



Digitalization of Creative Spaces of the Caspian Region Youth

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Abstract

The results the Google Forms survey conducted among young people living the Caspian bordering countries (Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan) revealed the main problems in the development of creative spaces for the youth self-fulfillment: lack of such places or their inaccessibility, lack of variety of the services provided, low level of their digitalization. At the same time, according to the respondents, digital spaces, which are developing especially rapidly during the pandemic, are disparate and sometimes dangerous (because of manipulations and fraud). The need of young people for systematizing and structuring creative spaces both in real and virtual environment is evident. The digital platform Discover Your Mission Through Nine Sources of Giving was developed and successfully implemented within the framework of this study. Thanks to this platform, the students of Astrakhan State University were consciously choosing and building creative spaces (in the roles of followers, creators, mentors). Creative spaces make it possible to find a useful activity according to one's mission and connect it with the future profession or with volunteer, business, blogging activities and research work (graduation thesis or dissertation). Immersion of young people into creative spaces and the process of its digitalization (in three areas: instant messaging, using social media for professional needs, professional software) resulted in the increase of responsibility for their lives and for the development of the Caspian region in comparison with the control study group.

Keywords

Love; Scientific Interest; Responsibility; Mission; Socialization; Social Media; Creative Space; Employment; Digital Spaces; Digitalization



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Цифровизация творческих пространств Прикаспийской молодёжи

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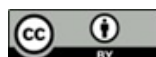
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Аннотация

По результатам проведенного Google-опроса молодых людей, проживающих в прикаспийских регионах (Азербайджан, Иран, Казахстан Россия, Туркмения), были выявлены основные проблемы развития творческих пространств для самореализации молодёжи: нехватка подобных пространств или их недоступность, однообразие предоставляемых услуг, слабая их цифровизация. В тоже время, цифровые пространства, особенно стремительно развивающиеся в период пандемии, по мнению опрошенных респондентов, разрозненны, иногда представляют опасность (через манипулирование и мошенничество). Очевидна потребность молодёжи в систематизации и упорядочивании творческих пространств в реальном и виртуальном пространстве. В настоящем исследовании была разработана и успешно реализована цифровая платформа «Узнай своё предназначение через девять источников отдачи», благодаря которой студенты Астраханского государственного университета осознанно выбирали и создавали творческие пространства (в ролях последователя, создателя, наставника), позволяющие найти полезное дело, исходя из своего предназначения, связав его с получаемой профессией, волонтерской, предпринимательской, блогерской активностью и научным исследованием (выпускной квалификационной работой или диссертацией). Результатом такого погружения молодых людей в творческие пространства и процесса его цифровизации (по трём направлениям: мгновенный обмен сообщениями, профессионализация социальных сетей, профессиональное программное обеспечение) стал рост, в сравнении с контрольной исследовательской группой, ответственности за свою жизнь и за развитие Прикаспийского региона.

Ключевые слова

любовь; научный интерес; ответственность; миссия; социализация; социальные медиа; творческое пространство; занятость; цифровые пространства; цифровизация



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Introduction

In September 2020, the authors studying digitalization of creative spaces conducted a Google Forms survey among 1100 young people living in the Caspian bordering countries (Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan) and studying at Astrakhan State University. The survey included the following questions:

- Are there creative spaces for youth self-fulfillment in your region and what problems of their functioning do you consider the most burning?
- What digital spaces and resources do you find the most effective for the youth self-fulfillment, what problems and risks do they hide?

The analyses of the answers to the first question let make the following conclusion: the common problems for young people in all the countries include lack of creative spaces or their inaccessibility, lack of variety of the services provided, low level of their digitalization.

The analyses of the answers to the second question let make the following conclusion: digital spaces, which are developing especially rapidly during the pandemic, are disparate and sometimes dangerous, because of manipulations and fraud.

Systematization of the survey results makes it necessary to structure creative spaces both in real and virtual spaces in accordance with the mission of each person.

A mission is a unique meaningful role, which a person, regardless of his gender, nationality, religion or age, needs to play in order to feel appreciated and to remain in good memory of his descendants. (Tetersky & Rostovskaya, 2016).

“The value of a man should be seen in what he gives and not in what he is able to receive. Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value” (Albert Einstein).

The concept “mission” has two aspects: materialistic (atheistic) and idealistic (mysterious) (Frolov, 1991).

From the point of view of materialism, each person, like all other living beings on the Earth, is the result of randomness of natural powers, of natural selection. A person strives to broaden and to deepen understanding of the world and his place in it: “When I view all beings not as special creations, but as the lineal descendants of some few beings which lived long before the first bed of the Silurian system was deposited, they seem to me to become enobled” (Charles Darwin).

From the religious point of view each person is born with a certain goal which he needs to achieve in the earthly and afterlife with the God’s help.

Mission means beingness determined by a higher power when a person has a possibility to choose whether to follow this path or to deviate. (Tetersky, 2014).



A person is the top of evolution (in dialectics) or a God's creation (in religion) but both interpretations presuppose conditionality of his development as of a being useful to himself, his family, the society, the state, the world.

A mission is revealed through love to somebody or something. It is the love as the higher power and the source of ideas and inspiration that creates the feeling of joy and happiness in life. The best things are created with love, filling a person's life with bright colors. Life with the mission, the sense, the positive goal and love is much more interesting and fuller than a constant race after the success.

Responsibility is also a positive attitude to the past, the present, and the future. The skills of the confident past, present and future allow to master innovative technologies to create a design of the real life. With the help of science, literature, cinema, theatre, music, Internet they allow to open new possibilities to live, to make friends, to love, to create, to be happy by making other people happy, to believe in oneself and to find soul mates able to change the world for the better (Fundamentals of State Youth Policy of the Russian Federation for the Period up to 2025, 2014).

Review of the references

While analyzing references on the formation of creative spaces in the Caspian region we focused on the studies of the processes of implementing and using digital technologies in culture.

The problem of digitalization in culture is studied by O.N. Miroschnichenko, E.A. Kuzmina. They analyzed the theory and practice of implementing digitalization in culture, revealed tendencies and patterns of digitalization development in Russia and Chuvashia (Miroschnichenko & Kuzmina, 2021).

V.Y. Muzychuk also studies implementation and usage of digital technologies. The author names five main fields of this sphere digitalization, generalizes the foreign and Russian experience of studying, preserving, spreading and consuming cultural values with the help of digital technologies (Muzychuk, 2020).

German researchers O. Ahel and K. Lingenau see digitalization as the key to increasing students' access to education for the sake of sustainable development and they announce the concept *Virtual Academy of Sustainable Development* of Bremen University that promotes UN sustainable development goals with the help of digital media (Ahel et al., 2020).

North American researchers W.F. Crittenden, I.K. Biel, and W.A. Lovely from **Northern Arizona University**, summarize the advanced technologies, concepts, researches, critical, artistic and interactive educational skills, necessary to increase the values in the world where machines will work together with people-specialists. They make a conclusion that it is the digitalization that will provide a new marketing landscape for interaction and mutual support of universities, professional associations, publishing companies and technological industries (Crittenden et al., 2019).



European researchers of the student creative spaces E. Wagner, N. Pachova, A. Suominen, C. Svendler-Nielsen, and L. Veloso in **the Yearbook of the European Network of Observatories in the Field of Arts and Cultural Education** reveal the connection between art, cultural education, digitalization and sustainable development goals and offer innovative fields of study for future specialists in art and culture (Wagner et al., 2021).

In his work ***Allowing Space for Ethnorelative Practices to Emerge in Dance Studio Practices***, the New Zealand researcher K. Mortimer **shows that it is efficient to include social integrity of various views of life into dance training. It makes it possible to acknowledge and accept cultural differences, create new spaces and relations** (Mortimer, 2021).

Chinese researchers X. Wu and Y. Ye study social responsibility of the youth and focus on employment as the final goal of a person to get family and formal education, as entrance into the society and as fulfillment of social responsibilities (Wu & Ye, 2018).

This references review has resulted in defining the topic of the experimental study.

Materials and methods

The objective of the study is to evaluate the influence of digitalization of the youth creative spaces on the level of a young person's responsibility for his life and for the development of his area of residence.

Having conducted the study, the team of the authors have developed and systematized its results:

- Google Forms survey involving 1,100 young people living in the Caspian region countries (Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, Turkmenistan);
- the digital platform *Discover Your Mission Through Nine Sources of Giving*;
- the experimental programme of the conscious choice and building of creative spaces that allow to find a useful activity according to one's mission and to connect it with the future profession or with volunteer, business, blogging activities and research work;
- methods of evaluating the level of responsibility for one's life and for the development of the area of residence (as a unity of processes of self-consciousness, actions and interactions);
- methods of evaluating digitalization process of the experimental creative space of the youth.

On the basis of the Autonomous non-profit organization "Children's and Youth Social Initiatives" the digital platform *Discover Your Mission Through Nine Sources of Giving* was developed and successfully implemented within the framework of this study <http://anodimsi.ru/testy>. Thanks to it, 250 students of the faculty of Peda-



gological Education, Art, Service and Culture (PEASC) of Astrakhan State University were consciously choosing and building creative spaces.

The questions of the digital platform *Discover Your Mission Through Nine Sources of Giving* are structured according to the time lines (the past, the present, the future) and formulated as the pieces of advice of how to achieve one's mission: from the images setting a meaning, through the actions in the here and now, to the connections including the most important mentors in achieving any goal (see Table 1).

	Images	Actions	Connections
The past	1. AWARDS	2. GIFTS	3. EXPERIENCE
The present	4. CREATIONS	5. HOBBIES	6. TOPICS
The future	7. HEROES	8. DESIRES	9. CARE

Table 1. Nine Favourite Sources of Giving

In order to discover one's mission it is necessary to answer nine questions about something valuable gained in the past (questions 1-3), something that causes excitement and admiration in the present (questions 4-6), something that makes other people, future descendants and followers happy (questions 7-9).

The digital platform *Discover Your Mission Through Nine Sources of Giving* is a study of one's own investment attractiveness, usefulness and value to the world.

During the academic year 2020/2021 150 students of the faculty of Pedagogical Education, Art, Service and Culture of Astrakhan State University were consciously choosing and building creative spaces allowing them to find a useful activity according to their missions and connect it with their future profession, volunteer, business, blogging activity and research work (graduation thesis or dissertation).

The main motive for the students to take part in the experiment was a chance for self-actualization, self-fulfillment, personal growth, professional training, understanding social importance of their activity, communication with the team of fellow-thinkers (Gil & Lukyanova, 2013).

The sense-role approach to the formation of responsibility developed by the authors allows to study interaction of a person with the world through the answers to the questions like "who and why?", which are related to the three fundamental tasks a person faces in the living time:

- Who is my mentor (creator, parent, curator, educator, master, teacher, trainer) and why?
- Who is with me and why?
- Who will be left after me and why?



A person's responsibility is, first of all, to know answers to these questions. In the process of understanding his unity and taking responsibility for his future and future of those he is in charge of, a person undergoes three conditional stages of development:

- A follower: thanks to some experienced others, a person, sometimes losing his own peculiarities, adopts current norms, principles, values, symbols, rules, tools and methods of activity which are used by all members of the group;
- A creator: escalation of controversy between the results of the first stage “to be like everyone else” and strive for individualization is solved by a person’s significant contribution to the life of a group or even by assuming its leader’s position;
- A mentor: a person fulfills his mission and worldview together with his students-followers, shaping their self-consciousness, self-analysis, assessment and self-assessment.

Sustainability of a personality’s structure is provided by multiple reproductions of these stages of responsibility because a person is a member not of one group but of many groups.

Moreover, finding himself in various situations a person whether consciously or subconsciously can break the impact of the environment and take a certain role in it: of a follower, a creator or a mentor. In any conscious age, a child from being a person accepting a social experience can become its creator and reveal himself as a subject and an object of influence.

The control study group included 130 students of the faculty of Psychology.

Methods of evaluating the level of responsibility for one’s life and for the development of the area of residence: initial (before being included into the digital platform and being immersed into creative digital spaces) and final:

1. What is your attitude to the life?
 - 1.1. – positive;
 - 1.2. – neutral;
 - 1.3. – negative;
2. Do you have any mentors? If yes, in what fields:
 - 2.1. – in education;
 - 2.2. – in (future) profession;
 - 2.3. – in upbringing;
 - 2.4. – in sport;
 - 2.5. – in entertainment;
 - 2.6. – in a different one, which one _____
 - 2.7. – I don't have mentors;
3. Can you say that your behaviour is perfect?
 - 3.1. – yes;



- 3.2. – I don't know.
- 3.3. – no;
4. Do you often ask for help and get it?
 - 4.1. – regularly;
 - 4.2. – seldom;
 - 4.3. – never.
5. Do you often delegate your duties to other people?
 - 5.1. – regularly;
 - 5.2. – seldom;
 - 5.3. – never.

6. Do you take full responsibility for your life?
 - 6.1. – full;
 - 6.2. – partial;
 - 6.3. – I don't take any;
 - 6.4. – I don't;
 - 6.5. – a different answer _____
7. Do you often reshape the life around you (build, create, improve, design, construct, program, etc.)?
 - 7.1. – regularly;
 - 7.2. – seldom;
 - 7.3. – never.
8. Does happiness of close people make you happy?
 - 8.1. – yes;
 - 8.2. – I don't know;
 - 8.3. – no;
 - 8.4. – a different answer _____
9. Do you contribute to the life of close people?
 - 9.1. – yes;
 - 9.2. – I don't know;
 - 9.3. – no;
 - 9.4. – a different answer _____
10. Do you often take a role of a leader in a group?
 - 10.1. – regularly;
 - 10.2. – seldom;
 - 10.3. – never.
11. Do you know your future?
 - 11.1. – I do;
 - 11.2. – I don't;
 - 11.3. – a different answer _____
12. Do you help your close people discover their future by turning it into socially useful activity?
 - 12.1. – I do;



- 12.2. – I don't;
12.3. – a different answer _____
13. Do you manage to pass your love for some activity to other people?
13.1. – I do;
13.2. – I don't;
13.3. – a different answer _____
14. If you have students-followers, how often do you get feedback from them?
14.1. – regularly;
14.2. – seldom;
14.3. – never;
14.4. – I don't have students-followers.
15. If you have students-followers, how often do you thank them?
15.1. – regularly;
15.2. – seldom;
15.3. – never;
15.4. – I don't have students-followers.
16. If you have mentors, how often do you thank them?
16.1. – regularly;
16.2. – seldom;
16.3. – never;
16.4. – I don't have mentors.

Interpretation of the results of the survey.

Questions 1-5 show the level of mastery of a sense-role “A follower”:

- high level: 1.1., 2.1., 2.2., 2.3., 2.4., 2.6., 3.1., 4.1., 5.1.
- average level: 1.2., 2.5., 3.2., 4.2., 5.2.
- low level: 1.3., 2.7., 3.3., 4.3., 5.3.
- Questions 6-10 show the level of mastery of a sense-role “A creator”:
- high level: 6.1., 7.1., 8.1., 9.1., 10.1.
- average level: 6.2., 6.4., 7.2., 8.2., 9.2., 10.2.
- low level: 6.3., 7.3., 8.3., 9.3., 10.3.

Questions 11-16 show the level of mastery of a sense-role “A mentor”:

- high level: 11.1., 12.1., 13.1., 14.1., 15.1., 16.1.
- average level: 11.3., 12.3., 13.3., 14.2., 15.2., 16.2.
- low level: 11.1., 12.1., 13.2., 14.3., 14.4., 15.3., 15.4., 16.3., 16.4.



Study results

An automated result of participation in the self-study at the digital platform *Discover Your Mission Through Nine Sources of Giving* is shown in the Mission Personal Profile (related to past, present, future events of a person, who has taken the responsibility for himself, the technologies used, his environment, territory), which allows to fulfill one's mission:

- a social one as a possible image-sense of the life, which is the result of brain-work, and which influences decision making;
- a personal one as one's uniqueness on psychological, moral, spiritual levels of existence;
- a professional one as a set of professions which "have chosen a person and follow him" from his early childhood;
- a voluntary and a business one: for early, deep and effective immersion into the basics of a profession, acquisition of a spiritual experience, necessary knowledge and competencies, development of important qualities, networking, finding mentors and followers, creation of reputation of a successful person;
- a scientific one as a systemic and continuous reveal of the patterns in the processes a person likes;
- an informative and a creative one as a public announcement of oneself as of a source of true interesting information, valuable and useful for others.

Mission Personal Profile allows a person to take responsibility for his past, present and future life.

As a result of **self-comprehension** a person's positive *Self-image* and a system of values as a guide for his behaviour, are formed, a socially responsible behaviour is demonstrated, a known future, which he together with his students-followers can reshape into socially useful activities, is created; his mission, social roles, personal and professional self-definition are comprehended.

Thanks to existence of mentors **actions** lead to constant development; a person reshapes life around him (builds, creates, improves, designs, constructs, programmes, etc.), demonstrates perfect behaviour, feels happy when close people are happy, passes love for his work to other people and gets feedback.

As a result of **interactions** a person easily achieves new positive and mutually useful relations, broadens the social circle, asks for help and gets it, delegates some of his duties to somebody, absorbs norms and rules of behaviour accepted in the society, contributes to the life of a group, assumes the position of its leader, thanks his mentors and followers.



The result of immersion of young people into creative spaces (in comparison with the control study group) was the increase of responsibility for their lives and for the development of the Caspian region.

At the moment, ways of spending free time is a burning problem of the Caspian region youth. Creative spaces provide the possibility to reveal and develop one's responsibility, influence social activity and creative potential of a student's personality, organization of various forms of leisure and recreation, creation of comfortable conditions for self-fulfillment.

To solve this problem, Astrakhan State University opened its Cultural Centre. The Cultural Centre is a platform for creative experiments. This centre provides services in the field of cultural activities not only in the university, but in the whole region. The team of the cultural centre organizes and holds master-classes in various artistic fields: choreography, theatre, vocal, etc. On the basis of this centre there are different studios where the Caspian youth can fulfill their creative needs: a vocal studio, a choreography studio, a school of public speaking, a theatre studio, a studio of History and Folk dance, etc. There are also platforms for the development of folk art and national crafts of peoples living in the Astrakhan region (Palatkina & Dakhina, 2016).

A special place in the creative space of the university is taken by a workshop *Art-Salon*. Its main objective is to enhance aesthetic education of students and university employees. Participants of *Art-Salon* obtain practical skills on creation of artistic works: drawings, paintings, graphics, sculpture, etc.). The result of the workshop activity is to hold various artistic exhibitions on university and city levels.

The ASU Faculty of Pedagogical Education, Art, Service and Culture runs a system of creative spaces which includes teams engaging in various areas of culture and education. Creative teams are headed by the university staff and student activists.

In 2011, the ASU Faculty of Pedagogical Education, Art, Service and Culture founded a student theatre *On Konovalov Street*. The amateur student theatre already has a rich repertoire of theatricals, including *Birthday* based on the work of A. Gurkov, *Chasing Two Hares* by M. P. Staritsky, *The Aristocratic Peasant Girl* and *Eugene Onegin* by A.S. Pushkin, and *The Taming of the Shrew* by W. Shakespeare.

Talented students, involved in intense creative activities of the theatre, develop their communication skills, teamwork skills, and skills of interacting with the audience which are necessary not only for their acting, but also for their future professional activities.

The *Caspian Phantom* student fashion theatre was founded in 2018 and functions under the School of Sewing Craft, a structural unit of the ASU Faculty of Pedagogical Education, Art, Service and Culture.

Another interesting area of creativity of the Caspian student youth is the *Club of the Funny and Inventive (KVN)*. It is a game competition in which creative teams show humorous items and improvise on various topics.



One of the popular creative teams of the faculty is the *Ethnosphere* student folk art ensemble, founded in September 2018; it combines two activities – singing and choreography – which makes the ensemble so special. The students create vivid stylized singing and choreography items and show their skills not only at the main stage of the university, but also at citywide, regional, all-Russia and international events.

The *Ethnosphere* ensemble consists of two main groups – a singing group and a dancing one. Their repertoire includes a variety of singing and choreographic items – a vocal and choreographic item *Utushka* (eng. *A Little Meadow Duck*), a Tatar composition *Nightingale*, a choreographic performance dedicated to the life of Anna German, a concert folk-styled programme *I'll Go out into the Street*, and a variety show *Without You* for the songs by Alla Pugacheva and Irina Muravieva.

The ensemble consists of students of different majors of the faculty. These are the future organizers of work with youth, social educators, primary school teachers, teachers of additional education, and organizers of sociocultural activities.

Guided by their professor, students go through all the production stages. Together with the leader, talented students develop the topic and idea of the production, design costumes, and get involved in staging and rehearsals. This collaborative process finally results in concert and competition activities of the ensemble.

Arranging the results of digitalization of the experimental creative space of young people – the *Ethnosphere* student folk art ensemble – allowed to identify the following trends in this process:

- instant messaging;
- professionalization of social media;
- professional software.

Instant messaging

The ensemble uses WhatsApp, the most popular free messenger that provides fast exchange of text, audio and video messages, to solve various organizational issues.

On WhatsApp, a special application for mobile devices, there is a closed group for the team members and the leader where they discuss organizational issues about the schedule of rehearsals and staging, get information on the place and time of future concerts, the rules of conduct at such events, the rules of taking care of stage costumes, various reminders and so on. This application allows the team members and the leader to stay in touch with each other all the time, since nowadays information is changing and getting outdated rapidly.

Professionalization of social media

The Russian social network VKontakte (VK), which is quite popular among the Caspian youth, plays an important role in the ensemble's activities.



The ensemble has created a VK group which contributes to the promotion of the ensemble's activities. They have also created a private group for members of the ensemble that plays an important role in the ensemble's activities. This private group is a virtual space for storing photo and video content. This is where the photos of competition and concert items and videos of rehearsals and events are being stored.

All files are stored in the VK group rather than on WhatsApp. They do not swamp the memory of the mobile device and are always available provided that there is a good Internet connection. Once the video is uploaded, the leader can take a close look at and analyze the concert performance, dwell on the mistakes made with the team members, give various advice that will help improve the level of artistic skills in the future and avoid repeating the same mistakes on stage. This is also where constant and lively communication between the team members and the leader takes place. The leader has the opportunity to monitor their activity in the social network, to remind them of proper administration of their profiles and pages, to give advice on creating and developing a positive image of future specialists of the Caspian region.

In the process of communication, the leader has the opportunity to conduct surveys within the VK private group. This allows to get feedback from the participants and to involve them in creative activities. For example, this tool can be used at the very beginning of creating of a singing and choreographic item to find out what style they would like to see it in (variety art, modern, folk-stylized, etc.). One can create a survey to select options for sketches of future costumes.

VKontakte has a rather large library of music, which is very important for the work of the ensemble's leader, who finds it quite challenging to select musical content. This music service allows the leader to keep track of new music, select similar pieces, make a playlist for ensemble's rehearsals, and share the musical content with the members of the ensemble.

Professional software

Working with musical content, the leader uses Adobe Audition software, a useful audio editor that offers various tools for working with sound. Using this program, the leader can edit the audio file – its length and playback speed, – create, reset and mix audio content, add different sounds to the audio file and even improve the sound quality. The program allows the leader to create interesting, vivid, and memorable audio compositions.

Various visual effects are used in the number production. Designing the background with video footage is one of the examples. Video footage is created in Adobe Premiere Pro, a professional video editor, individually for each item of the Ethnosphere student ensemble. Things like the topic of the future performance, colors and dynamics are taken into account. Aspects that require special detail are drawn and created in such programs as Adobe Photoshop or Adobe After Effects.



The process of creating visual effects complements the concerted items of the ensemble and creates a special atmosphere on the stage of Astrakhan State University, and source materials are carefully selected for this purpose. These can be media from personal files, broad access materials from the Net, and handmade things.

The next and most important step is editing the footage, where timeframes, dynamic parts, and transitions are determined. When the footage is ready, it is forwarded to the lighting designer, who designs the stage lighting for the performance in addition to the background. The visual design can change over the course of rehearsals, because the right accompaniment is very important for immersing in the performance to the fullest. At the performance itself, media material is launched with a special program, presetting the timing of the performance and the time of the lighting effects turning on. The footage itself is projected on the main screen to the whole stage. These features allow the ensemble's concerted items to produce a positive impression on the audience and remain memorable for a long time.

Interconnection and interdependence of the three leading areas of digitalization of the youth creative space – instant messaging, professionalization of social media, and professional software – are positively reflected in the ensemble's activities. The Ethnosphere student folk art ensemble has opened its fourth concert season, increased the number of members, and keeps working on creating new performances.

Students of creative and pedagogical majors see the above-mentioned creative teams of the faculty as a special platform and a creative space to form and test their professional competencies, which will certainly be useful in their career.

Astrakhan State University is a space of potential. While studying at the university, students acquire up-to-date knowledge and skills, engage in various, including creative, activities. Finding themselves in such creative spaces, active and creative young people gain teamwork skills, learn how to apportion their free time properly, develop self-discipline, and find ways of self-fulfillment. The university is interested in training successful graduates that will have a significant impact not only on the Caspian region, but also on the world community in general (Palatkina & Akmurzieva, 2021).

Studying at university, successful students can already consider employment opportunities. During their educational (introductory) internships and job placement, talented young people can already earn a good reputation in the employer's eyes and find a job that will open up new horizons. For this purpose, the university concludes internship agreements with leading companies, educational institutions, organizations in the sphere of culture and art, etc. Students can also choose an organization for undertaking an internship themselves by concluding an agreement between the university and the organization in advance.

Currently, the university runs the Center of Career Planning which is mainly aimed at assisting in employment of the students and graduates.



There is a student labor exchange on the official website of Astrakhan State University. It publishes up-to-date information about job openings from leading employers in the Caspian region, specifying the position, employment mode (full- or part-time), contact information, etc.

The official website of the Astrakhan Employment Service (rabota.astrobl.ru) can also help successful graduates find a job. All they need is to register and explore the job bank.

They can also find a job using mobile applications and job search services, like hh.ru and rabota.ru. To do this, they again need to register and prepare a CV.

Conclusions and findings

Arranging the study results for the control and experimental groups allows to draw the following conclusions:

1. Thanks to digital techniques aimed at understanding and implementing students' mission, 100% of students in the experimental group responsibly declare their profession and career height.

2. 99% of students are ready for and actively unite in socio-professional initiative teams, despite the fact that 50% of them initially have individualistic aspirations and values.

3. Foresight immersion in their mission spotlighted the students' interest in socio-professional initiatives in the strategic areas of development of their regions – education, comfortable settlements (urban environment), developing social institutions and conducting effective social policy, medicine and culture.

4. Most participants (70%) are satisfied with the team interaction and mentors' consistent support.

5. Using modern digital technologies allowed most of the teams not only to implement their initiatives in the here and now, but also to launch their video channels, groups, communities, and organizations in social media.

The proposed new digital format of entering the creative space, which allowed the students to make a leap into their better professional future, resulted in comprehension of their value and usefulness in the present. “You always get as much as you give. If you want more, give more, and do it sincerely, with love,” – this is the main guideline for the functioning of creative digital spaces (Tetersky & Teterskaya, 2018).

Students learn about their mission based on nine sources of giving: what was already acquired in the past (awards, gifts, experience), what arouses admiration in the present (creations, hobbies, topics), and what appeals in the future (heroes I want to be like; things I dream about; things that will make my neighbours and followers happy).

The efficiency of digitalization of the creative space is ensured by two elements – the known future and relevance in the present, the person's sense of



peace of knowing that his/her job is significant not sometime later, when he/she passes exams, enrolls, graduates, and finds a job, but right now.

Students like this “self-discovery in the destined profession” also because they feel not only as students and apprentices, and not so much as simple volunteers or community leaders, but as co-investors and givers, capable of acting and being perceived as responsible professionals by their environment.

Along with the discovery of an in-demand professional in oneself here and now, the modern system of education and youth policy gets teams of coaches capable of making both the locals, tourists, migrants, and investors, fall in love with their Motherland.

An important result of the experiment is support of the students’ desire to unite in socio-professional initiative teams in order to support common goals related to their professional self-determination and the development strategy of the Caspian region in real and online communication, to identify ways and find means to achieve them.

Digitalization of young people’s creative spaces is a key element of upgrading the modern education system, aimed at the joint development of a coherent universal picture of the future. This is possible if there is a universal worldview and a unified system of values embedded in education as a process of creating, achieving and distributing ideal images, uniting the efforts of the educational process actors that set conditions for consolidation and proactive interaction (“Russian Federation Law No 273-Fz ‘On Education in the Russian Federation’...”, 2012).

The public need for creative responsible behavior of each person determines the transition from today’s traditional fixation on external affiliation with the future profession and professional community (status, title, degree, position, symbols, corporate values), centered around acquisition and application of skills and knowledge relevant for this profession at the moment, to a deep understanding and instant implementation of the professional mission based on personal life mission, purpose, passion for something, unique qualities and skills, and the opportunity of being useful and valuable.

This new creative responsible thinking will require a transition:

- from the given formats of learning to an increased level of self-awareness about one’s abilities, educational methods, adaptation, and value creation;
- from learning to doing for learning, so that one not only constantly learns, but also adapts the gained knowledge for the present and a better future;
- from accumulation of knowledge to the desire for acquiring new interdisciplinary knowledge and skills in real professional activities (according to the age).

A rapidly changing economy determines active introduction of digitalization, where people not only reflect on what future professional roles they will perform



and how they will do it, but also aim at applying their unique abilities in the here and now.

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