

PSYRGGU 2020

Psychology of Personality: Real and Virtual Context

CONDITIONS OF THE TEACHER'S PROFESSIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AS AN EDUCATOR

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Abstract

The relevance of the research is determined by the high demands of society and the state to the educational activities' results of the modern school. The main aim of the article is to determine the conditions of the teacher's professional skills development as an educator. There are some leading methods used in the article such as the theoretical analysis of psychological and pedagogical researches and the rating method. The study was taken place in three stages. The theoretical analysis was used at the first stage when the authors were studying the works of domestic and foreign researchers on the issue under consideration. This made it possible to present in the article the author's definition of the term "the teacher's professional skills as an educator". Also, the theoretical analysis of the researches on the issue under consideration allowed the authors not only to identify the conditions which were affected the teacher's professional skills development as an educator, but also to develop questionnaires. The questionnaires were used at the second stage, i.e., during an empirical study. The authors convincingly proved that the teacher's formation as an educator was more influenced by conditions which related to external factors. At the same time, the data obtained made it possible to identify conditions whose importance was recognized by teachers, but their potential was not sufficiently realized in their practical activities. In conclusion of the article, the authors highlighted the conditions of the teacher's professional skills development as an educator in a general educational organization.

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Keywords: Educational activities, professional development, teacher as an educator, teacher's professional skills.



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1. Introduction

In scientific literature the teacher's professional skills development is considered as a process which accompanies his entire professional path. A separate factor (or their combinations) has a decisive influence on a person at different periods of his individual development. The leading factor in human development is the professional activity, carried out by him, from the beginning of his professionalization to the end of a professional career.

Turning to the specifics of the school teacher's profession, some researchers (Kuzmina, 1967; Slastenin, 2011; and others) note its multifunctional nature and distinguish the following activities as diagnostic, orientational and prognostic, constructive-design, organizational, informational and explanatory, communicative-stimulating, analytical and evaluative, research and creative.

From the standpoint of such researchers as Kolesnikova et al. (2005), Stepanov (2018) and others, in the teacher's activities it is necessary to single out educational activities "as a special type of pedagogical activity", which "is carried out in the system of pedagogical relations and is aimed at: improving people and relations between people; creation of favorable conditions of the development of personality; habitat; microclimate of the communities into which the pupil enters" (Kolesnikova et al., 2005, p. 34).

Traditionally, educational activities are considered as an integral part of the teaching. As rightly noted by the authors of the authoritative textbook "Educational Activities of a Teacher": "Sometimes it seems that it does not exist separately, being integrated into other types of activity and pedagogical processes" (Kolesnikova et al., 2005, p. 5). In practice this tendency (that is not to designate educational activity as a "special type of activity") leads to the fact that this type of activity is not paid attention to the teacher's professional skills development. And as a result, as the authors team led by N. L. Selivanova, notes: "for many teachers, unfortunately, educational activity was and remains the most unattractive component of professional activity" (as cited in Selivanova & Stepanov, 2011, p. 7). At the same time, I. Kolesnikova (2017), drawing attention to the importance of training a teacher as an educator, rightly notes that this is not only a subject for scientific discussion, first of all, it is a manifestation of the laws of socio-economic life of society.

Thus, considering educational activities as professional activities of a special nature, which are characterized by motives, goals, actions, methods and means that are manifested in the personal and professional position of the educator that are distinct from other types of teacher's activities, we consider it necessary to create conditions in educational institutions, which would contribute to the development of professional skills of the teacher as an educator.

2. Problem Statement

The problem of the teacher's professional skills development is the research's subject of domestic (Bakhtigulova, 2018; Fedorova, 2016; Kamensky, 2018; Kolykhmatov, 2019; Ozhogova & Rasskazova 2018; Tracevskaya, 2019; and others) and foreign (Galaczi et al., 2018; Francis, 2016; Moore, 2009; Rahman, 2016; Soliday, 2015; Williams, 2016; etc.) researchers. In their studies, the authors identified patterns, principles, leading conditions of the teacher's development, identified the possible stages and stages of the professional development's process. However, the problem of the teacher's professional skills

development as an educator remains insufficiently study. It is important to identify the conditions which are affected the teacher's development as an educator in a general educational organization.

3. Research Questions

What conditions influence on the teacher's professional skills development as an educator in a general educational organization?

4. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the conditions of the teacher's professional skills development as an educator, which must be created in general educational organizations.

To achieve this purpose, we solved the following tasks:

1. We studied the theoretical aspects of this problem, presented in researches of foreign and domestic authors.
2. We conducted an empirical study among teachers.
3. We identified the leading conditions of the teacher's professional skills development as an educator.

5. Research Methods

There are some leading methods used by us in the article such as the theoretical analysis of psychological and pedagogical researches and the rating method.

6. Findings

Starting to analyze the conditions of the teacher's professional skills development as an educator, we outline our understanding of the essence of the concept of "the teacher's professional skills as an educator". Unfortunately, the narrow scope of the article does not allow a detailed presentation of the logic of our study of this concept. We only outline the substantive grounds of the analysis and construction of the concept. Based on the analysis of theoretical approaches to the phenomena of "professional skills" and "educational activity", we determined that the teacher's professional skills as an educator is a high level of knowledge of educational activity, characterized by:

- the presence of the teacher's professional motivation to educate;
- the educator's formed personal and professional position;
- deep theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of education,
- developed skills for the implementation of basic pedagogical actions and an individual style in educational activities.

The study of the conditions of the teacher's professional skills development as an educator was carried out in several stages.

At the first stage, the theoretical analysis of studies on the problem of the teacher's professional skills development was carried out. It was found that the authors used two different concepts of "condition"

and “factor”, which were designating them as the reason of the affection of the teacher’s professional skills development.

So, in most cases in pedagogical researches the concepts of “factor” and “condition” of professional development are not shared and are used as synonyms. In modern psychology and acmeology, on the contrary, there has been a tendency to distinguish between “conditions” and “factors” of professional development (Derkach et al., 2000; Mitina, 2018; etc.).

In this regard, the approach of Larionova (2008), which proposed concretizing the essence of the concepts of “psychological condition” and “psychological factor”, deserves attention.

The psychological condition is an important circumstance of personal and professional life, which is primarily of an extra-subjective nature and on which the teacher's progress towards professional mastery depends.

Psychological factors are the determinants of the development of a university teacher as a subject of activity, that is, intra-subject driving forces of the development of professionalism (Larionova, 2008).

Our position is to consider the concept of “factor” as a broader concept, combining external and internal reasons affected the development of a professional. By “condition” we will understand those circumstances of the teacher’s personal and professional life which must be purposefully created for the development of his professional skills.

The idea proposed by the author to take into account the non-subject or intra-subject nature of the reasons (circumstances, driving forces) affecting the teacher’s professional skills development was taken by us as a basis for classifying the external and internal factors (conditions) acting as a driving force, circumstance, the reason for the teacher’s personal and professional development as an educator. As a result of a theoretical analysis of studies on the problem of the teachers’ professional skills development, we identified external and internal factors that positively affected the development of professional skills of a teacher an educator and had a negative impact (Shcherbakov, 2017).

Having examined the approaches to the development of professional excellence in domestic pedagogy and psychology, we turned to modern foreign studies of this problem. The analysis allowed us to conclude that numerous studies were devoted to studying the influence of a condition or a method on the professional development of a teacher. For example, J.E. Hartnett’s study is disclosed the impact of the processes of the teacher’s co-operative development and implementation of a mental computation instructional program and the provision of ongoing support for the classroom teacher by the education advisor (Hartnett, 2011).

Francis (2016) revealed the role of joint professional teams consisting of teachers with different ages and work experience in mastering new learning tasks.

In the works of Soliday (2015) and Williams (2016) reveals the potential of collegial professional development and professional learning communities.

Among the works we analyzed, we would like to draw attention to two studies in which there was a tendency to identify a complex of conditions affected the development of the teacher’s professional skills.

Moore (2009) revealed positive and negative factors which influenced the teachers’ professional development in the United States. There were identified such positive factors as cooperation, collegiality, group training, participation in conferences, encouragement from family members and other teachers, the

successful application of new knowledge and skills in working with children and improving student performance.

The factors, which were inhibiting the educators' development, included: time, financial obligations, family responsibilities, and professional preferences in programming (Moore, 2009). The study by Galaczi et al. (2018) is also noteworthy. The researchers carried out a systematic analysis of programs to improve the standards of the English language as tools for the effective teachers' professional development. The authors described the obstacles and problems which were limiting the impact of programs on the teachers' professional development, presented a description of 10 key features of successful English language teaching professional development programs, which, in our opinion, characterized the process of professional development as a whole, and not only in relation to the improvement of language teaching skills.

Based on the theoretical analysis and our own experience of professional pedagogical activity, we determined a list of conditions which affected the teacher's professional skills development as an educator. This list contains such 17 items, as:

- 1) the reading pedagogical literature;
- 2) the help of an experienced teacher;
- 3) the school's educational traditions;
- 4) the presentation of their own experience of educational activities in front of the teaching staff;
- 5) communication with colleagues;
- 6) the observation of the experience of colleagues' educational activities;
- 7) the school administration's requirements;
- 8) the pedagogical reflection of their own experience of educational activities;
- 9) the participation in creative groups with colleagues;
- 10) the interaction with parents;
- 11) the need to participate in solving children's problems;
- 12) the image of the teacher as an educator;
- 13) school professional events dedicated to education (seminars, pedagogical advice, meetings, etc.);
- 14) the participation in professional communities (associations, clubs);
- 15) professional and personal beliefs;
- 16) communication with the same age teacher;
- 17) a team of like-minded people.

These conditions became the basis for the development of the questionnaire.

At the second stage of the study, we conducted a study of teachers of the higher and general education systems in order to identify the conditions which had the greatest impact on the development of their professional skills as educators. The respondents were 496 teachers of educational organizations from 14 regions of the Russian Federation (Moscow, Kurgan region, Moscow region, Nizhny Novgorod region, Novosibirsk region, Omsk region, Sverdlovsk region, Tula region, Ulyanovsk region, Chelyabinsk region, Perm Territory, the Republic of Bashkortostan and Tatarstan, the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area).

During the survey, the teachers were offered, using the rating method, to rank the 17 conditions proposed by them according to their degree of importance for two reasons:

- the first basis was the conditions which were influenced on the teacher's formation as an educator.
- the second basis was the conditions which had to be created in the school for the teacher's professional skills development as an educator.

The generalized results of the study are shown in table 1.

Table 01. Conditions' rating affecting the teacher's professional skills development as an educator

Rating position	Conditions which were influenced on the teacher's formation as an educator	Conditions which had to be created in the school for the teacher's professional skills development as an educator
1	The help of an experienced teacher	The help of an experienced teacher
2	The school's educational traditions	The creation and maintenance of the school's educational traditions
3	Professional and personal beliefs	The creation of the conditions for children's problems professional discussion
4	Communication with colleagues	The creation and maintenance of a team of like-minded teachers at the school
5	The observation of the experience of colleagues' educational activities	The observation of the experience of colleagues' educational activities
6	The need to participate in solving children's problems	The creation of the conditions for the manifestation of professional and personal beliefs
7	The image of a teacher as an educator	The study of pedagogical literature
8	The reading pedagogical literature	The organization of school professional events dedicated to education
9	Like-minded team	The participation in creative groups with colleagues
10	Pedagogical reflection of the experience of their own educational activities	Communication with colleagues

The analysis of the results, presented in table 1, allowed us to draw the following conclusions:

1) The formation of a teacher as an educator was more influenced by conditions which related to external factors: the help of an experienced teacher (1 position in the rating), school's educational traditions (2 position in the rating), communication with colleagues (4 position in the rating).

2) At the same time, the conditions which are a manifestation of internal development factors (professional and personal beliefs, observation of the experience of educational activities of colleagues, the image of a teacher as an educator, the need to participate in solving children's problems, pedagogical reflection of the experience of their own educational activities) are assessed by respondents as significant to develop their professional skills.

The analysis of the results made it possible to confirm the importance of the teacher's professional skills development as an educator of the conditions which took the leading positions in the rating: the help of an experienced teacher (1 position in the rating), school's educational traditions (2 position in the rating), the need to participate in solving children's problems (3 position in the rating).

At the same time, the data obtained made it possible to highlight those conditions the importance of which was recognized by teachers, but their potential was not sufficiently realized in their practical activities. Those conditions demonstrated the dynamics of changes in teachers' significance (reading

pedagogical literature, a team of like-minded people) and the emergence of factors not identified in the first rating as significant (school professional events, participation in creative groups with colleagues).

The data obtained allowed us to suggest that teachers felt the need to obtain additional knowledge on education issues (reading pedagogical literature, school professional events), and also recognized the importance of conditions which affected the development of the teaching staff as a community united by common value ideas (collective like-minded people), manifested in joint activities (school professional events dedicated to education; participation in creative groups with colleagues).

Our attention was drawn to the fact that the condition “requirements from the school administration” was noted by teachers as insignificant for their professional skills development as an educator (16th position in both ratings). This allowed us to conclude that in educational organizations, the teacher’s professional skills development as an educator was not given due attention. This fact confirmed the relevance of our study to identify and justify the conditions of the teacher’s professional skills development as an educator in a general educational organization.

7. Conclusion

Based on the results of theoretical and empirical researches at the third stage of the study, the conditions of the teacher’s professional skills development as an educator in a general educational organization were determined.

These conditions include:

- 1) Ensuring intergenerational and interstate relations between teachers, manifested in:
 - coordination of role positions, norms and rules of interaction in the teaching staff;
 - orientation of all subjects of interaction on compliance with role positions, norms and rules of interaction in the teaching staff;
 - organization of vertical and horizontal relations between representatives of different generations;
 - recognition of the value and importance of each group member, the usefulness of his contribution to group activities;
 - respectful attitude to the authority and experience of each member of the teaching staff.
- 2) The involvement of the teacher in the creation and development of the educational system of the school, manifested in:
 - designing the educational goals of the school and the children’s team;
 - development and maintenance of the traditions of the school and the children’s team, its system-forming types and directions of activity;
 - building humane relations between all subjects of the educational system;
 - providing conditions conducive to the development of children's educational environment of the school;
 - participation in the management of the development of the children's team and the educational system of the school.
- 3) The involvement of the teacher in professional communities, characterized by:
 - the presence of common professional values shared by all participants in the community;
 - priority of educational goals;

- the informal nature of relations in a community;
- alternating and shifting responsibilities and organizational roles;
- joint participation in the organization of educational affairs;
- the presence of group and individual forms of reflection of joint activities.

4) Acceptance by the teacher of various organizational roles in the implementation of the educational process:

- initiator of affairs who is proposing new ideas, showing activity in their implementation in the educational process;
- mastermind who is encouraging all participants to achieve the goals of educational activity, creating and maintaining a major mood;
- designer who is carrying out the development of the structure, content, forms (etc.) of the educational process;
- leader who is organizing, coordinating and controlling all participants in the educational process, making responsible decisions in contentious situations;
- contractor who is realizing the task entrusted to him in accordance with the general plan of activities;
- analyst who is analyzing the success of the implementation of individual stages and the educational process as a whole;
- psychologist who is supporting a positive psychological atmosphere among the participants in the educational process.

5) Generalization and presentation by the teacher of his experience of educational activities in the school and beyond, allowing him to demonstrate the current level of professionalism, show his own methodological developments, analyze the advantages, disadvantages and prospects of his development.

In conclusion, we note that the conditions of the teacher's professional skills development as an educator, which have been revealed during theoretical and empirical researches, can be the basis for the selection of forms and methods of professional development within a general educational organization.

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