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EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH STUDY OF THE RUSSIAN VOCATIONAL PEDAGOGY AND EDUCATION MOTIVATIONAL POTENTIAL IN THE INTERNATIONALISATION PROJECTION

Abstract

The paper reveals research results of the pedagogical mechanisms influencing the increase of professional motivation of the new century Russian academics within additional vocational training program ‘Lecturer in higher educational establishments’ focusing on the efficient work in the international educational environment as an outcome.

Introduction

World image and role of university vocational education and training has significantly changed during the last decades. Internationalisation and globalization of education, widening access to its different types regardless of social, ethnic and gender differences, implementation of lifelong learning, accessibility of all sorts of human knowledge, worldwide communication through various technological tools, new horizons opening in educational research and innovative pedagogical practices in vocational pedagogy and education characterize contemporary stage of countries` transition to the knowledge-based society. Such agenda requires a new type of academic, possessing fresh ideas, deeply involved in practitioner research, ready for interdisciplinary scientific discourse within local, national and international environment, fully understanding the values, objectives and expectations of the society based on knowledge and eager to promote the advising role of science and scholarship worldwide.

Unfortunately in some post-Soviet states the popularity of work in education or research among younger generation is not that high due to a number of social and economic reasons. Such a decline in this field was mostly seen on the threshold of the centuries and made it an issue of special concern in education and science policy debates in most of these countries. Russia has not been an exception. After the collapse of the Soviet Union its system of higher vocational education¹ has also faced a number of destructive tendencies manifested in the rise of professional demotivation and disqualification of academics, actualization of issues concerning ‘emotional burning out of specialists’ and decrease in the attractiveness and prestige of the teacher’s profession in the society at large. In Russia it resulted in a number of regulations (1997, 2002) provided by the Ministry of general and vocational education of the Russian Federation concerning state recommendations on organization and implementation of the new programs of additional qualifications ‘Teacher’² and ‘Lecturer in higher educational establishments’³ in universities throughout the country.

This article provides a critical overview of practical implementation of the vocational training program ‘Lecturer in higher educational establishments’ at Southern federal university, ranking fourth among classical Russian Universities, at the Department of psychology and pedagogy of higher education which was initially

opened specifically for this purpose in 2006. It also demonstrates the results of the undertaken evidence-based research study aiming at revelation of the mechanisms influencing the increase of specialists' professional motivation within this course of studies.

Program description and its main objective

Academic curriculum of the program is represented by four modules. Although they are detailed in the state requirements to the minimum of content and level of preparation for acquiring the additional qualification 'Lecturer in higher educational establishments' issued by the Ministry of general and vocational education of the Russian Federation in 2002, higher educational establishments have an independent right to choose both some courses from the part of 'Special disciplines' and educational content of the disciplines taught. The length of the program is one year and a half what equals 1080 hours, 360 of which are contact⁴.

The first module 'General vocational courses' (320 hours) is represented by four disciplinary fields to study: 'Human psychology' (60 hours), 'Pedagogy' (60 hours), 'History, philosophy and methodology' (100 hours), 'Information technologies in science and education' (100 hours).

The second module 'Special courses' (520 hours) includes 'Additional specialized courses on psychology and pedagogy' (60 hours), 'Technologies of vocational education' (60 hours), 'Organizational bases of the system of education' (60 hours), 'Foreign language' (140 hours), 'Contemporary chapters of disciplines of the scientific field' (140 hours), 'Training of vocationally orientated rhetoric, debate and communication' (60 hours). The first and the third groups of special courses are chosen by the institution itself.

The third module is 'Pedagogical practice' (100 hours) when students get a chance to act as university lecturers at different faculties of the university lecturing and organizing seminars in the sphere of their expertise.

And the fourth one is 'Final state assessment' (140 hours) including preparation and defense of the qualification paper and sitting for the qualification examination. The overall objective of the program is to prepare a future academic for educational and scientific work and it assumes the development of professional motivation and thinking, formation or improvement of teaching skills necessary for the work in the globally transforming international educational environment.

Research design, theoretical background and methodology

After opening the Department of psychology and pedagogy of higher education at Southern federal university program leaders were offered to form the academic curriculum for the additional qualification 'Lecturer in higher educational establishments'. Being a part of the group it was offered by me to address the issues of professional motivation as it seemed reasonable due to the necessity of generation and further modification of the academic curriculum, disciplinary content and finding adequate methodical instruments in relation to the 'Special disciplines' concrete list of which is defined by the institution delivering the program. Eventually it was decided to carry out evidence-based research during two academic years (2007/2008, 2008/2009). Two groups of post-graduate students having six

people in each were chosen to be the empirical object of the research during their first year of studies. In each experimental group three out of six post-graduate students were already holding university positions of either professor assistants or academics and others were planning to teach in the future and it was their main motive of participation in this program delivered on the optional basis. The age of participants varied between 23 and 35 years old meanwhile each person in the group had a Diploma of higher education³ i.e. was a specialist in a specific scientific field.

Theoretical background of the research was represented by the ideas connected with motivation and motives (Iljin, 2002), intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Zamfir, 1983), motivation bases of teacher's activity (Dubitskii, 2004), motivation inclusion into work (Karpova, 1998) and personal self-actualization (Rubinshtein, 2007). The aim of the undertaken evidence-based research study was to reveal reliable changes in the indicators of the personal professional motivation complex of post-graduate students in the course of studies and define the mechanisms influencing positive and negative dynamics of this variable, modify the training process in accordance with the empirical data obtained.

For this purpose were used various behavioral techniques (in-depth interviews, problem discussions, diagnostic gaming) and '7 point scale of professional motives' – a methodology offered by Zamfir K. and modified by Rean A. (Bordovskaya, Rean, 2001). According to Zamfir's idea all professional motives are divided into intrinsic and extrinsic. The first ones are generated by social value, satisfaction from work reflected in creativity, participation in organization and management, interaction with people. The second ones are divided into positive extrinsic motivation (desire for prosperity, career growth, and approval of one's achievements by the society) and negative extrinsic motivation (the system of punishment, fines, disciplinary penalties and other ineffective influence on the person). Zamfir's ideas that creative work is impossible on the basis of extrinsic motivation and its efficiency is determined exclusively by intrinsic motivation were also taken into account. It is obvious that negative extrinsic motivation restricts person's professional development and atrophies his/her internal needs and interests. Positive extrinsic motivation shows its effectiveness only during a very short period and it weakens as soon as stimuli disappear or neutralize.

Research outcomes and their effect on educational process

Two groups of post-graduate students underwent the same stages of experiment during their first year of studies. At the first stage of research respondents were diagnosed the level of their professional motivation with the help of '7 point scale of professional motives'. After the first stage of experiment I calculated the index of the student's intrinsic (IPM), positive extrinsic (PEPM) and negative extrinsic professional motivation (NEPM) (according to Zamfir's formula) and the interpretation of the results showed disbalance between these three when summing up professional motivation complex (PMC) of the group. It is important to mention that PMC is made up of correlation between 3 above mentioned types of motivation. Optimal motivation complex may be represented by two types of correlation: $IPM > PEPM > NEPM$ and $IPM = PEPM > NEPM$. The worst motivation complex may be represented by the type: $NEPM > PEPM > IPM$. But anyway it is important to consider the intensity of each type of motivation even within one motivation

complex. So, the results of the first group, before doing the program were (3,3>2,4<2,6), it was not the worst motivation complex, but the idea was to increase the level of IM and stabilize two other variables by the end of the academic year.

To achieve better parameters an assumption was made that changing of the paradigm of pedagogic targeting resulting in the transfer from technocratic approach⁶ to the concept of personal self-actualization may influence the increase of the level of professional motivation of future academics. The latter one is supposed to have personally orientated influence on the student helping to form integrally understood mentality characterizing individual's world outlook, life priorities and behavioral motivation in all spheres including a vocational one. It was offered to build up all the course structure and delivery bearing in mind this idea.

On the first stage of the experiment it resulted in introduction of a series of courses worked out by my colleagues and myself such as 'Pedagogical epistemology', 'Education in contemporary world', 'Quality assurance of education' (Chigisheva, 2007), 'Developing students' personality in the process of education and upbringing' (Chigisheva, 2007) etc. the content of which was designed so as to form professional reflexivity through familiarization of students with the models of other humanitarian experiences and necessity to widen their own educational continuum. At the end of the year the group was diagnosed again and the results (3,6 >2,5<2,6) showed positive dynamics in all positions, the biggest changes were in IPM with the increment factor of 0,3.

Nevertheless it showed rather low professional motivation effectiveness of the courses offered, so the next year it was decided to renovate the previous ones by wider introduction of inquiry based approaches and reinforce teaching practices with appropriate methods and teaching techniques. It became possible through the usage of case studies, project work, research-teaching linkages, individual writing and reading tasks on the difficulties of person's teaching experience and constant debate between staff and students in the logic of new understanding of the educational process and its qualitatively new pedagogical projections under the influence of internationalisation. During 2008/2009 academic year working with the second group I tried to follow the same strategy in developing the research. So, the first stage results of the group were 3,4>2,8<2,6 vs. 4,0>3,0<2,6 by the end of the study course.

IPM growth equaled 0,6 but at the same time PEPM showed 0,2 growth as well. Such course design proved its greater effectiveness and positive trend. Besides that the students themselves told about the changes in the interest in teaching and some of them even planned to write instructive materials for students in disciplines they were already teaching.

Conclusion

Evidence-based research study of the mechanisms influencing the increase of professional motivation of specialists within additional qualification 'Lecturer in higher educational establishments' conducted within two academic years proved its necessity and value. It helped to balance the curriculum of the program in accordance with the professional motivation measurement results, build up ways of further program improvement and enhance the outcomes of the program for students. It should also be noticed that it had a positive professional effect not only

on individuals participating in the program but also on the staff of the Department. Those involved stated positive changes in their teaching skills, improvement of communication skills with post-graduate students in the groups and greater wish to use elements of other sociocultural and educational traditions in their own teaching practices. The methodology addressed in the study is supposed to be used for monitoring educational and professional effect of this program in the future and tracing acuteness of other vocational programs taught at the Department.

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Notes

1. In Russia all levels of education provided by different educational establishments after a minimum level of school education are called vocational.
2. The program is offered for university graduates getting a Diploma of Higher Education in the chosen field; usually it only provides a right for teaching in secondary schools.
3. The program is offered for Masters, postgraduate students or academics having no less than two years experience of teaching in higher educational establishments and having no pedagogic education. It provides a right for teaching in the sphere of tertiary education.
4. In Russia it is a usual practice that contact hours take up to two thirds of total hour length of vocational educational program although the correlation may vary from institution to institution.
5. Diploma of the specialist is given to the students after 5 years of study at any higher educational establishment in Russia. It is an aftereffect of the Soviet system of higher education which is being displaced now by the European system of degrees.
6. Technocratic approach was widely used in the system of Soviet higher vocational education and directed at fuller satisfaction of state requirements aimed at progressive economic, technical and industrial development. In the conditions of social egalitarianism the person acted a role of a 'cog in the machine' and person's labor activity was reduced to simple mastery performance lacking initiative and responsibility for its results, quality and ability for individual decision-making. Within the years this idea of 'mass person's development' proved its groundlessness in relation to the concrete individual.

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