THE STUDY OF PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY SENIOR STUDENTS' MORAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The main indicators of Pedagogical University senior students' moral development are analyzed in the article, which allows, to some extent, to evaluate the results of professional training and, subsequently, to enhance the educational process at the faculty and the University as a whole. The survey was attended by 80 students completing their undergraduate studies at the faculty of social management of Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University named after K. D. Ushinsky. Such methods as observation, creation of diagnostic situations, assessment, focus-group were also applied. The most evident and measurable indicators of senior students' moral development (moral value orientations, personality orientation, goals of professional choice, behavior of students in situations of moral choice, etc.) were identified and selected on the basis of literary resources analysis and the expert evaluation made by specialists. The stages and organization of the study are characterized. As a result of processing techniques and analysis of the empirical data, generalized conclusions are made about a fairly high level of social management faculty graduates' moral development: positive motives for obtaining professional education and participation of students in social activities, priorities of moral values, a high level of moral sense of personal achievements, etc. are formed. The obtained data allows the University teachers to get important information about the moral value orientations of young people and take them into account in their future professional activities, to some extent, to assess the results of educational work at the faculty and to specify the tasks of moral education for the nearest future.

1. Introduction

The problem of young generation of specialists' moral development has recently become particularly acute, due to the unstable state of society, significant changes in the economic and ideological development of the country, contradictions in education. Consequently, there was a decrease in the level of moral education of young people, their value disorientation in society. The young generation upbringing is given special attention in a number of key documents: The Law "On Education", National Doctrine of Education in the Russian Federation, Concept of Modernization of Russian Education, Strategy of Moral Development in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025 and others.

Modern problems of education of children and youth pose new challenges to the system of higher pedagogical education. An important place in the professional training is occupied by the educational process, which is carried out both during the curricular and extracurricular time. Moral education of students at the Pedagogical University is of special importance. Its graduates, working in social and educational spheres, conducting educational process in various social and educational organizations, should be role models for children and youth. In this regard, at the Pedagogical University special attention should be paid to the formation of the personality of a specialist with moral value orientations and humane goals, a deep inner world, an active life position, a high level of responsibility (Federal State Standard of Higher Education, 2016).

Education as a purposeful process involves certain qualitative and quantitative changes taking place in a person on the basis of regulated interaction between the teacher and the pupil. To regulate the process of education, it is necessary to monitor its results, one of which is the moral development of students. It is especially difficult and, at the same time, important to study the state of senior students' moral development, and to compare its level with the planned results. This information will help University teachers to understand the inner world, the needs of young people, critically analyze the interaction with them and, subsequently, to adjust the tasks, pedagogical tools of organizing educational activities of students at the Pedagogical University. We have tried to conduct a study of senior students' moral development at one of the faculties of the Pedagogical University, based on a number of important indicators, without claiming this investigation to be complete and comprehensive. Currently, we have not found similar works, which proves the scientific and practical significance of this research.

2. Problem Statement

The importance and relevance of the study of moral education received by young people completing their studies at the University are obvious, however, there arised a number of problems during the course of this research. First of all, there is no unambiguous approach to the interpretation of the concept of "Moral Development", including "Moral Education". Often, to determine a person's moral development, three approaches are distinguished: general cultural, characterizing moral education as part of the general culture and the result of continuous education and self-education of a person; competency, suggesting to consider education, using the concept of social competencies, and level, meaning the assessment of different levels of formation of qualities that characterize education (Garavan & Murphy, 2001; Zaiceva, 2011).

It is rather complicated to evaluate the level of a person's moral development, and some experts in the field of moral education believe that it is impossible to objectively assess the level of development of this integrative quality. It is possible to agree with these view points, but at the same time it is necessary to determine the level of students' moral development when it comes to managing the educational process, to support the development of a particular person. Therefore, a number of researchers in this field have proposed and repeatedly tested in practice some particular indicators characterizing moral education, and successfully applied the results of the study for the development of the educational process (Bayborodova, 2016; Krestovskij & Belovolov, 2007).

It is also necessary to select methods that are convenient for processing the data and give the most reliable results. Studying this question, we have found that traditionally there are two main points of view on this issue. Some researchers believe that the level of moral education can be determined by observing human behavior, others study the moral education of students using surveys, tests, expert assessments, etc. We propose to use a set of methods and techniques, which includes both pedagogical observation of students' behavior in situations of voluntary participation in activities and moral choice, as well as questions, tests, evaluation (Watkins & Ebersold, 2016).

At the moment, we have not found a special study on senior students' moral education, but it is obvious that there are certain indicators, moral qualities that are important for bachelors who are going to work in the social and educational spheres in the future (Barakoska & Jovkovska, 2013; Fortova & Fabrikov, 2017; Zelenova, 2019).

3. Research Questions

3.1. What indicators characterize the Pedagogical University senior students' moral development?

3.2. What methods and techniques can be used to reliably determine the formation of the main indicators of moral development?

3.3. What is the level of formation of the most important qualities, indicators of senior students' moral development?

3.4. What moral qualities are insufficiently developed in future specialists of the social and educational spheres?

3.5. What tasks are relevant at the organization of educational activity of students of Pedagogical University?

4. Purpose of the Study

The main objective of the research, based on the study of senior student's moral development, was to determine the tasks and ways of further development of academic and educational processes at the faculty of social management of the Pedagogical University.

Accordingly, the objectives of the study were formulated:

▪ to define the main indicators of moral education of students and to select methods of their measuring;

- to characterize the level of formation of senior students' moral development at the faculty of social management of the Pedagogical University;
- to reveal actual problems of moral education of future bachelors involved in social and educational spheres;
- to specify tasks of educational activity of students for the nearest period.

5. Research Methods

The following methods were used to solve the tasks of the study:

- theoretical - analysis of literature resources, results of empirical research, systematization and generalization of the obtained data;
- empirical - questioning, interviewing, conversations, observation, creating diagnostic situations, assessment, focus-group;
- method of interpreting the results of the study.

The study included three stages:

1. At the stage of preparatory work, the scientific literature on an investigated problem was analyzed, the criteria and indicators for the study of senior students' moral development were defined, appropriate methods were selected, the plan and scenario of the diagnostic testing for each student group at the final course of studies at the faculty of social management were developed.

2. The empirical stage was conducted in April-June 2019 and included a number of complementary methodologies:

- A. Monitoring the behavior of senior students in diagnostic situations of moral choice, when students had the opportunity to participate in a number of activities with different social and professional value.

- B. The "Goal Setting" technique was used for defining goals that today's graduates set for themselves before entering the University, both actual at the moment and also the long-term ones, as well as for revealing their moral values.

- C. The "Proverbs" technique, the purpose of which is to determine the level of moral orientation, value attitude of students to life, people, themselves. The methodology contains value judgments recorded in the content of 15 pairs of proverbs, opposite in moral sense, for example: 1) spiritual / spiritless attitude to life, 2) insignificance / significance of material well-being in life, 3) the significance / insignificance of work, 4) self-determination / lack of self-determination in life, 5) the pursuit of achievements in life / lack of aspiration, 6) good / bad attitude to people, 7) the significance / insignificance of friendship, 8) the significance / insignificance of learning, etc. The student needs to read each pair of proverbs ("a" and "b") and choose the pair with the content of which he agrees to the greatest extent. The indicator of moral development is determined by the following ratio: the greater the degree of agreement with the content of proverbs "a", and the lower the degree of agreement with the content of proverbs "b", the higher the level of students' moral development, and vice versa (Cullen, Joyce, Hassall, & Broadbent, 2003; Petrova, 2015).

- D. The "Graduate Student" questionnaire which includes questions on identification of valuable meanings the senior students express about University education in general; on an assessment of

their main achievements; on definition of senior students' social role in the activities of the University, faculty, group; on an assessment of qualities which the students acquired during the period of study.

- E. The survey involved 84 senior students enrolled in the Bachelor's degree of the faculty of social management of Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University named after K. D. Ushinsky.

The analytical stage included the processing of the data, systematization and generalization of the results of empirical research, drawing conclusions in accordance with the tasks. While processing the obtained results, the materials of 4 students had to be excluded: the answers of three students turned out to be contradictory, one student did not answer all the questions or did not fully answer some of them (Yamada, 2016).

6. Findings

Based on the analysis of various scientific sources (Barakoska & Jovkovska, 2013; Fortova & Fabrikov, 2017; Krestovskij & Belovolov, 2007), expert evaluation of specialists, we define moral development as a set of moral qualities that are manifested in human behavior and identify the following indicators of students' moral development, which, in our opinion, are important for this study: targets and priorities, moral value orientations, personality orientation, behavior of students in a situation of moral choice.

First of all, we describe the targets and priorities of the senior students. The vast majority of students at the stage of admission to the University aimed to obtain higher education, diploma and graduate from the University. At the time of completion of the course of study 71.25% of respondents are preparing to successfully pass the final tests and find a job in the specialty, a quarter of graduates plan to enter the Master's program, the rest of the students are going to develop as professionals, find a respectable and interesting job, continue education in the next year or two. For the ten-year period, students set the following goals: starting a family (77.5%), expanding the sphere of professional activity, career growth, decent earnings (16.25%), to be successful and recognized in society (6.25%).

According to the results of the survey (see table 1), the majority of Bachelor's graduates consider self-cognition and self-improvement (40%), preparation for further professional activity and life (21, 2 %) to be the main values of studying at the University. The development of one's own interests and abilities, obtaining professional skills are also close in value sense to the previous ones. For only 5% of students, prestige values are paramount. These data indicate that the overwhelming number of senior students have formed positive motives for obtaining professional education (Table 01).

Table 01. The Main Values of University Education (according to Bachelor's graduates)

The Main Values of University Education	Number of answers (%)
Self-cognition and self-improvement	40.00
Preparation for further professional activity and life	21.25
Development of one's own interests and abilities	10.00
Obtaining professional skills	10.00
Exploration and comprehension of the surrounding world	8.75
Scientific research	5.00
Getting a diploma with excellent grades	2.50
Prestige of education	2.50

The "Proverbs" technique, the purpose of which was the study of moral value orientations that characterize the attitude to life, work, people, themselves, confirmed the high level of senior students' moral development - 73. 75%.

To determine the most significant moral values, graduates were asked to rank the various aspects of life according to the degree of importance for them: the lower the average rank, the more important and significant this aspect in the lives of young people. The following results were obtained: for the majority of senior students, the priority was given to such aspects as love (the average rank 1. 75) and a happy family life (the average rank 1. 7), health takes the second place (the average rank 2.4), financially secure life (the average rank 2.75), the third position in the rating belongs to life wisdom (the average rank 3.9), self-development (the average rank 4.6). All in all, the data obtained indicate the priority of moral values, which are important for life, in 83.75 % of graduates.

The answer to the open question on the qualities which have developed in students over the years of University studies is indicative for the assessment of their moral development. A significant part of graduates (from 46.25% to 71.25%) noted the following important qualities: communication, commitment, self-confidence, responsibility, willpower, determination, independence, organizational qualities, efficiency, critical thinking. Only some students named such qualities as activity, initiative, creativity, diligence. Unfortunately, none of the students noted patriotism, citizenship, respect for people, care for others. We believe that teachers should pay attention to these data when designing the educational process, focusing on the current value priorities in determining the content of education, organization of goal-setting and evaluation of students' social activities.

A significant part of graduates considers good grades and Graduation with Honours, obtaining Higher Education, the realization of their opportunities, successful participation in various events (conferences, educational events, etc.), making friends, acquiring knowledge, experience, positive qualities to be the main achievements of their education (open question). Most of the students (77.5%) noted that in general, their goals have been achieved and coincide with the main objectives. The list of personal achievements of the majority of students during the period of study is characterized by a high level of moral sense, which confirms the previous indicators of senior students' moral development.

It was important to determine the involvement of graduates in public affairs, to record the real actions of students and the nature of their participation in activities in order to assess the level of their moral development. According to official data, which are recorded by the fact of participation of University students in specific socially significant events, students of the faculty of social management are the most active, being the initiators of a number of socially important events: voluntary Saturday clean-up; activities aimed at the adaptation of first-year students (city tours, freshman week, photo races, etc.); volunteer movements; collection of waste paper; environmental activities (battery collection, garbage collection and sorting, etc.); donor days; work with the social rehabilitation center and other organizations; work in the University and faculty newspapers; master classes (workshops) for children and grandchildren of the teaching staff, the New Year's party; design of the faculty museum.

One of the questions of the questionnaire was devoted to students' assessment of their role in public affairs of the faculty. Analyzing the results, we can conclude that the majority of graduates of the faculty of social management mostly often assess their role in public affairs of the faculty as an active participant

(67.5 %). 15 people (18. 75%) consider themselves to be organizers and initiators of events. Only a small number of graduates take the position of observer or passive participant. Three people replied that they almost never participated in the events of the faculty. Thus, according to the results of the analysis of the data obtained, it can be concluded that a significant part of the graduates showed social activity, some are constant initiators and organizers of various occasions.

The results of the students' survey were confirmed by the Deputy Dean of the Faculty for Educational Work, mentors of the senior student groups of the final year, who highly appreciated the level of social activity of graduates. About half of the graduates of each student group (from 30% to 55%) showed activity in the organization of the "Doors Open Day", where students independently presented the educational program, which they have mastered for four years. On average, about 45% (in some groups up to 70%) of graduates showed creativity during various master classes of professional orientation, held at the University and abroad. Volunteering was of particular importance for senior students: about 80 % of graduates participated in volunteer actions, collected gifts for the elderly, helped shelters for homeless animals. Senior students took part in the organization of many educational events during the year: concerts for various holidays ("Teacher's Day", "Country Defender's Day - February 23", "International Women's Day - March 8", "Victory Day - May 9", etc.), supervision of junior students, the conference "Preparing students to work in children's health camps", etc. All in all, according to University teachers, we can talk about positive motivation of students' participation in social activities, which confirms a sufficiently high level of senior students' moral development.

At the same time, according to University teachers, one and the same students became the organizers of the majority of social events, although other graduates also have the resources for the manifestation of leadership skills, which naturally inhibited their personal and professional development. At the University level, unfortunately, only a small part of graduates (16.25%) took part in various professional activities (olympiads, competitions, conferences, etc.), mostly often being observers or enthusiastic spectators, very rarely organizers. Teachers, mentors, student activists at the faculty, heads of moral education centers at the University need to further identify mechanisms and incentives for more active inclusion of students in the affairs of the University, other social and educational organizations in the region, taking into account the great moral and organizational potential of undergraduate students of the faculty of social management.

Thus, summarizing the data of the students' survey, the analysis of their voluntary participation in public activities in situations of moral choice, taking into account the opinions of faculty teachers, it is possible to estimate the moral development level of the majority of the graduates. However, some students (18, 75%) have an average level of moral development, and 7.5% of Bachelor's graduates are approaching a low level, which makes it problematic for them to get access to the professional activity as future employees of the social and educational spheres.

7. Conclusion

We have tried to analyze the senior students' moral development, considering the data obtained as one of the results of bachelors' professional training and as one of the grounds for further management of the educational process at the faculty and at the Pedagogical University. From the point of view of reliability of the data received by means of a complex of the interconnected and complementary techniques, we

consider the results of studying and the conclusions made on their basis to be quite objective for the surveyed students and the conditions of carrying out research.

The results suggest that, despite the complicated problems in society and the education system, Bachelor's graduates are generally well-bred. Diagnosed indicators of most senior students' moral development are at a high level, which allows, to some extent, to speak about the presence of a positive moral impact of the educational process at the faculty of social management.

It is important that the values associated with starting a family and ensuring its well-being, the aspiration of students for further development, the continuation of their education are regarded as the most essential ones by the majority of students. However, there are students who have not shown any initiative, have not realized their full potential. It is also possible to name a number of qualities, the development of which should be aimed at the educational process in a Pedagogical University: patriotism, initiative, creativity, activity, sensitivity and attentiveness. It is necessary to expand the scope of social activities of students, strengthening its professional orientation (Approaches to the assessment of education of students, n.d.).

The obtained results of the analysis of senior students' moral development are taken into account in the organization of the educational process and management decisions. Conclusions and recommendations based on the results of the study are used in further adjustment of the educational process at the faculty and its management. Attention is drawn to the lowest indicators of moral education of graduates when designing a promising strategy of pedagogical activity at the faculty and at the University, specification of tasks in the field of moral education of students. For purposeful management of the educational process it is necessary to monitor the changes that occur in the process of moral education, and to assess the degree of its achievement, taking into account the existing conditions and means of educational activity, to record and analyze to what extent the pedagogical tools, technologies, methods, created conditions affect the effectiveness of students' moral development.

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