



The Transition from Education to Work and Employment Opportunities from the Point of View of the Students of the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan

Munavara Abdullaeva

PhD, Associate Professor, State Conservatory of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan

E-mail: abdullaeva_15@hotmail.com

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Abstract

The paper examines the results of the quantitative study undertaken among the students of the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan in order to reveal what difficulties and shortcomings creative graduates have, and whether they are prepared to break into professional networks. As well as how higher educational establishments in creative musical art deal with a growing interest in the sector of entrepreneurship. According to the findings, students are generally aware of the complexities of a career in music and the performing arts. In this regard, the majority of respondents showed interest in gaining additional knowledge outside of their primary profession. The survey also revealed that many students wanted to do more of their specialty without considering the economic implications; however, a smaller group of survey participants was prepared to enter the creative economy.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurship; Musical Education; Multidisciplinary Skills; Contemporary Art Market; Prospect for Creativity; Art Management; Career Opportunities*

Introduction

The demand for specialists from a specific educational institution is now used as an indicator of the effectiveness of a higher education institution [1]. The State Conservatory of Uzbekistan's Bachelor's programs provide students with knowledge, skills and abilities for their further professional activities, and pedagogical activities in general education schools, as well as in specialized music schools, and also provide an opportunity to continue their studies in the postgraduate program. The State Conservatory of Uzbekistan's curricula combine the development of students' creative abilities, as well as providing them with professional knowledge and skills for continuous professional and intellectual growth. However, for recent graduates who are just starting out in their careers, career advancement has emerged as one of life's most pressing issues. As part of the MUSAE (Multidisciplinary Skills for Artists' Entrepreneurship) program, a new course is being introduced at the Conservatory of Uzbekistan to help students learn the fundamentals of entrepreneurship in order to increase their labor market competitiveness. However,

before the introduction of the new course, a quantitative study was carried out among the students to determine their awareness of the problems of the labor market, as well as their aspirations for career growth. The questionnaires were used to collect needs data. Thus, the results of a survey conducted among students at Uzbekistan's State Conservatory assisted in understanding how young musicians are able to face the challenges of future employment. The survey determined whether any system exists to assist conservatory graduates in finding jobs that meet their material and professional requirements.

Today, creativity acts as one of the key principles of modern society. The socio-cultural environment generated by representatives of creative specialties has intellectual capital and a strategic resource in the sphere of art and culture [2, – p. 105]. Due to the fact that the educational process in conservatories is aimed at the reproduction of specialists whose work is performance and creativity, it is very important to put emphasis on organizing and managing the entrepreneurial process. Professional musicians after graduating from educational institutions, face difficult labor market competition. Musicians are delicately organized human materials whether they are performers, composers, or conductors, but they are not usually suited to dealing with practical issues ranging from employment (which, by the way, music universities have not paid enough attention to) to concert performance and tour organization [3]. The importance of entrepreneurial training for students in art universities, particularly at the Conservatory, confirms that today all components of the musical sphere including commercial are vital.

Graduates of the conservatory should work in the context of the modern art market without a business assistant, creating works and performing them not only for self-realization but also for the sale of their creative product. Moreover, the future entrepreneur must be able to participate in the planning and execution of market research in order to communicate with sponsors, buyers, and users of their products.

According to Suminova “art managers must understand not only the types of art, but also the specifics and technological processes of creating cultural forms, documents, projects, and information objects for the art industry” [4, – p. 49]. While Bennett in her paper reflects on the role of higher educational establishments in shaping the careers of students [5]. Today, conservatory graduates who have mastered their creative specialty and have a thorough understanding of the creative process must also be familiar with the legal and financial aspects of the latter.

In order to study was conducted in the conservatory within the framework of the MUSAE project. The project aims to prepare SCU students to generate art projects, promote their names in the art market, and form segments of the arts and culture.

In order to find out to what extent the students of the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan are ready to master the knowledge of entrepreneurship the survey was conducted among students and teachers in the context of considering the problem of how much the students themselves are ready to take on the functions of entrepreneurs.

The Survey Findings

The main objective of the survey was to identify the potential and shortcomings of the educational system (taking into account also the students' point of view) regarding students' readiness for independent employment after graduation. As part of the ongoing multidisciplinary skills program, a survey has been conducted among the students of the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan to assess the responsiveness of the education system concerning entrepreneurial objectives. The number of students at the time of the survey enrolled in SCU was 1402 (BA–1349, MA–53) and the percentage of female students was 69 percent. The universe of the study encompasses students from 18 years old and up to 29 years with the majority from 20 to 23 years. Thus, a total of 75.5 and 25.5 percent respectively

represented female and male respondents in the survey. The survey questions have been distributed among students via e-mails and TELEGRAM platforms. The survey was conducted in Russian, Uzbek, and English, and three versions were disseminated. Most of them were from Tashkent (the capital of Uzbekistan) others were from Andijan, Nukus, Navoi, and Chirchik.

A total of 51.1 percent were in their 4th year of study with 19.1, 12.8, and 8.5 percent from the 2nd, 1st, and 3rd years respectively. Those who had parallel work activities were 57.4 percent against 42.6 percent who did not. Students' parallel activities were laid in Opera and Ballet theatre, chamber orchestras, teaching centers, film studios, specialized musical schools, and a small amount in the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan.

Participants were asked to answer questions about the study environment and views on their professional development in the future.

The findings suggest that most students believe their chosen profession is their calling, that they enjoy what they do, and that they love art and music and cannot imagine their lives without them. Some responded that it ran in their family, while one responded that he entered this field by mistake.

A total of 59.6 percent of respondents agreed that their institution fully supported students in their studies, that they provided necessary literature to improve knowledge, that they have highly professional teachers, that they provide all opportunities for creativity, and that their teaching staff is qualified and highly professional. Many students admitted that the state scholarship helped them.

Though 40.4 representatives believe that the institution is not interested in helping students. Thus, they mentioned the high cost of training, lack of materials and training equipment; poor food quality in canteens; lack of internet service; lack of air conditioning, and uniform requirements, no fun activities for non-titular representatives, corruption, the teaching process is not going out of the box. A few answered they did not know. Therefore 63.8 percent of the respondents said they would recommend their institute to others while the rest 36.2 said they would not.

A total of 78.7 percent of the respondents believe that students should acquire basic knowledge of the economy since it could be used in life later, all knowledge will come in handy, against 21.3 percent who do not. Less than 56 percent of respondents think that their institution promotes entrepreneurship, though no broad answers were provided.

Concerning critical issues that the institute needs to improve the students answered as followed:

Their institutions should increase the number of rehearsal classes; more freedom for teachers and students to pursue creativity; building renovation; rehearsal classes and up-to-date equipment; mainly computers; better heating and air conditioning system; should improve teachers' qualifications; eradicate corruption; increase the number of hours for studying subjects in majors; make close connections with foreign universities; and introduce master classes by musicians of a worldwide scale.

Students see themselves in the future, as businesspersons, interior designers, architects, teachers, exhibition curators, concertmasters, art managers, performers, film producers, opera singers, and work with charitable foundations in tourism. Some have not decided on a profession yet. As a result, 75.5 percent of respondents are considering starting a business in the future. Given this, they identified a lack of funds as the primary impediment to the realization of their business plans, as well as a lack of theoretical and academic knowledge and information, a lack of a degree, and a lack of government support. The respondents had difficulty determining what information they needed to meet these needs.

They listed economics, management, pedagogy, psychology, specialty subjects, history, foreign languages, IT, and tourism as teaching subjects that could provide them with the necessary skills for doing business. A total of 70.2 percent of those polled responded that those subjects are already taught, while the remaining 29.8 percent would like to see them added to the curriculum. Altogether, 51.1 percent of respondents have already begun business projects that they intend to continue in the future. In addition, of the latter, half work as a solo entrepreneur and the other half as part of a team.

Thus the business they wanted to be involved in reflected: a foreign languages center; a private music school; the organization of an event; a design studio; lectures on art; various courses in art history; a school for children with disabilities; performances group of musicians, blogging; an educational project with a new look at music, services—fine arts. Some said they didn't know, one said it was a secret, and one said he/she preferred to be involved in creative performing rather than a business.

Thus, respondents believe that their business will affect young people in both entertainment and cognitive aspects, will put people in a good mood, will pass on knowledge to the next generation, will assist people in identifying their talents, and music of all genres will be available to a large audience, will improve the quality of life, and will foster creativity.

When answering about the strength and weaknesses of their business ideas the respondents evidently lacked clear ideas. Though the weakness they attributed to financial issues and lack of funding and sponsors, lack of professional staff, and the financial side of the issue, do not see and do not understand how all this can be organized, assembled, and created in a single system; no clients, need in an advertisement. Despite these doubts, 48.9 percent answered that their business idea is economically valuable, 8.5 percent that it is not valuable, and 42.6 percent that they do not know.

When asked what they knew about financial investments have to foresee, it appears that some students did not fully understand this question, almost everyone said they knew nothing or very little. The same can be said for the following question regarding the possibility of investing many did not answer or were not sure.

In terms of questions that respondents thought were necessary for work, 55.3 percent said they needed marketing knowledge, 48 percent said they needed legal skills, and 63 percent said they needed financial knowledge. In regard to teaching subjects that are already present in the current curriculum to meet the needs of English and management, the respondents included composition; entrepreneurship, economics, management; fundamentals of economics, marketing, gallery business, mathematics, marketing, art marketing, history and theory of cultural tourism, polyphony and analysis.

Conclusion

To conclude it should be noted that according to the results, the students overwhelmingly agree that knowledge of the economics is important. Overall, the respondents had business ideas that ranged from start-up companies in music groups to foundations for education. The majority of business ideas were general and not specifically elaborated which points to the need for market analysis skills, as the succeeding questions regarding investment. Significantly, the skills they require to develop their business ideas include financial advice, business model, and marketing which would suggest that these need to be incorporated into the modules and learning outcomes of the courses to be implemented by the project. The findings also shed light on the awareness of the students on how to make the first steps to build a career and a network in order to enter the professional world.

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