

# Library and Information Education in the Republic of Tatarstan: Modern tendencies

## Bibliotecas y educación de la información en la República de Tatarstán: tendencias modernas

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#### ABSTRACT:

The paper reports the library and information education conditions and problems in the Republic of Tatarstan. It also reveals a linkage between development level of library science and library education, and provides justification for library community, educational and cultural authorities interaction in solving the present issues of the sector. It also suggests that libraries require a targeted contract training provided on the basis of Kazan state institute of culture.

**Keywords:** library and information education, libraries staff establishment in the Republic of Tatarstan

#### RESUMEN:

El artículo presenta un análisis del estado y los problemas de la educación bibliotecaria e informática en la República de Tatarstán. Se revela la interrelación entre el nivel de desarrollo de la biblioteca y la educación bibliotecaria, la necesidad de la interacción de la comunidad bibliotecaria y los organismos de gestión educativa y cultural en la solución de problemas existentes. Las bibliotecas necesitan un sistema de formación específica por contrato de especialistas provisto por el Instituto de Cultura del Estado de Kazan.

**Palabras clave:** biblioteca y educación de la información, dotación de personal de las bibliotecas de la República de Tatarstán

## 1. Introduction

Library science condition has an indisputable direct bearing on library education. In return, the library education problems affect library industry.

The document 'State cultural policy framework' places great importance of libraries as cultural institutions. Libraries preserve the function of exercising citizens' constitutional right to free access to information and knowledge. The libraries as public institutions of books distribution, reading promotion should be maintained, and some measures to modernize

their activity should be taken.

State program 'Cultural development of the Republic of Tatarstan in 2014-2020' notes: public libraries play the key role in creation of unified information and culture environment and exercise citizens' constitutional rights to free access to information and cultural values.

At present day, libraries are the most numerous actors of cultural space in the Republic of Tatarstan. There are only 1518 libraries, which are run by the Ministry of culture in the Republic of Tatarstan. According to the all-Russian libraries census of 2010, apart from the public libraries registered by the Ministry of culture in the Republic of Tatarstan, there are over 1800 libraries of various types and different types and forms of ownership.

The libraries of the Republic of Tatarstan are found vulnerable to the the same problems as any library in this sector of the whole country:

- reduction in libraries network;
  - reduction in mode of libraries operation, increased number of libraries providing citizens with the minimum service in a reduced mode of operation;
  - understaffing of library funds;
  - insufficient technical equipping of the libraries with office equipment and expendable materials, low-quality performance of communication channels, in particular the Internet in rural libraries;
  - low salary. According to the data announced in 2016, the salary in municipal libraries accounted for 52,3% of average salary in the region. Although in 2017 there was a salary rise for the librarians, which can hopefully further become a positive tendency in the sector.
- And, as a consequence of the above mentioned problems in the sector, librarian as a profession doesn't attract much attention.
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## 2. Methodology

The research is aimed at learning the modern tendencies of library and information education in the Republic of Tatarstan. To achieve this we have set the following objectives:

- study the staffing potential of library industry in the Republic of Tatarstan;
- characterize the age profile of librarians;
- analyze the percentage of librarians with a higher education in library science;
- study the library education condition in the Republic of Tatarstan;
- identify the reasons for decline in undergraduate students admitted to 'Library and information activity' course;
- characterize the model of continuing library and information education elaborated and implemented in Kazan state institute of culture;
- develop a strategy of professionally-oriented training with attracting employers and educational and cultural authorities.

The methodological framework of the research comprises systematic approach as a branch in scientific knowledge methodology, which deals with object of research as a system.

There are also empirical methods used in this research, in particular observation and comparison methods, along with publications and regulatory documents review.

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## 3. Results

According to the Russian national library monitoring data, conservation of professional network of library services establishment system in Tatarstan was regarded as positive and notable experience (only 27 actors of the Russian Federation managed to conserve professional network of library services establishment system).

Total number of librarians in the libraries of the Ministry of Culture in the Republic of Tatarstan amounts to 3065. 30,7 per cent with higher education in library science. In Republican libraries (the National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, Republican youth

library, Republican children's library, Republican special library for blind and visually impaired) the number of staff with higher education in library science is considerably higher and amounts to 64,3 per cent. 22,2 per cent of library staff have secondary education in library science. For the last 2 years the percentage of staff with higher library education has risen by 3 per cent. But, unfortunately, this growth is observed not due to the graduates of the University, but due to the advanced training that for the past three years has been successfully conducted by Kazan state Institute of culture.

Thus, 53 per cent of public and municipal libraries in the Republic of Tatarstan are staffed with specialists who have higher library education. It should be emphasized that only 9,2 per cent of them are aged under 30, and 19,9 per cent are aged over 55. Most of the librarians are aged from 30 to 55, which is more than 70 per cent. There is a big number of pre-pensionable age staff, since for the last decade the quantity of higher education institutes of culture graduates has been experiencing a considerable decline, and very few of them choose to work as a librarian opting for more prestigious and better-paid job.

It can be noted in 'Annual report on municipal libraries activity in the Republic of Tatarstan for year 2016', submitted by the National library of the Republic of Tatarstan, unequal distribution of the specialists with library education (secondary and higher), working in the Republican municipal libraries.

The situation of staff with higher vocational education has become critical in Tukaev district – 2,4 per cent of staff with higher vocational education, in Buinsk district it is 5,7 per cent, Yutazinsk district – 5,9 per cent, in Novosheshminsk district – 6,3 per cent.

As it is noted in the named report, age profile of the library staff in the Republic of Tatarstan is a particular cause for concern. A weak inflow of young specialists into sector does not allow the Republican libraries to develop in the framework of their objectives.

All the mentioned factors have an impact on library education condition in the Republic of Tatarstan.

For the last decade the quantity of students enrolled in 'Library and information activity' program has decreased three times. In 2008 there were 325 students, while in 2018 the number has reduced to 97.

There has also been a decrease in number of fields in the framework of 'Library and information activity' program. There were four of them five years ago:

- Management of library and information activity;
- Information support of professional activity;
- Psychology and pedagogy of library and information activity;
- Computer technology in library and information systems.

In 2016 there was only one student group admitted (in one field of study). In the current year education is provided in two fields of study: 'Management of library and information activity' and 'Communicative activity of public and school libraries' in full-time and part-time formats, respectively.

The admission quotas are also reducing. In 2008 there were 56 state-commissioned study places provided to library and information activity program (full-time – 27 study places, part-time – 29). In 2017 the number has declined to 20 places (full-time – 13, part-time – 7), which is supposed to cover two levels of education – bachelor's and master's programs.

Reduction of admission to 'Library and information activity' program was gradual, which was caused by some objective factors, such as:

- Reduction of state-commissioned study places;
- High tuition fee for commercial students (in 2017 tuition fee for full-time students was 174,400 rubles, for part-time students – 51 thousand rubles);
- Establishment of unified state examination in 'Literature', which is chosen by a small number of high school graduates, as profiling admission exam. It is reported that some school directors and teachers oppose leavers who opt for taking exam in literature, unwilling to take responsibility for the results;

-Low prestige of the profession (it should be admitted that prestige of a profession for the young people and their parents is primarily determined by the salary level);

-Absence of request for librarians in municipal institutions and the Ministry of labour, employment and social welfare of the Republic of Tatarstan;

-Absence of recognized professional standard of 'Specialist in the sphere of library and information activity', establishing as compulsory secondary or higher library and information education, further library and information education. At present there is a draft standard of 2013, but it has not yet been adopted. As a consequence, every second of library staff does not have a library education.

The reduction in the number of students enrolled in the specialty "Library and information activity", led to a reduction of the teaching staff involved in preparation of library staff and to the elimination of independent faculty. Ten years ago, there was a library faculty (we will apply this title to it, although it has been modified many times for the last years), including four departments staffing 26 specialists. Apart from librarians it provided education for publishers, booksellers, experts in applied informatics, document specialists.

Nowadays there is only one department of 'Librarianship, bibliography and record management', staffing 8 full-time and 3 part-time educators, responsible for producing the highly qualified staff in the field of library and information activity. The same staff provides training for 'Record and archive management' program.

The educators have industry-specific education, they regularly study on the programs of professional training and retraining. 90 per cent of them have academic degrees, over 50 per cent have doctor of science degrees.

The department offers multi-level training for library experts comprising of bachelor's, master's and postgraduate programs. There is a dissertation Council for 'Librarianship, bibliography and book science' program.

In the current situation Kazan State Institute of Culture in the nearest years will not be able to supply the library industry with the highly qualified specialists. Thus, the issue of professional training and retraining is getting specifically relevant.

Kazan State Institute of Culture developed and implemented the model of continuing library and information education in the following formats:

-post-course monitoring – the contact with our graduates, working in the libraries of culture and education systems, etc.;

-further education programs implemented in districts and cities and towns of the Republic of Tatarstan. Since 2015 the number of library staff graduated from 'Library and information activity' professional retraining program, implemented on the basis of local CLS (centralized library system), in Bugulma has been 29, in Aksubaev – 26, in Leninogorsk – 38. At present the program is being implemented in Almetyevsk (27 students) and in Bavly (41 students);

-professional training for specialists from municipal libraries and educational institutions.

Only during 2016/2017 academic year 46 school librarians of the Republic of Tatarstan graduated from 'Improving of school library activity' professional training program has been included into republican register of additional programs (modules) of professional training and retraining of educational staff in the Republic of Tatarstan.

In September, 2017 the program 'Relevant issues of modern theories and practices of library science' of professional training was implemented and available online for CLS librarians of Naberezhnye Chelny. 36 library staff participated in it.

In October of current year Kazan institute of culture with the Russian Ministry of culture support has implemented a program 'Library assemblies. Reading and literature in national language in public libraries promotion' of professional training for library staff, attended by colleagues from Mariy-El, Udmurtia, republican libraries of Tatarstan, Centralized library system of Kazan, totaling 36 trainees.

Kazan State Institute of Culture is doing its best to conserve republican higher library school,

support and development of staffing potential of the industry. But there are too many problems, which are hardly solved without the help of employers.

We have set a goal of enhancing vocational-oriented work with the involvement of employers and local cultural and educational authorities.

The first step in achieving it should be an increased number of students admitted on a company-commissioned targeted study places. By now this number should have been increased by 30 per cent of total number of admitted students.

It should be noted that for the last eight years the institute staff has been making a lot of efforts to attract students.

In particular, according to the results of staff situation of the industry monitoring they elaborated a report and on its basis prepared the letters signed by the minister of culture in the Republic of Tatarstan and sent to municipal institutions asking them to select the students to enter the institute. (Unfortunately, even these measures did not bring the expected results, since the potential students did not apply to study in the institute).

During eight years, annually, the educators has spoken on the board of republican CLS directors, organized by the Ministry of culture, with an appeal to organize a vocational-oriented work among the high school students, explaining the admission rules, including the advantages of targeted admission.

Department education staff go to republican districts, organizes meeting-ups with high school students, provides vocation-oriented work, and arranges the meetings with institute graduates in the libraries of Kazan.

For the last 2 years in the framework of professional training program for school and republican librarians department education staff has gone to towns and cities and districts of the republic of Tatarstan (Bugulma, Bavly, Aksybaevo, Almetevsk, Leninogorsk, Naberezhnye Chelny), performed work with librarians, explained admission rules, appealed to take an active part in vocation-oriented work.

As the members of State attestation committee (Izhevsk, Orenburg, Yoshkar-Ola, Cheboksary) in the field of 'Library and information activity', the department education staff is actively recruiting students on master's and postgraduate programs.

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## 4. Conclusions

Thus, a targeted contract training program implemented by specialists of Kazan State Institute of Culture is of high importance today. Measures on improving the staff retention system, their moral and financial support should be taken.

It should be noted that, apart from traditional methods of social support, for which all the categories of librarians are eligible, in many regions a series of special measures for young staff members attraction and retention are taken and these we lack in Tatarstan, though. This is a single financial support, monthly salary increments, mortgage loans and reduced housing fees, dormitories for young specialists employed to serve in their specialty in the state cultural and educational institutions.

Only the mutual efforts made by librarianship community and cultural and educational authorities can provide solution to the current problems and, thus, conservation and development of library education and the industry itself, in general.

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