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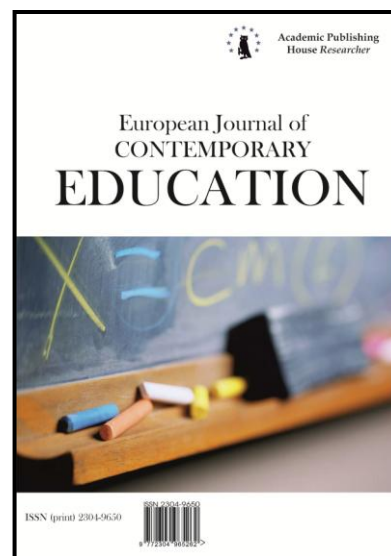
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The Problems of Contemporary Education

Socio-Cultural Dimension of Military Education in Modern Russia

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Abstract

The article reveals the essence of the sociocultural approach as a universal tool which allows considering the process of modernization of cadet education in modern Russia in the complex determining its conditions and factors. The basic mechanisms of functioning of cadet education system are the processes that form the equilibrium diad "tradition – modernity". Sociocultural approach is interpreted as a concretization of universal evolutionism principle which is a compound of evolution idea with ideas of systemic approach. Sociological research based on empirical data confirms its worth for all educational systems. The authors define perspective directions and forms of institutionalization of socio-cultural modernization of cadet education in modern conditions.

Keywords: sociocultural approach, modernization, cadet education, traditional and modern, suvorovetc (a graduate of Suvorov Military School), cadets.

1. Introduction

Nowadays there is an obvious need for increased attention of scientific community to issues of all levels of modern education. On the one hand it would meet technological challenges of the twenty-first century and lack of conservation strategy of national education traditions accumulated over centuries where "traditional" and "modern" would be in a state of homeostasis. Primarily it

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concerns the institutions of cadet education because the cadet model is becoming increasingly popular in Russia and abroad in the modern society in terms of socio-cultural uncertainty. So the questions related to the search for a theoretical platform to study and identifying promising areas and forms of institutionalization of socio-cultural modernization of cadet education in modern conditions are brought up to date.

2. Materials and methods

This paper is based on fundamental research in general sociology, sociology of culture, sociology of education, military sociology and sociology of youth. They determine the logic of the research procedures and methodological approaches to the study of cadet education as an object of modernization in modern Russia. The discourse of "traditional" – "modern" society reflected in the works by A. Akhiezer, N. Lapina, P. Romanov, P. Sorokina, E. Yarskaya-Smirnova is served as a basic principle of methodology for socio-cultural analysis of modernization of cadet education. The use of scientific methods of research: classification, comparison, mapping and integration of data, univariate and multivariate data analysis and methods of concrete sociological research, including various surveys and interviews gives the opportunity to dissect the problem areas of quality and efficiency of its functioning.

3. Discussion

The sociocultural approach has developed on the basis of the system approach in sociology which considers society as a unity of culture and sociality. This approach is interpreted by P. Sorokin as a fundamental principle of society development. In the inseparable triad "personality, culture, society" no element can exist without the other two and the "core" is culture (Sorokin, 1992).

According to P. Sorokin all the society changes happen in the dynamics of cultures and the key role is played by the education system. Following that logic, N. Lapin identifies two possible types of society:

- a society with the rule of traditionalist values where the priority is the rules and regulations prescribed to subjects of social interaction (traditional actions);
- a society of liberal values with opportunities of purposeful rational (innovative) actions (Lapin, 2000).

Following the methodology of socio-cultural analysis A. Akhiezer builds up his model of society which is in "the conflict between two types of constructive tension (local and society in general)". According to the author overcoming the conflict must be achieved in culture, in the growth of reflection of Russian history. Understanding culture as text (program), A. Akhiezer reduces the problem of socio-cultural approach to "mainstreaming" and "socialization" of culture and determines the embodiment of these processes in life as the selection of texts and programs that enhance the ability of society to survive. We should select the most effective development programs that take into account the specific historical characteristics of the society from all the texts of culture (Akhiezer, 1997).

Despite different interpretations the authors agree that the sociocultural approach is not opposed to other approaches but complements them. It connects the civilizational and formational approaches into a unified whole. If civilizational approach includes sustainable components of human history (anthropological, ethnic, cultural) and formational approach focuses on the more variable (social, personal) structures, the socio-cultural approach explains the pairing of sustainable and changeable (the individual and society, culture and social) (Lapin, 2000).

In addition the socio-cultural paradigm is compatible with structural-functional, phenomenological and anthropological concepts as they all include culture as one of the most important elements of the social structure of society (Gvarliani et al., 2016). Modern Russian scholars P. Romanov and E. Yarskaya-Smirnova emphasize this role noting that the methodology of modern domestic researches is developing in the direction of sociocultural, phenomenological, ethnographic and critical approaches that allow us to analyze everyday practices of various professional communities and groups (Abrams, 2015).

The recognition of multiplicity of coexisting and competing rationalities and ethical systems allows us to understand the world of a particular profession from the inside better. Therefore, according to Romanov and the Yartsevo-Smirnova, the profession is not only the main parameter

of social structure but the personality identification that nominates him applying a social label. In its turn cadet education reinforces not just the skills of future profession but lays the foundations of metaprofession. Hence there is a high demand for institutions of this type which are created in each region a in the structure of the Ministry of Defense and other departments. Retrospective of transformation processes related to the modernization of cadet education at various stages of its formation is reflected in a number of papers by Russian sociologists, historians, educators and psychologists (Alpatov, 1958).

However, the analysis of scientific literature allows us to conclude that cadet education is poorly studied from the standpoint of the sociocultural approach. There is no theoretical-methodological basis of its research and no modern organizational model for students training. So there is a real need for a systematic analysis of military education, directions of its modernization and socio-cultural ground of its mechanism.

4. Result

Modernization of cadet education in modern Russia comes against the backdrop of a changing social reality that gives rise to uncertainty and risk, the transition from linear to non-linear type of development.

"Traditional" and "modern" in relation to cadet education set different trajectories of professional preferences of students. Hence, a significant part of graduates has got the lack of predisposition for their future profession (Moshenko et al., 1992).

The process of education institutionalization is constant in a changing society. New needs and standards arise, they are more appropriate to the emerging realities, appropriate sanctions find applications. These changes promote the formation of new institutional relationships, which are characterized by flexibility, democracy and good linearity (Romanov, Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2009).

The specificity of cadet education is a particular characteristic that defines the structure, content and dynamics of status and role relations between all participants of educational process (Mikhailov, 1997). And these relations determine the professional route for future work.

There are some problems in the interaction of environment and self-determining personality. In this regard, pedagogical support of professional self-determination is necessary along with the process of self-organization and self-determination. Self-organization, life and professional self-determination are in the process of socialization. Therefore, the goal of ongoing innovations in respect of cadet education is to create a model that is designed to generate modal personality with a philosophical culture, harmoniously combining morality, spirituality and the military-professional competence (Abrams, Osadchaya, 2016). It is necessary to form a person gifted with patriotic feelings and beliefs, with an active civil position and responsibility (Chuikov et al., 2016).

Based on the methodology of the system approach, cadet education is seen as an integrative unity. According to Luhmann (Luhmann, 1990), J. Clear (Klir, 1990), R. Flood and E. Carson (Flood, Carson, 1993) it evolves and undergoes significant changes and is characterized by a high degree of agreement on goals, objectives, values and results.

Institutionalization is the process of structuring and formalization of social ties and relations in the dyad "traditional" and "modern" in line with the sociocultural approach.

The outcomes presented are very important due to the fact that educational conditions ensure formation of educational thinking, devotion, reflection, develop skills for creativeness, targeting in educational sphere (Epaneshnikov et al., 2017).

Primary and secondary sociological information obtained in the course of sociological research on the basis of institutions of cadet education of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation helps to identify the social characteristics of the existing model.

The results of the expert polls of command, teachers and officers from Moscow, Saint-Petersburg, Ussuriysk cadet military schools and Nakhimov Naval Academy (n = 172, 2013-2015), as well as the expert community veteran organizations of alumni of the Suvorov Military School (SMS), Nakhimov Naval Academy (NNA) and Cadet Corps (n = 69, 2013-2015) and pupils of the senior classes (n = 45, 2015) reveal the reflection of the respondents regarding the purpose, timing, training, human resources and issues of professional socialization.

As noted by the respondents, the main problems of students training should include:

- lack of retraining system of educators and teachers;
- imperfect institutional structure;

- imperfect value-oriented leisure activities organization;
- lack of social preferences at University admissions;
- lack of commitment of graduates to enroll in universities of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (see [table](#)).

Organization of educational process in conditions of the middle specialized military education requires the special attention of authorities to three main mechanisms of regulation of pupils' social behavior: selection, prescriptions and control at all levels.

The effectiveness of the mechanisms of prescriptions and control is defined by the rhetoric of the respondents in answer to the question "How did SMS affect your professional destiny?" in Suvorov-Nakhimov model of cadet education. The vast majority (95 %) of graduates of Suvorov Military schools (n = 123), NNA (n = 18) and Cadet Corps (n = 6) (2014–2015) expressed the following judgments: "easily entered higher school", "became a good leader" "learned discipline and order"; "learned to live in groups", "became a good officer"; "provided career"; "well settled in civilian life." The judgments evaluated on a 5-point scale to values close to the maximum. These qualities can be defined as modal for the military or any other sphere of professional activity.

Table. Reflection on the tasks, timing of training and issues of professional socialization

Problematic issues		Command, teachers and administration (n = 172)	Alumni veterans (n = 69)	Senior classes Students (n = 45)
The task of SMS		– future elite of the armed forces training; – professional socialization of future officers; – competitive graduates training; – decent social lift		
Training time	7 years	82 %	58 %	34 %
	3 years	18 %	42 %	66 %
Staffing (requirements)		– reserve officers; – military experience and pedagogical skills; – to be competent teachers and educators. – love for children	– higher education – knowledge of foreign languages, – be able and willing to work with children – to have your own prosperous family, – to love children	– administration and teachers – military personnel
Main problems of preparation		– lack of retraining system of educators and teachers; – imperfect institutional structure; – imperfect value-oriented leisure activities organization; – lack of social preferences at University admissions; – lack of commitment of graduates to enroll in universities of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation		

Original research and secondary sociological information obtained from expert assessments allow us to conclude that the current model of cadet education is quite wealthy.

This model does not involve the system of social preferences to graduates in spite of performing a vital social function – enabling children to receive a quality secondary education. It is noted by the vast majority of experts from the veterans, administration and interviewers of educational institutions.

Prospects of cadet education is conceptually substantiated and empirically confirmed in the structure of Russian society and are as follows:

1) Military unit is legally consolidated in the structure of military education which involves professional socialization from early teenage years (since the 5th grade);

2) Pupils of Presidential cadet corps have the right to enroll in specialized military schools after the 8th grade. Those who have chosen as a future professional route a career of police officer, lifeguard, border guards, and agents of the security services enter the cadet institutions of MIA,

EMERCOM and FSB. Graduates are given preference for admission to all higher schools for the training direction "State and municipal management";

3) Graduates of cadet schools proceed to the universities on a common basis, or by decision of the government of entity (in the presence of quotas or budget financing) can obtain the right to enter civilian universities on preferential basis in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation;

4) Modal personality of a graduate of military school is defined by the following characteristics, fixed in the State standard:

- patriotism, sense of duty and honor;
- high general educational development (GPA not lower than 4.5);
- command of foreign language, the ability to read and translate original sources;
- confident use of the computer;
- military skills enabling to guide subordinates due to the requirements for junior officers of Army and Navy;
- great sports training (1 category on one of military-applied kinds of sport);
- initial skills of system analysis in questions of military administration and public administration;
- ability to work and self-training;
- knowledge of basic etiquette and good manners;
- ability to dance the waltz and play at least one musical instrument.

Each of these basic (primary) professional ability is confirmed by a certified document. The goals of the educational exposure and career guidance are combined with the organized system of social diagnostics and psycho-pedagogical support. This system is able to respond immediately to gaps and omissions in order to correct the General level of education and professional socialization, to identify individual talents of pupils and to create conditions for their development.

5) It is necessary to create feedback system of institutions of secondary specialized military education with the graduates by the establishment the Council of veterans-graduates in each institution.

Public organizations of graduates of Suvorov military, Nakhimov naval schools, special military schools and cadet corps are established in most regions of the Russian Federation. They are united in the national Union of cadet associations "open Commonwealth of Suvorov, Nakhimov cadets of Russia" which has become a significant and influential part of civil society in Russia. These organisations represent a kind of Corporation organized according to the principle of spirit affinity and a kind of corporate form of civil control over the institutions of military education and quality of education there.

6) Inclusion of these ideas and events in part of the respective priority National projects.

External social environment sets out the overall direction of modernization of cadet education. It is built on three pillars: optimization of number of schools; improving the quality of education; relationship of education and the latest achievements of science and technology.

On the one hand it is necessary that the dynamics of transformation of military education ensures the highest international standards and on the other – it should reproduce the best national experience in educational activities and meet the requirements of the objective law of mental identity.

Cadet education gives the graduates not just the skills of their future profession but lays the foundations of metaproperties for the whole life. This feature characterizes the specificity of the culture formed in the institutions of military education, sets pupils targets of socialization and represents such quality characteristics as objects of identification, system of values, traditions, ethical codes, culture of interpersonal relations and attitude to religion.

Research in various fields of scientific knowledge suggests that the educational environment is recognized as one of the main factors of professional socialization.

B. Bim-Bad says: "Educational and educative environment is a constantly expanding sphere of human activity. It includes increasing wealth of its relations with nature and cultural objects – things created by man for man, by social environment" (Bim-Bad, 2001).

Social, educational and professional environments are defined as environments of one subdivision – open, nonlinear, self-organizing in accordance with the synergetic concept.

Professional education built on these principles meets the requirements of full consideration of individual abilities and methods of continuous education most effectively.

While the educational environment is presented by external and internal institutional structures affecting institutional subsystems and setting socio-cultural practices.

The external environment sets out the "rules of the game", defining social, political, economic, psychological and socio-cultural conditions of professional socialization. In addition it has several social functions:

- reconstitutes and transforms sociocultural practices, general ethical and moral codes for different professional groups;
- stratifies military profession in the social structure of society and gives the military-grades the system of preferences in social policy;
- issues value judgments regarding the prestige and elitism in the labour market of military profession;
- builds institutional formal and informal discourse on civil-military relations;
- defines the role of the middle specialized military education as a social institution in the transformation of the social structure of society.

The internal social environment is simulated by school. The social reality of student is divided into many fragments. The pupil accepts some of them the others are rejected by him. The result is a thesaurus as systematic, comprehensive and essential part of knowledge for orientation in the socio-cultural environment.

According to a socio-cultural analysis we can conclude that the old "traditional" characteristics dominate in the attitude of pupils of the specialized military schools to the educational environment (in terms of quality and efficiency). They are associated with values of training and education. However, there is a tendency of formation of modern models of relation to social reality (pragmatism of judgments, a certain degree of mistrust towards each other) on the basis of the rational type of social interactions.

5. Conclusion

Thus, the sociocultural approach is a universal tool which allows us to consider the process of modernization of cadet education in the determining factors complex: structural, institutional, socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural. We should take into account the dynamics of changes of value structures which set the boundaries of individual transformation as an active subject of education.

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