

The Problem of Correspondence of Educational and Professional Standards (Results of Empirical Research)

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In the article, the problem of correspondence of educational standards of higher pedagogical education and teacher professional standards in Russia is actualized. Modern understanding of the quality of vocational education suggests that in the process of education the student develops a set of competencies that will enable him or her to carry out successfully professional activities. As a part of the study of correspondence of educational and professional standards through questionnaires, the representation of employers (heads of educational institutions) about the preparedness of young teachers to the professional activity was studied. The paper presents the analysis of the results of empirical research conducted in two regions of Russia, the problem areas of teacher training are identified, which include deficits in the subject training, in skills of building interaction with the participants in the educational process, deficiencies in required professional motivation and general culture, in communication and IT skills, social infantilism.

Keywords: educational standard, professional standard, higher education, correspondence, teacher training

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary conditions of social development the problem of improving vocational education, which is designed to ensure national economies with qualified

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specialists, meeting the requirements of the present stage of social development, becomes increasingly urgent. The emphasis in the requirements to the specialist in professional and educational standards is transferring from the volume of knowledge to the ability to apply this knowledge in the ever-changing situations of professional activity. The human lives today in the rapidly changing world, therefore, ready-made solutions often do not bring the desired results, in addition the scope of any professional activity is constantly expanding and becoming more and more complicated. That is why the system of higher professional education is meeting the task of training specialists able to adapt quickly to the ever-changing demands of today's professional activity, focused on the competent decision of professional problems, and motivated for professional development and self-development.

The quality of modern professional education is determined by a number of items related to the educational outcomes of students and to the characteristics of conditions established in educational institutions in order to achieve the desired results. The quality of professional education today is considered from the point of view of its effectiveness. Moreover, in the university rankings employment of graduates, their professional competence and successful career are very important indicators. In these circumstances, the surveys of employers' opinion about graduates' preparedness for professional activity become very important. For updating the content of teacher education, the research of correspondence between the educational requirements and professional standards is acute (Ilyushin and Sergienko, 2014).

In the research the assumption was formed that employers' opinion on the preparedness of graduates for professional activity, which focuses primarily on the professional requirements to the teacher, can help to draw conclusions about the degree of correspondence of the educational standards of higher teacher education and the professional standard of the teacher.

The problem of professional preparedness of the future teachers is one of the central in the theory of pedagogy and in the practice of education. Graduates receive a diploma of higher education and almost immediately become participants in the labor market. Analysis of the concept of "professional preparedness" led to the conclusion that there is no consensus about its nature in the scientific literature. Preparedness to the professional activity in the contemporary scientific discourse is considered to be the integrated set of cognitive (fundamental psychological, pedagogical and subject knowledge), functional (skills, abilities and experience) and personal (emotional and volitional, motivational and evaluative, communicative and reflective components) competences. These competences are "cross-cutting" in the structure of the universal (social and personal and general cultural, general research, instrumental) and professional competences as it is stated in the Federal standard of higher education) (Nazarov, 2010). Preparedness for professional activity may be seen as the ability to carry out responsibilities in specific problematic situations (Tokareva, 2009); as an integrative characteristic, which includes theoretical and methodological knowledge, professional and applied skills, positive attitude to teaching and ability to solve professional problems and typical professional tasks arising in real situations of professional pedagogical activity. The study of Nazarov proved that this ability is the main indicator of students' preparedness for professional activity (Nazarov, 2010). Tatur (Tatur, 2004) believes that in a special way the young specialist is characterized by the ability to operate successfully even in the absence of skills based on the ready-made algorithms which are the bases of orienting activity, but showing a creative, constructive thinking.

Initial structural components of preparedness for professional activity, binding its species and subspecies in the integrated system, are the components of this preparedness:

- motivational component, the content of which includes professionally significant needs, motivations and values of the activity, emerging on the bases of stable interest and positive attitude to the profession (Lezhnina, 2010), of understanding the importance of pedagogical activity, as well as the specialist's knowledge of demands placed on them by the society and the labor market; motives of the professional activities include professional beliefs and the need for constant expansion of information in the area of specialization (Lisichko, 2009);

- personal component, the content of which makes up professionally significant properties of the individual such as characterological, emotional and volitional, moral, communicative and other qualities that define professional qualification of a person (Lezhnina, 2010);

- theoretical component (presence of knowledge needed to carry out core functions: technological, organizational, managerial and research) (Lisichko, 2009); this component is characterized by general and professional knowledge meeting the requirements of modern society; knowledge of the professional activity in changing social context (Koksheneva, 2010), which allows to define cognitive, cognitive-gnostic components and theoretical knowledge as the components;

- practical component (skills of professional activity, ability to plan, analyze and evaluate professional activity (Lezhnina, 2010) as well as operational activity (indicates the presence of skills that allow specialist to solve professional problems) (Koksheneva, 2010; Tokareva, 2009).

Thus, the purpose of the study was to determine the employers' notion of the preparedness of graduates for professional careers in the field of education through the assessment of their motivation, professional-significant qualities, professional knowledge and skills of professional activity.

METHODOLOGY, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH DESIGN

To investigate the notion of employers (representatives of the administration of educational institutions) of young teachers' preparedness for professional work the method of survey was used.

The questionnaire for employers consists of 25 questions (Piskunova et. al., 2014). Responses to the questionnaire reveal the young teacher' preparedness for professional activity, allow to make conclusions on the labor conditions and the problems hindering their professional development. The questionnaire presents several sets of questions, revealing:

- peculiarities of the new teacher admission to employment (selection criteria, the level of the training system of higher pedagogical education);

- understanding of professional problems of the teacher and professional standard requirements to the teacher;

- characteristics of the professional activity of young teachers (main problems related to professional education, manifested in their professional activity).

Several answers were offered to the posed questions. The participants of the survey were asked to choose up to three answers, having the highest priority in their view. In the absence of the necessary choices, respondents were asked to formulate their own answer and to make a note in the cell corresponding to "Other" (Sergienko, 2014).

Questions were formulated in such a way that the analysis of the respondents' answers allowed to describe their perceptions of preparedness of young teachers – the university graduates for professional careers.

The questionnaire was prepared with Google Docs, which allowed involving a large number of respondents in all regions remotely in a short period of time. The program is able to ensure the security, storage and processing of the data.

The survey was conducted in two regions of Russia, St. Petersburg and Tyumen. The sample in St. Petersburg and Tyumen included the heads of educational institutions of different levels and types. A total of 102 respondents participated.

RESULTS

At the admission to work most employers look through the documents of the applicant (diploma of education, employment records, characteristics, etc.), as well as conduct interviews; these two positions have the highest rankings in all categories of employers. The employer is primarily focused on the documents of the applicant (86.0% of the respondents put the analysis of the applicant's documents on the first and second place). The second position is the impression obtained in the interview (test) (67.7%). 50.6% of respondents put on first and second position professional plans of the applicant in terms of "career orientation".

Employers consider interview the most effective way of organizing the process of candidate teachers' selection. More than a half of respondents (51.6%) believe that the interview is sufficient for their decision. Many respondents (46.2%) pointed out that the applicant's portfolio is important for the decision. Employers also consider effective to evaluate candidate's real interaction with students in class (40.9%). Nevertheless, some employers only need the diploma of education (16.1%).

Among the factors influencing employer' decision on admitting a candidate to work, the leading positions take the level of education and skill level of an applicant (68.8% and 59.1% respectively). The next position was shared by the applicant's communicative competency and professional experience (58%). The subject knowledge is no less important than the motive which a teacher brings to work (47%). This is followed by professional intention (31.2%), appearance (22.6%) and professional experience of the applicant (21.5%). Age and marital status of an applicant are not marked by employers as determining factors.

In general, one should note that the positions of the "level of education", "skills", "communicative competence" and "professional experience" received the highest number of respondents' elections. However the significant spread of number of responses for each position, obviously allows concluding that the interviewing process for admission goes fairly formal - the survey demonstrated that almost all positions with the highest rating could be ascertained from the applicant's documents.

The attitude of heads of educational institutions to the need for admission examination of an applicant was unambiguous enough - 68.8% of executives believe that such an examination is not necessary, and the interview is quite sufficient for their decision about admission (46.2%). Among supporters of special examination, the majority believes that it should include assessment of real interaction with children (20.4%). 9.7% believe that the exam should include presenting applicant's pedagogical credo, 11.8% consider that the test should include pedagogical problems' solving, and 3.2% think that an applicant should be tested in the subject.

In assessing the significance of the information in the documents presented by the applicant (diplomas), respondents noted that, first of all, they pay attention to the grade for teaching practice (50.5%). These results indicate that the employers consider the applicant's ability to conduct a real learning process the most important. Knowledge in the subject areas of course is necessary for successful pedagogical activity (grade for subject knowledge in diploma as an important indicator of the applicant's preparedness for professional activity was indicated by

46.2% of respondents). Employers pay attention to the average score in all subjects (28.0%), and then - on the grades for psychology and pedagogy (22.6% and 20.4%, respectively). Thus, the employers consider not only the applicants' knowledge valuable, but also the ability to put the knowledge into practice.

The results showed that not for all employers a thorough analysis of the applicant documents on education is a priority. Answers of 15.0% of respondents indicated that they do not look through the documents on education because they believe that the documents are not the evidence of acquired knowledge, and that it should be proven in practice. Some employers (6.4%) are confident that the education results do not affect the teaching profession.

According to the study, only 12.9% of respondents are satisfied with the training of future teachers at the university. 69.9% are not completely satisfied, and 10.7% believe that teacher training is inadequate. Assessing the dynamics of teacher training, 57.0% of employers said that over the past few years the level of teacher training has become lower, 30.1% believe that the level of training has not changed.

The respondents' answers showed that most young professionals show the lack of motivation (54.8%) and the inability of building interaction with other participants in the educational process (45.2%). It should be noted that we are talking about the absence of professional motivation among young teachers who have come to school to work. Many heads of educational institutions are concerned about the lack of common culture (34.4%) and low level of subject training of young professionals (33.3%). So it is not surprising that in the document on education the employer checks the grade on specialization subject - the knowledge of subject taught is a significant requirement for candidates. Less often respondents mentioned the lack of intellectual effort (laziness) (23.6%), social infantilism (19.3%), low level of literacy (12.9%), low level of morality (10.7%), lack of expression of civil position (5.4%) and low level of ICT competence (3.2%).

Employers expressed their views on the causes of young teacher low motivation. In their opinion, the first reason is the choice of profession "by chance" at the stage of entering the university (66.7%), the second reason is the low social status of the teaching profession (60.2%), the third - increasing difficulty of work with children and teacher workload (59.1 %). Ability to obtain an attractive "non-teaching work" with the teacher diploma was marked by 30.1% of respondents, and 26.9% reported low social status of a young teacher. 7.5% of respondents see the reason of low motivation in the fact that student teachers have seen during studies very few successful, prestigious schools, in which they would really like to work.

One of the questions of the questionnaire was devoted to the professional tasks which are to be solved by any teacher today. The range of professional tasks that cause difficulties for young teachers was identified. The following ranking of problem areas in the professional activity of young teachers was defined in the survey. According to the opinion of school directors, the greatest difficulty is the cooperation with parents (64.5%) and the need to maintain discipline in the classroom (52.7%). The design of the educational process with taking into account the characteristics of children (38.7%) also causes difficulties for young teachers. And knowledge of the subject is insufficient (38.7%). Many also have problems in the diagnosis of pedagogical process (30.1%), in clear explanation of their subject (26.8%). Only 9.7% of school administrators noted that young teachers unsuccessfully cope with the use of modern educational technologies, including ICT, and only 2.1% have documented that young teachers have problems cooperating with the administration.

Being asked about the state of teacher education in our country, none of the respondents agreed that it fully meets the needs of school and does not require changes. The majority of respondents (50.5%) believe that in general it corresponds

to the demands of school, but needs some renovation, and 34.4% believe that it does not meet the needs of school and requires deep reforms.

Some responses to the questionnaire were combined in the analysis to define necessary measures of improving teacher education programs. Thus, the majority of respondents supported two initiatives proposed: using the average score of the school certificate at the entrance procedures for educational programs in Teacher Education was supported by 73.1% of respondents, 16.1% voted against. Using portfolio as a significant indicator supported 51.6% of respondents, 29.0% voted against.

The need to support young teachers at the start of their career path raises no doubt. Each educational institution has its own forms of support young teachers. The majority of the respondents (90.3%) confirmed that their educational institution has a system of mentoring and advice for young teachers by more experienced; 67.7% of respondents indicated the existence of teachers' teams, and 49.5% - the constant supervision on young teachers by principal assistants. Other forms of young teachers' support are less common: the "school for young teacher" was noted by 17.2% of respondents, the ongoing seminar for young teachers was indicated by 11.8%.

To the administrators of educational institutions the idea of "internship" seems important - 36.5% of them believe that internship is a correct idea and is necessary to be implemented in all universities that prepare teachers; 31.2% think the idea worthy of experimental verification and validation at some universities; 25.8% consider it necessary to organize a special period of "entry into a profession," but see the possibility of different versions of the embodiment of this idea (internship, working under the guidance of a mentor, the transfer through the levels in the hierarchy of professional development - "assistant teacher", "junior teacher" and so on.). Only 3.2% of executives believe that the idea of "internship" is useless for improving the quality of teacher education.

DISCUSSION

In general, the analysis of the results of the study allows drawing several conclusions.

According to the study a significant part of the school directors are not completely satisfied with the university training of teachers, more than half of employers note the decrease in the level of training during last few years.

For the admission employers consider the level of education, skills, communicative competency and professional experience of young candidates for the position of teacher the most important. As for qualifications, it is obvious that employers prefer young professionals with pedagogical education, because in this case there is no need to send an employee to additional training.

The problems of young teachers' communicative competence and professional experience deserve more attention.

It is clear that in the professional activity in education the "man-man", "man-group of people," communication and cooperation are of particular importance. Deficiency of these competencies can affect negatively the results of the educational process. These competencies fall into the category of common cultural (in accordance with the terminology of the Russian Federal Educational Standard), and their development should be provided in the educational process at the university. Thus, it can be concluded that university teachers in their professional activities target to the content of academic disciplines and, apparently, mainly work in the paradigm of knowledge transfer which loses its significance nowadays, than in the modern paradigm of the creation of conditions for the construction by students their

own knowledge through communication and their interaction with each other and the teacher.

The second position, which requires additional comment, is availability of work experience for young professionals, recent graduates. As mentioned above, for the employer knowledge of the applicant is not as much valuable as the ability to put this knowledge into practice. That is why a large part of school leaders drew attention to the assessment of teaching practice; and supporters of the admission examination believe that such a test should include a situation of real interaction with children. These results confirm the need to strengthen the practical orientation of teacher education, increasing the volume of practical work. The solution of this problem is obvious - the use in the university training such teaching methods as case studies, project learning, and simulation games as the embodiment of a modern model of learning - learning by doing.

Thus, on the basis of the study the problem areas of professional activity of young teachers can be described in – where the university does not meet the today's requirements in teacher education.

CONCLUSION

The degree of correspondence between the professional standard for teachers and university educational standards requires additional studies. In these standards, there are significant differences in the description of the requirements to the teacher if the university standard uses the term "professional competence" and, accordingly, describes the educational outcomes through lists of the competencies to be mastered in the university, the professional standard operates with the concept of "work functions," "work actions". It should be noted that despite terminological differences, the characteristics of professional activity, described either through competencies or through functions and actions are very similar. However, there are significant differences in the content of teacher preparedness to perform various actions. In particular, the professional standard of the teacher requires, for example, that a teacher is able to work in multicultural children's groups, which may include children who do not speak the state language, children with lack of motivation, children in difficult situations or having learning difficulties connected, for example, with health or level of literacy. There are other examples of deficiencies identified in a clearly articulated in the educational standards characteristics of the teacher professional activity. But it can be assumed that the deep analysis of the requirements of professional standards and the requirements of the educational standard shows more similarities. In any case, the renewal of educational programs for teachers on the basis of this analysis will help to improve the situation of preparedness of university graduates for professional work in the field of education.

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