29.2  | 24.1  | 16.3  | 7.5   | 0.0   | 0.0          |
| 46-55           | 14.8                                   | 27.8 | 29.2  | 46.2  | 53.5  | 50.0  | 35.7  | 12.6         |
| 55-65           | 13.6                                   | 8.9  | 20.8  | 22.2  | 25.6  | 42.5  | 64.3  | 68.7         |
| Older than 65   | 2.5                                    | 0.0  | 1.4   | 3.7   | 4.7   | 0.0   | 0.0   | 18.7         |
| Total           | 100                                    | 100  | 100   | 100   | 100   | 100   | 100   | 100          |

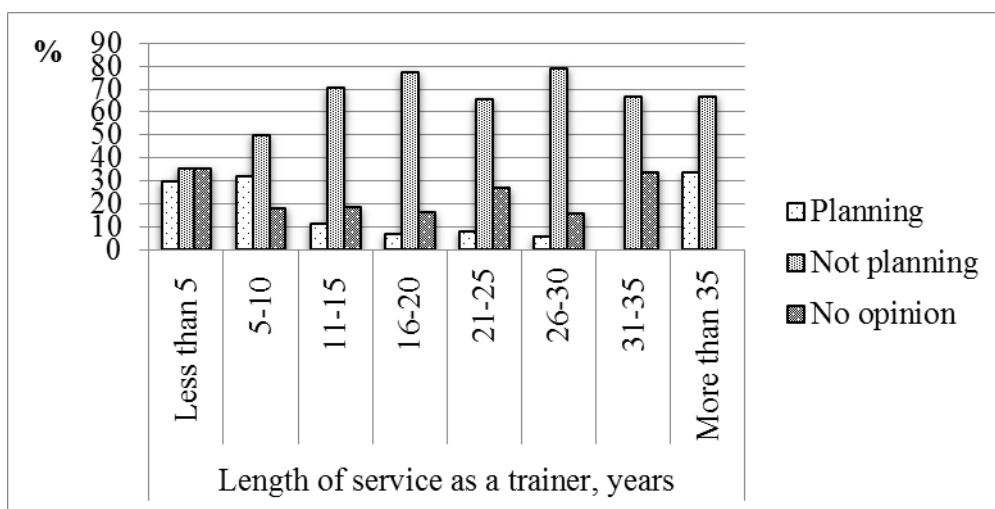
It may be that a lack of plans for obtaining a pedagogical education is explained by long-standing work experience. Research results have shown the influence of work experience on the presence or absence of pedagogical education; with the growth in length of service by trainers, the share of those having a pedagogical education increases (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** Interrelation of length of service as a trainer and presence of pedagogical education, by percentage of length of service groups

This figure shows that the vocational activity of a trainer demands a pedagogical education, and work in this position forces trainers to acquire it.

Among the trainers who do not have a pedagogical education, about a third have a short length of service (under 10 years), but have plans to receive it. It is the younger men who are most likely to adjust to continuing professional activity in education (Figure 9). With the increase in work experience, the share who plan to obtain pedagogical education gradually decreases (except in the most senior group, whose representatives are statistically insignificant).



**Figure 9.** Interrelation of length of service as a trainer and plans to obtain pedagogical education by percentage of length of service groups

Thus, a lack of pedagogical education is a serious problem for trainers and requires a solution. N.M. Zolotareva (2013), the director of the Department of State Policy in the sphere of VET and adult education in the Russian Ministry of Education and Science at the VII Congress of the Union of VET providers of Russia considered this problem: Pedagogical realities (the introduction of federal education, a problem with the expansion of categories of trained citizens) demand continuous development of pedagogical qualifications. Therefore, the development of a methodical network in the VET system, creation of regional research and methodical centres, and formation of interregional councils for professional education are important' (Zolotareva, 2013). It is possible to declare with confidence that in many respects the further success of training officers as a professional group depends on a solution to this problem.

### *Distribution of vocations*

The trainers in this study carry out personnel training in very different vocations for various branches of the economy. The base occupations are created by so-called mass vocations in industry (welders, mechanics, machine operators, electricians, turners, equipment adjusters, assemblers, milling-machine operators, etc.), construction (bricklayers, plasterers, painters, tilers, joiners, carpenters), transport (mechanics, drivers, tractor operators, locomotive drivers, etc.), and service sectors (cooks, bakers, sellers, controller-cashiers, bank controller, hairdressers, tailors, cutters, etc.). In addition, the agricultural professions are also presented as 'traditional' (masters of agricultural production, operators of machine milking, operators in the artificial insemination of animals) and 'new' (estate hostesses, masters of landscape gardening and landscape construction, flower growers). Among respondents, there were trainers who carried out training in IT technologies such as the operator in digital processing, or the operator of an electronic set. Another group of vocations represents the sphere of arts and crafts: the performer of art and decorative works, the artist of a list on wood, the manufacturer of art products from wood, and the master of national crafts. A special group is compiled from the universal professions necessary in any sphere – clerks, secretaries, and accountants. The partial list provided confirms the broad variety of vocations trained in the Russian VET system.

The distribution by vocations and federal districts of the trainers who participated is presented in Table 3.

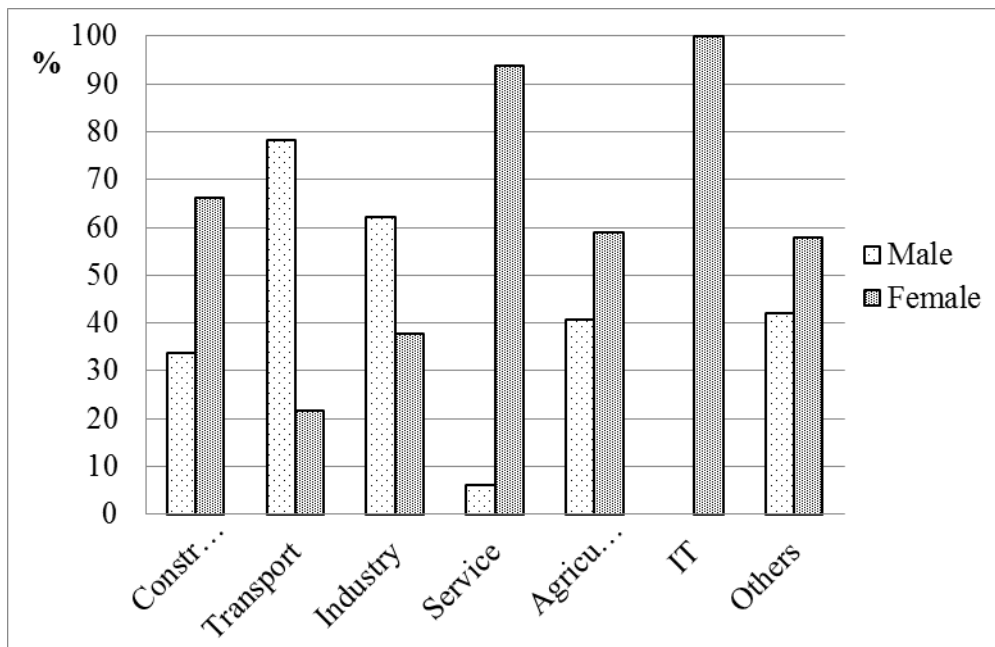
**Table 3.** Vocational distribution by federal districts (percentage by a row)

| Federal district | Training vocation |               |          |         |                 |     |       | Total |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|----------|---------|-----------------|-----|-------|-------|
|                  | Constru<br>ction  | Transpo<br>rt | Industry | Service | Agricult<br>ure | IT  | Other |       |
| Central          | 6.9               | 43.7          | 12.6     | 27.6    | 6.9             | 1.1 | 5.7   | 100   |
| Southern         | 19.3              | 19.3          | 19.3     | 33.3    | 10.5            | 0.0 | 0.0   | 100   |
| North Western    | 13.8              | 31.0          | 10.3     | 37.9    | 0.0             | 0.0 | 6.9   | 100   |
| Far East         | 11.1              | 40.7          | 25.9     | 29.6    | 7.4             | 0.0 | 3.7   | 100   |
| Siberian         | 9.7               | 16.1          | 35.5     | 25.8    | 0.0             | 6.5 | 0.0   | 100   |
| Ural             | 42.9              | 14.3          | 42.9     | 7.1     | 0.0             | 0.0 | 0.0   | 100   |
| Volga            | 16.1              | 19.4          | 26.6     | 21.8    | 6.5             | 3.2 | 8.9   | 100   |



|                |     |      |      |     |     |     |     |     |
|----------------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| North Caucasus | 0.0 | 66.7 | 33.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 100 |
|----------------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

As seen in the data, the mass vocations are represented in nearly all federal districts. The orientation of vocations, by which training is carried out, reflects rather distinctly (even when adjusted for pedagogical activity) the gendered professional segregation existing in the Russian economy. Training for 'male' vocations (industry, transport) is undertaken mainly by male trainers, and 'female' vocations (services sector, arts, and crafts) are under the supervision of female trainers. The prevalence of forewomen in such male vocations as construction and information technologies is explained first by the fact that females are overrepresented in education; second, in construction there are many 'female' vocations (e.g. painter, plasterer, tiler); and third, in the sphere of information technologies, women today actively compete with men (Figure 10).



**Figure 10.** Interrelation of sex and trained vocations by percentage of a vocational group

The analysis of research results on education level has shown that there are only small distinctions concerning higher and initial levels of vocational education whereas trainers with post-secondary vocational education in all professions are presented rather precisely. Trainers with higher education are represented more in areas of training such as IT (85.7%) and arts and crafts (75%). Trainers, who are bachelors with higher education, carry out training approximately in identical shares (40.4–41.5%) in the service sector, industrial, transport, and agriculture. The smallest proportion of all trainers with higher education (32.2%) is found in the construction trades.

As for trainers with an initial vocational education, they are mostly found in the agricultural sector (13.6%), in industry (8.9%), and in construction, transport, and services where they range from 2.8 to 4%. Among trainers who carry out preparation in IT and arts and crafts, there are not enough trainers

with the bachelor level of education to respond to real needs there were no masters with this level of education that were likely to correspond to a real need at a higher level of education.

## Conclusion

The overall conclusion from these findings indicates that a typical representative of this professional group is a woman of average or slightly advanced age with a family, who has a VET or higher education, has served as a training officer for not less than 10 years, and who has either been recruited as a highly skilled worker or as a specialist. A typical representative feels the need to change something in life and teach young people what she knows.

Creating a social portrait of trainers as a professional group allows us to note first its uniformity, and second, its typical nature as a pedagogical group. The main characteristics of the social portrait are similar in many respects to characteristics of other professional groups in the Russian education system, such as secondary school teachers, and other categories of VET teachers.

It seems that the professional group of trainers should be presented in less monochromatic terms with respect to the needs of the Russian economy. In this respect, a number of measures are needed to improve the management system of training through involving stakeholders. Modernisation of the production system assumes transformation not only in its technical components, but in the transformation of the society's social and professional structure. Any transformations connected with industrial re-organisation and a new production system assume transition not only to new technologies but also to the reproduction of a new type of workers. This fact generates a serious problem connected with reproducing the personnel capable of functioning successfully in the new production environment. The most important figure in the reproduction of personnel for the modern economy becomes the training officer.

The condition of this professional group is characterized by a number of vital issues, on which the solutions to its development prospects depend. These include ageing staff being replaced with inadequate numbers of younger people; insufficient education levels and qualifications, which are expressed in an absence of pedagogical education among most trainers and an unwillingness to obtain it; a predominately instrumental relation to work characterized by lack of a value orientation that, in many respects, is because of the low prestige of this profession. A serious problem also involves attracting qualified specialists, including highly skilled workers, to the position of training officer.

Training the trainers has to be transformed to a new system, which combines organizational mobility, and addresses the content of training, variability, and rationality. The main task of the new system of training of trainers derives from economic interests and is focused on ensuring the formation of a strata of highly qualified specialists in the working professions for the development of a competitive national economy. In other words, to train the modern worker, it is first necessary to prepare the trainer who understands modern production and, at the same time, possesses the necessary pedagogical and psychological competences.

A perspective on studying the trainer can be connected with addressing attention to the trainer's self-portrait, self-assessment, and self-presentation. Further research should take account of the wider social context to analyze the



dynamic characteristics of trainers through their inclusion in the social system, and interaction with other social groups and structures.

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### Notes on contributors

**Vitaly A. Kopnov** is PhD, Professor of Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University, Ekaterinburg, Russia.

**Tatiana V. Permyakova** is PhD, Professor of Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University, Ekaterinburg, Russia.

**Alexander G. Kislov** is PhD, Professor of Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University, Ekaterinburg, Russia.

**Olga I. Vlasova** is PhD, associate professor of Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University, Ekaterinburg, Russia.

**Vitaly S. Kuimov** is senior lecturer of Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University, Ekaterinburg, Russia.

**Maria A. Dremina** is PhD, associate professor of Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University, Ekaterinburg, Russia.

**Anastasia N. Blinova** is research scientist of Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University, Ekaterinburg, Russia.

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