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PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION OF CIVIL SERVANTS IN TERMS OF SOCIO-CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

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Abstract

Changes in reality are justified by the technological breakthrough of leading countries. They actualize the need for the dynamics of the public administration system, including the professional development of modern public servants. In modern globalization, there is a need to reform the system of additional professional education of civil servants in the conditions of sociocultural transformations of modern society. The article analyzes the results of the study conducted in the modular vocational training in state authorities of the Vladimir region in 2015/2019. The training involved the development of a range of additional professional continuing education programs developed by representatives of the scientific and teaching staff of the Vladimir branch of the RANEPa for government employees of the Vladimir region. During the implementing additional professional continuing education programs, the team of authors not only provided educational services, but 1) determined the basic educational needs of representatives of government agencies, 2) developed and implemented customized additional professional programs, 3) resorted to expert advice in order to improve educational content, 4) monitored the quality of the provision of educational services, and also examined the degree of satisfaction of civil servants from contents of programs. Applying the developed methods, the authors designed a system for improving the additional professional education, taking into account the socio-cultural transformations of Russian society. A team of authors carried out the study with the expert representatives of power structures who specified educational requests for customized programs of additional education.

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1. Introduction

In most countries, public administration is undergoing systemic changes caused by external and internal factors. The result of these changes largely depends on the professionalism and competencies of state civil servants, their knowledge and skills. The quality of public administration is also determined by their training level and quality. Sociocultural transformations in modern society have a direct impact on the system of additional professional education of public servants.

Following Farazmand (2009), we will name “the rapid growth of the unknown world” as the main reason for the transformation processes in public administration. It is understood that the modern world is not just volatile: it is constantly increasing the rate of change, and most importantly, the unpredictability of such dynamics is growing. The modern representative of society does not feel psychologically comfortable, as it loses confidence in the objectivity of reality. The loss of objectivity is confirmed by real unpredictable changes in external circumstances, including in public administration. Representatives of the neuro-linguistic and cognitive trends mention of the existence of *umwelt*, that is, an exclusively subjective reality, which is characterized by specific characteristics of the owner of the *umwelt*.

2. Problem Statement

From a psychological point of view, the process of effective management is most often hindered by the unexpectedness and uncertainty of the situation, and the lack of positive experience. In this regard, representatives of public administration experience a competency-based need for professionalism of a broader profile and significance (Bao et al., 2011). The traditional administrative competencies discussed in most studies and constructing models of professional competences become obsolete than are realized in the activities of specific employees (Jingwei, 2017; Raadschelders, 2018). The main drawback of the developed competency models is the neglect of the need for multidimensional foresight, which is reflected in the “lag” in the system of additional professional education of civil servants from existing public inquiries and challenges in the context of socio-cultural transformations.

3. Research Questions

The transformation of the system of additional professional education of civil servants in the conditions of sociocultural transformations of modern Russian society.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is the formation of a systemic strategy aimed at optimizing the trajectory of professional development of public civil servants, primarily in terms of changing additional professional education.

5. Research Methods

The general methods of scientific knowledge (theoretical and empirical research) were applied. Among the theoretical methods, abstraction, analysis and synthesis, idealization, induction and deduction,

mental modeling were chosen. The second group includes observation, comparison, measurement, experiment.

The main research methods were: philosophical, sociological, psychological, pedagogical, linguistic analyses of the course and results of additional professional advanced training programs for public civil servants; generalization of empirical experience of increasing the effectiveness of continuing professional education; theoretical modeling of learning process; approbation of the developed model during the forming experiment. Additionally, an in-depth analysis of program documents was conducted. A retrospective approach has been used to identify trends and patterns.

The structural aspects of the study were:

a) a four-year study in the realization of additional professional development programs for state civil servants of the Vladimir Region;

b) inter-branch projects with colleagues from other structures of the Academy on issues of increasing the effectiveness of additional professional education North-West Institute of Management, South-Russian Institute of Management, Dzerzhinsk Branch of RANEPa, Ivanovo Branch of RANEPa, Nizhny Novgorod Institute of Management, Tambov Branch of RANEPa;

c) introducing foreign experience into the paradigm of Russian additional education after participating in international internships in the United States of America (Western Illinois University, University of Middle Tennessee), the Republic of South Korea (Korean Civil Service Association; Korean Institute of Public Administration; National Institute for Human Resources Development under the Ministry of Personnel Management; Sokyong University; Korea International Cooperation Agency), India (Indian State Institute Government Administration; Jawaharlal Nehru University; International Institute of Management; Indira Gandhi National Open University; University of Delhi), the People's Republic of China (Beijing Administrative Institute, Yunnan Administrative Institute). These internships were devoted to studying the world's best educational practices in public administration.

6. Findings

The innovative development of the system of continuous training is based on the principles of diversification of the educational process, the priority of the innovative component in the additional professional education of civil servants, the functional integration of educational and expert consulting activities, the modularity of the construction of educational training programs, the continuity and sequence of all stages of the educational process, the coordination of all parts of the system additional professional education of civil servants (Annin, 2016).

Among the practical recommendations that accompany the transformational changes in the system of additional professional education of state civil servants in Russia, we will mention the following ones.

The first one is the re-routing of additional professional programs in accordance with the speed variability of modern reality. Each additional professional program must solve practical problems of unpredictable, unexpected changes in public administration at all levels of interagency cooperation. The main competencies to be developed should be aimed not only at the quick and competent response of civil servants, but also at multidimensional foresight and planning. Such a behavioral trajectory depends, first of all, on the psychological stability of civil servants.

The second one is a development of professionalism of a wide profile. The term “professionalism” in the traditional sense of “professional skill” expands its meaning and implies a very wide range of soft-skills (Cheema, 2004; Eakin et al., 2011), which is constantly expanding and dynamically developing in accordance with specific professional requirements. In this regard, programs of continuing professional education should be developed with the participation of expert practitioners, as well as heads of structural departments at various levels. Moreover, the presence of expert advice during additional professional programs, as well as in the process of post-project interaction and reflection allows you to expand professionalism of students to an unlimited and open space. Professionalism of a wide range involves the adoption of personal, collective and administrative responsibility, the absence of a fear of asking incorrect questions to the leadership, the desire to build subordinated communication (with managers and colleagues) and social communication (with citizens), the desire to improve the legislative system and solve existing problems.

Adaptation and / or innovation of continuing professional education in order to match the process of globalization. Change caused by large-scale globalization processes can be traced in management, and in ministry, and in a cultural sphere (Madureira & Ferraz, 2010; Rubaii, 2016). In this regard, ideas on a transdisciplinary approach seem to be the most promising (Moky, 2011)

The holistic approach involves innovation and adaptation as integral aspects of globalization. Moreover, the term innovation should be understood as not large-scale scientific discoveries and technological breakthroughs. Innovation in the system of continuing professional education implies the high adaptability of all components of the educational process to the present and future requirements of customers. The constantly updated adaptability of the educational content itself, the target groups participating in the programs (teachers, students, experts, customers), as well as the tasks and results of additional professional education, are significant. It is efficient to use not entirely new, but relevant methods for a specific program and a specific target audience, including team and leadership behaviors, aggressive and ethical communication practices, psychological interactive and unloading, expert analysis of results and reflection. It should be noted that there is not always justified and excessive introduction of world educational experience in the field of Russian education. For example, agile-methods, scrum, facilitation technologies are certainly effective in business structures, but not always effective in public administration. The very hierarchy and administrative nature of public administration implies the influence of the individual, authority on the opinion of students. The balanced participation of teachers and experts, in our opinion, gives the greatest result.

Implementation of additional professional programs aimed at developing “administrative power” (Farazmand, 2009). Such a process implies a new approach to understanding power and implies its necessity, justice, and omnipresence (Bertot et al., 2010). Our study demonstrates interesting results on the perception of public servants in power in general, and their own functions in the public administration system in particular. On the one hand, representatives of public administration understand a certain specific attitude of other representatives of Russian society to the public administration system, often formed on stereotypes. It is interesting that the government officials themselves agree with most mental stereotypes. However, personally, employees, their professional activities, as well as their wide and narrow environment, do not belong to power structures. There is a certain contrast between public

servants and the public administration system. The issue of creating a positive image of a civil servant and the perception of this image by citizens of the Russian Federation are directly related to the issue under discussion. In this regard, in our opinion, any additional professional advanced training program should include modules for the development of ethical-communicative competence of civil servants. Information openness associated with globalization regulates any behavioral and speech actions of government representatives. There is a constant danger of responding or reacting incorrectly. The consequences of inaccurate reactions of civil servants to provocative actions of citizens are appeals to the prosecutor's office and other negative consequences.

Promoting the professional development of institutionalization of public administration implies a conceptual abstraction of the institution of state power from other significant structures (Farazmand, 2009). Public administration cannot merge with other institutions, but must be a powerful autonomy. The issue of constructivization of the role of the modern Government is closely connected with the issue under discussion. The constructive function of power involves a quick and autonomous action in unforeseen crisis situations. Additional professional programs should include a sufficient number of practical tasks that mimic critical situations. Representatives of power structures should learn how to act independently in such situations, how to team up, how to delegate or accept previously unfulfilled duties. Russian managerial reality is the mandatory presence of a team, order, direction. However, the current situation requires government representatives to clearly organize the services provided in a broad sense. Service organization refers to security, economic development, respect for the public good and social justice (Makrydemetres et al., 2016; Michael, 2003)

The creation of high-quality customized contents that forms the value system of representatives of power structures. It is important to understand that representatives of public administration in the speech and behavioral plan, on the one hand, are associated with state power. On the other hand, they are role models for other representatives of society. Even small shifts in the values of government representatives lead to global transformations in the governance system (Raadschelders, 2018; Stoker, 2006). It confirms the significance of each individual carrying out professional activities in public service. This indicates the need to single out the most responsible and morally oriented staff capable of exerting local and global influence.

The orientation in creating additional professional programs to the educational needs of public servants demonstrates the ethics, reliability and transparency of educational content. It is these characteristics that should underlie all the communication processes taking place in public administration (Bao et al., 2011; Haroon, 2016).

One of the leading professional competencies is becoming ethical-communicative competences. In contrast to communicative competence, ethical-communicative competences are aimed at the formation of ethical communication, implying the ability to work in a situation of information openness and even demonstrativeness; the ability to quickly and correctly respond to sudden and conflicting interactions; the ability not to make behavioral (non-verbal) mistakes in a stressful situation; the ability to ignore provocations from any sources (citizens, the media, leaderships, colleagues, opponents) and much more (Kotliarova & Potapova, 2018).

7. Conclusion

It is determined that in sociocultural transformations of modern society, the improvement of the existing system of additional professional education of civil servants should be based on: 1) an individual approach to planning the professional development of civil servants; 2) an inclusion of events for the exchange of experience, practices and internships in continuing professional education; 3) an increase of the volume of self-training of employees; 4) an introduction of elements of mentoring, tutoring in the curricula of training programs; 5) cooperation of state institutions with organizations that train public servants in continuing professional education; 6) inter-level differentiation of educational programs depending on the legal status of employees; 7) strengthening methodological, analytical, methodological and informational support of educational programs.

The competencies constructed during additional professional programs are aimed at the formation of norms and values that ensure adaptation to previously unknown and unexpected challenges of reality. Consequently, the retention of the formed value system and its positive dynamics ensure the preservation of effective public administration.

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