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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF A PSYCHOLOGIST AS THE BASIS OF HIS PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

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Abstract

During the period of reforming higher professional education, training of a high-quality specialist in psychology is of great significance. Training of future psychologists in educational institutions of higher education is focused on development of special knowledge, skills and abilities, and personal and professionally significant qualities. Professional development of a psychologist depends on successful academic and professional activities; however, personal development is the leading indicator of his development. Interrelation of personal and professional qualities is the main link to ensure effective training of psychologists. Modern educational standards are aimed at mastering theoretical and practical components of vocational training. However, insufficient attention is paid to personal development of the psychologist as an obligatory component of his professional training. This paper discusses the concept of "personal and professional development" and reveals the criteria for personal development and growth of a psychologist: self-acceptance, integrity, willingness to accept his own experiences, acceptance and understanding of others, socialization, creative adaptability, etc. The concept of "fully functioning person" and its components are considered. The personality of the professional develops through the integration of two processes: development of the personality in ontogenesis (throughout life) and its professionalization (activities from the beginning of professional self-determination to the completion of an active working career). The paper highlights motivational factors for choosing a profession and their role in successful mastering the profession: despite the already established choice of the study area, educational and professional self-determination, that is, a conscious choice of vocational training options, is still relevant for students.

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Keywords: Personal development, personal growth, professional development, professionalism, professional competence, fully functioning person.



1. Introduction

The problem of personal and professional development of the individual can be solved in the humanistic paradigm. The humanistic paradigm is a combination of views that determine the nature of the individual and his freedom as the highest value.

A number of researchers consider the problems of personal development and formation. They disclose the concept of personal development, its factors and conditions, self-development and self-actualization based on psychological discoveries and achievements. These researchers state that the goal of personal development is the disclosure and definition of subjective human norms for organization of the world (Akimova, 2009).

2. Problem Statement

In the social life of modern Russia, effective psychological assistance to the population is a rather acute problem which is becoming ever more urgent. Any professional activity is allowed not only "to produce" any goods and services, but it allows a person primarily to create conditions and realize his creative potential. Therefore, the problem of high-quality training of specialists in psychology and creation of conditions for personal and professional development of a future psychologist during his professional training is of special significance.

3. Research Questions

Foreign authors interpret personality development as unfolding of innate tendencies towards self-actualization and becoming a "fully functioning person", that is, a person that uses all of the makings and abilities, realizes his personal potential and strives to better understand himself, his experiences, thoughts and feelings.

Scientific literature often considers the concept of "personal growth" to be close to the term "personal development". According to the concept by Bratchenko (2007), personal growth is "liberation, finding oneself and one's life path, self-awareness, self-actualization and development of all basic personal attributes" (p. 90).

He distinguishes interpersonal (external) and intrapersonal (internal) criteria in the structure of personal growth.

Among interpersonal criteria for personal growth, the author notes:

1. Acceptance of others – respect for other people, recognition of their absolute value, and trust in them.

2. Understanding others – freedom from prejudice and stereotypes, the ability to realistic and comprehensive perception of people and the environment.

3. Socialization – a personality trait, which shows the individual's desire for constructive social relationships; openness, trust, naturalness in social contacts, and desire to constructively resolve interpersonal conflicts.

4. Creative adaptability – the ability of a person to use his inner abilities to overcome life difficulties, adequate assessment of each particular moment (Bratchenko, 2007).

The intrapersonal criteria include:

1. Acceptance of oneself – recognition of one's essence, "perception of oneself as a person that deserves respect and capable of independent choice" (Bratchenko, 2007, p. 90).
2. Willingness to accept one's experiences – the higher the level of personal development, the more it is free from distorting effects of psychological defenses, open to new experience, and capable of taking risks.
3. Understanding yourself – the ability to analyze and relax your current state, to have full self-perception.
4. Responsible freedom – the ability to take responsibility for one's choice and adequately assess its consequences.
5. Integrity – "strengthening and expansion of integration and interconnectedness of all aspects of human life".
6. Dynamism – a continuous and continuous process of changes, during which actual problems and contradictions are solved, and as a result, new experience is acquired (Bratchenko, 2007).

This is a developing personality that openly reacts and evaluates its own response to situations and strives to implement self-actualization. A fully functioning personality is characterized by the following aspects: living in a situation "here and now", openness to experiences and new experience, belief in one's own strength, motivation and intuition, and ability to correctly evaluate one's strength.

The ability to experience and cope with stressful situations and states of anxiety plays a special role in personal development of a psychologist. Erina (2016) notes:

For a person, various stressful and disturbing situations, the uncertainty of events is a consequence of objectively set parameters of the situation (its variability and high dynamics) and its subjective interpretation, which is associated with personal characteristics, and lack of skills or experience in solving this type of life issues. (p. 179)

The ability to experience and cope with stressful situations and states of anxiety plays a special role in personal development of a psychologist, as noted by Erina (2016): "Various stressful and disturbing situations, the uncertainty of events for a person is a consequence of objectively set parameters of the situation (its variability and high dynamics) and subjective interpretation, which is associated with personal characteristics, lack of skills or experience in solving these types of problems" (p. 172).

A number of authors (Bratchenko, 2007; Klimov, 2007) note personal development as one of the professionally significant qualities of the practical psychologist and define the process of the development professionally significant qualities as "personal development". Among these qualities, the authors point out professional experience, a high level of creativity, motivation in the profession, and value orientations aimed at progressive development of a psychologist (Zamorskaya & Kosyrev, 2004). One of the factors that contribute to development of personal and professional competence of a psychologist is a high level of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is interpreted as a combination of emotional, personal and social abilities that affect the ability to successfully cope with environmental demands and pressures (Tolegenova et al., 2015).

One of the fundamental psychological theories of emotional intelligence belongs to the Russian psychologist Lyusin (2004), who described the basic mechanisms of functioning of emotional intelligence, its role in the structure of the human psyche and features of its effect on personal formation.

At the same time, professional personality develops through the integration of two processes: development of the personality in ontogenesis (throughout life) and its professionalization (activities from the beginning of professional self-determination to the completion of an active working career).

Numerous departments are being established in Russia to train psychologists, and various full-time and part-time courses are being designed for their training. Retraining of other specialties for psychologists, most often in the "person-to-person" sphere (Abdusamatova, 2015), has become common. To date, the focus is not on the promotion of higher education, but on the quality of educational process as a whole and monitoring of its results (Stukalina, 2019). The concept of social-emotional learning (SEL) has affected the quality of education. It implies the effective use of knowledge and skills to set and achieve positive goals, to show sympathy for others, to establish and maintain positive attitudes, and to make responsible decisions (Yang, Wang, & Zhang 2018).

Professional self-determination is important for professional and personal development of a psychologist.

Assessing the abilities, prestige of the profession, and socio-economic situation, young people choose options for receiving professional education and alternative work.

Therefore, the problem of educational and professional self-determination, that is, a conscious choice of professional training options, is relevant for students. A personal professional plan of each individual varies and depends on his character and mentality. The main goal is the future. The level of claims for public recognition, namely, its realism, should be taken into account.

An important component of professional development is student's awareness, and information must be reliable. In addition, student's abilities must be considered not only in school, but also in social life. If an individual is consciously engaged in various activities, he will be able to change his hobbies, and hence his study area (Klimov, 2007). This is important for students since pre-professional hobbies are the path to more successful future.

Students choose the professional activity, which, in their opinion, corresponds to their own capabilities.

Self-knowledge and self-esteem affect the correctness of professional self-determination. Self-esteem helps to plan an adequate self-development program and to choose the right job. However, students are often not able to objectively assess themselves. Some may overestimate themselves, while others, on the contrary, underestimate themselves. Incorrect choice of the profession causes disappointment.

The problem is that young people do not know much about the psychological basis of professional self-determination. When choosing a profession, young people are guided by their moral and volitional, intellectual and organizational qualities. They lack knowledge of psychology, and it is difficult for them to understand their own interests, character traits and abilities. In this situation, psychological education is an important condition for formation of an objective self-esteem of the individual.

The major factors that affect the profession choice are professional suitability and prestige of the profession.

The consulting experience shows that students who delay their choice of profession often consult a psychologist to determine the type of activity they are most capable of. They expect to receive advice on their professional suitability (Kazantseva & Oleinik, 2002).

Moreover, modern students are confused due to the lack of complete and accurate understanding of what professional suitability is.

In this regard, an important criterion of the professional choice for them is job prestige. As a result, the profession is often chosen not because the student enjoys working. Indeed, most young people are not aware of benefits and drawbacks of the chosen profession.

University teachers fulfill a difficult task. They need to pay more attention to activities that promote students' professional self-determination.

Personal-professional development of university graduates requires transition from an egalitarian, unified approach to understanding of individualism as a positive factor for the formation of the human capital of society, and a practice-oriented approach to show the personal potential of the next generation that needs development in the pedagogical process.

The mechanism of development is personification of the educational process, educational programs and technologies, which takes into account the spectrum of students' personal characteristics, their needs and motivation of self-determination in the chosen profession. A combined effect of personification and individualization of education contributes to professional self-determination of the graduates (Kuznetsov, 2000).

The study was carried out at Humanities and Education Science Academy, V.I. Vernadsky Crimean Federal University, which trains specialists of different profiles, among which 37.03.01 Psychology, 44.03.02 Psychological and Pedagogical Education, 44.05.01 Pedagogy and Psychology of Deviant Behavior, and at Stavropol State Pedagogical Institute, which trains specialists in 44.03.02 Psychological and Pedagogical Education and 44.03.03 Special (defectologic) Education.

Humanities and Education Science Academy annually holds a job fair for students, which completes the activities for employment of graduates and students of the academy. Students and graduates have a real opportunity to get acquainted with employment opportunities in the modern labor market. Throughout the entire calendar year, Humanities and Education Science Academy and Stavropol State Pedagogical Institute organize scientific and practical conferences in order to increase students' knowledge in specific areas of psychological practice and to provide opportunities for students to acquire practical skills of counseling and correctional types of work.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study aims to investigate personal and professional development of psychology specialists through improved quality of practical training and professional education.

5. Research Methods

Theoretical methods employed in the study are a comparative analysis of scientific approaches to understanding of the categories of "personal" and "professional" development, methods of analysis,

synthesis, generalization, systematization of theoretical and empirical material; empirical methods include interviewing and training methods.

6. Findings

We developed a questionnaire to identify the professional competence of a psychologist, attitudes towards the future profession and ideas about it. The questionnaire contained the following types of questions: what qualities should a competent psychologist possess (which of these qualities do you have), what principles should be guided in practice, what influenced their choice of profession, etc. What qualities should a competent psychologist possess? (Which of these qualities do you have?), What principles should guide you in practice? What influenced your choice of profession? etc.

When surveying students of the 1st and 4th years, we identified the following qualities characteristic of a psychologist: sensitivity and insight; empathy and reflection; creative thinking; openness to different opinions, tolerance; focus on the customer, ability and desire to help him; rich imagination, intuition; resistance to stress and emotional-volitional stability; self-confidence, awareness of his own conflict areas, adequate self-esteem, positive self-attitude, the ability to create an atmosphere of emotional comfort; general psychophysical activity; high level of intelligence. About 27% of the first-year students and 64% of the fourth-year students note that they possess most of these professional competencies.

We argue that students need targeted motivation to achieve the required level of competence, to develop professional knowledge, to plan future career, and to master the employment techniques. To achieve the goal, the student should demonstrate internal activity, perseverance and independence, and desire for personal growth and development. In addition, the problem of choosing a profession has not yet been completely solved for young people enrolled in the institution of professional education. Some of them are disappointed in the first year of study, others are doubtful about the correctness of the choice of the profession at the beginning of their independent professional activities, and others feel disappointment after a few years of work within the context of their speciality.

In order to develop personal and professional skills of psychologists, we conducted development classes, lectures, and psychological games. Students were actively involved in scientific clubs, master classes and presentations at scientific conferences. In addition, we assisted senior students with employment.

In addition, psycho-correction was carried out using author's methods (Zalevskaya & Usatenko, 2018) for more profound immersion in the profession.

7. Conclusion

Thus, professional competence of a psychologist involves not only mastering necessary scientific disciplines and the ability to apply them, but it is a long and complex process which involves an important role of personal development and personal growth of a future professional.

Professional development and personal growth is primarily the process of acquiring necessary and significant qualities of a psychologist to form his professional competence. The motivational component of

choosing a profession is also significant in professional development, since this problem has not been completely solved by students.

The study has shown that students enrolled in psychology programs are aware of competences necessary for a psychologist but not in full. To date, we focus students not only on studying the academic psychology, but also on mastering practical skills for their future work.

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