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MORAL AND LEGAL SELF-DETERMINATION OF FUTURE CUSTOMS PROFESSIONALS: LEVELS OF READINESS

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Abstract

The study aims to develop an algorithm for assessing the readiness of future customs officials for moral and legal professional self-determination. Based on the results of analysis of classical and modern methods for assessing moral and legal competence, the methods for assessing the readiness for moral and legal self-determination were developed. The theoretical foundation of the research was works by A.A. Arskiy, A. Bandura, A.E. Vorobyova, E.N. Kovtun, L. Kohlberg, V.N. Kormakova, A.B. Kupreychenko, A.V. Kuts, E.A. Lukashva, N.V. Maslennikova, M. Osterloh, L.N. Khripkovo, Bruno S. Frey, etc. Practical experience of scientific and educational organizations is results of analysis of studies on the formation of professional responsibility of customs officers conducted by Belgorod State National Research University (Russian Federation), Russian University of Peoples' Friendship, North Caucasus Federal University (Russian Federation), as well as the practice of Leeds Metropolitan University (UK) where there is a program "Master of Customs Administration in Customs, Taxation and International Trade Law". The readiness coefficient was calculated. The rational and irrational values of the readiness coefficient serve as the boundaries for assessing the readiness of future customs specialists for moral and legal self-determination based on the ranking of readiness indicators. The authors specified the definition of the concept "moral and legal self-determination of the future customs specialist" as orientation of the future customs specialist to the performance of official duty under the current customs legislation taking into account moral and ethical standards enshrined in the public consciousness and official duties of the customs officer.

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1. Introduction

Today, Russian researchers are studying personal and professional readiness to live in society and work in specific conditions. The authors found that “positive dynamics of educational and professional self-realization in the sociocultural environment of the university is possible if interaction between the student and the environment will be provided with pedagogical support, i.e. the teacher acts as an organizer, partner, consultant and mentor assisting students in self-realization in various micro-environments of the university”.

Professional moral and legal consciousness has a specific list of concepts: “professional duty”, “professional dignity”, “professional honor”, “service to the Fatherland, state, people”, “justice”, “conscience”, “moral”. The activities of the customs officer, personal and professional qualities are under the scrutiny of the public. Impeccable reputation, decency, and moral behavior are the basis of public confidence. Responsibility has legal and moral aspects. The customs officer is obliged to represent the boundaries of his official position, feel the line between permissible and unacceptable, execution of duty and requirements of moral and ethical laws. Only high-moral personal qualities can ensure professionalism (Gryaznova, 2011).

The essence and content of activities of the customs specialist determine professional characteristics: readiness for self-organization, self-regulation and self-control, ability to make responsible decisions in professional situations; professional mobility, quick response to non-standard situations; readiness for self-education and self-development (Grigoryeva & Kormakova, 2018). Law and morality are the most important elements of value orientations, since they are directly related to the responsibility of an individual for his actions, freedom of self-determination and expression of will, being main regulators of this freedom (Lukasheva, 2014).

Moral and legal problems often arise in the professional settings due to the specifics of the customs service. Globalization and economic integration generate these problems (Kohleberg, 1981). Accordingly, customs legislation is developing, requirements for the activities of a customs service officer are increasing. The problem of moral and legal self-determination and education in the vocational education system of future customs professionals is determined by objective developing processes and requirements of modern society.

2. Problem Statement

It is relevant to solve the problem of moral and legal self-determination of future customs professionals as a process and a result of the choice of civil and professional position of the individual. Assessment of readiness for moral and legal self-determination can be expressed on the basis of a mathematical model that takes into account 3-4 stages of readiness. Analysis of the scientific literature and empirical experience of educational organizations identified an insufficient level of readiness for moral and legal self-determination. The results of the study on professional responsibility of the individual customs officers conducted in Belgorod State National Research University, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, and the North Caucasus Federal University identified an insufficient level of pedagogical support for professional, moral and legal self-determination of future specialists: “It is determined by undeveloped

moral and psychological qualities, since in the rating system of professional qualities, due attention is not paid to responsibility and duty, morality and emotional stability ...”(Maslennikova, Kovtun, & Khripkova, 2013, p. 10). Researchers emphasize the need for improvement of the quality of professional training, further development of the personnel potential of the Federal Customs Service (FCS) in Russia (Kuts, 2017; Grigoryeva & Kormakova, 2018). The authors studied the experience of foreign colleagues from the University of Leeds Metropolitan (UK), where future customs officers are trained under the program "Master of Customs Administration in Customs, Taxation and International Trade Law". University teachers believe that customs specialists need legal knowledge, ability to correctly interpret laws, strong moral convictions, ability to apply legal norms.

Analysis of the empirical experience of Russian colleagues allowed us to argue that Russian universities have gained valuable experience in training future customs professionals. Penza State University developed a discipline “Deontology of a Customs Specialist”, as well as the methodological support for organizing students into the socio-professional community of customs officers. The developed materials were successfully tested on the students of the program 38.05.02 “Customs”, showed high performance in forming moral qualities of future customs professionals (Kuts, 2017). Researchers from the North Caucasus Federal University say that self-determination as a process and a result of choosing a civil and professional position is important for future specialists (Maslennikova, Kovtun, & Khripkova, 2013). The authors agree that the system of value orientations influences professional and life plans, encourages the choice of adequate means to achieve goals and methods for their implementation.

3. Research Questions

The research subject is readiness of future customs specialists for moral and legal self-determination. Indicators of readiness for self-determination are as follows: ability to carry out socially significant activities; ability to carry out self-organization, self-control, self-regulation, self-analysis, and reflection activities; ability to make independent decisions; ability to position himself as an active subject of life activity in accordance with social and professional requirements which will contribute to performance of professional duties.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to develop an effective algorithm for assessing the readiness of a future customs specialist for moral and legal orientation and goal setting whose result is effective moral and legal self-determination of a professional. The mathematical apparatus of the assessment model is designed to take into account the ranking of indicators of readiness for moral and legal orientation.

5. Research Methods

As part of the study “Pedagogical support for moral and legal self-determination of future customs specialists”, in order to study the level of readiness for moral-legal self-determination of students enrolled in 38.05.02 “Customs” program, we conducted experiments in Belgorod State National Research

University (Institute of Economics and Management) and the Russian University of Cooperation (Russia, Moscow).

To diagnose the level of readiness for moral and legal self-determination, the following methods were applied: 1. Diagnostic conversation "Moral and legal choice"; 2. The personal questionnaire "My actions in crucial situations"; 3. Questionnaire "The ratio of morality and law".

Method 1. When conducting the "Moral and Legal Choice" diagnostic conversation, students were offered professional situations associated with administrative violation of customs rules (customs control of passengers crossing the customs border) and short answers. During the conversation, the student was asked to give legal and moral assessment of the situation and substantiate the answer using the norms of law.

Method 2. When applying the Personality Questionnaire "My actions in crucial situations", a system-structural approach was used. The moral is holistic psychological education that includes many interrelated signs (states, feelings, attitudes, qualities) that summarize information about behavior of the individual. To group the signs, factor analysis was used. According to this method, transformation of the initial set of signs was carried out in a more meaningful form, i.e. the signs were detected from a small number of hidden factors. The factor analysis of the experimental data allowed us to build a structural model of moral and legal guidelines of future customs specialists:

1. Professional honor and moral beliefs (designed to measure the level of moral consciousness, moral beliefs, professional honor and dignity).

2. Humanism and humanity (designed to assess humanistic morality, relationships in the professional community, goodwill and respect for people).

3. Internationalism and patriotism (designed to assess the readiness to commit acts for the good of the Motherland, observe loyalty to the professional oath, benefit society, assist people).

4. Goodwill and justice in relations with subordinates, nobility and respect for controlled persons (designed to assess the attitude towards subordinates).

5. Respect for the commanding staff, elders (designed to assess attitudes towards the leadership and elders by age and position).

6. Self-control and self-discipline (designed to assess the ability to purposefully develop moral qualities, strengthen the will, regulate actions, restrain feelings and emotions).

7. Readiness to serve the Fatherland (designed to assess the readiness to fulfill professional duties).

8. Readiness for self-education, conscientiousness, diligence (designed to assess attitudes towards physical and mental labor, readiness for self-education, conscientious fulfillment of official duties).

Students were asked to answer 120 questions agreeing (yes: "+") or disagreeing (no: "-") with the statements. The assessment of each factor was carried out with a positive response to the corresponding questionable numbers of questions in the questionnaire.

Methodology 3. The questionnaire "The relationship between morality and law in the customs profession" included 40 questions aimed to identify the level of their knowledge of all-Russian and customs law, moral and ethical norms.

6. Findings

When processing the results, the following data were obtained: 76% of respondents have low and medium levels of readiness for moral and legal self-determination which need correction, and only 24% of the students have a high level of readiness for moral-legal self-determination.

The authors developed the “Readiness Coefficient” which determines the need for curriculum transformation, trainings, seminars, round tables in order to encourage students to moral and legal orientation (Rotter, 1990).

In order to increase the applied value of moral and legal orientation, it is necessary to differentiate approaches to orientation in terms of the moral and ethical factor that influences important life decisions in the educational and professional practice. Creation of moral and legal guidelines of the moral level allows for more accurate territorial planning of the distribution of labor resources at the federal level, measuring preferences of young professionals. These measures allow for adjustment of educational plans and take into account wishes of future specialists when designing the variable part of the curriculum:

1. Willingness to relocate to remote areas with an underdeveloped socio-economic infrastructure (in comparison with the infrastructure of cities where universities are located).
2. Willingness to serve in the customs bodies taking into account moral and legal perception of the cause-and-effect relationship of formation of situations generating conflicts of interest between customs officers and persons crossing the border.
3. Willingness to master the second and third majors not related to their main major. The readiness of the future customs specialist for practical actions is presented in Table 01.

Table 01. The assessment coefficient for student’s readiness for moral-legal self-determination

| No | Calculation of the indicator coefficient | Rational value of the indicator | Irrational value of the indicator | Conditions |
|----|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | $K_A = \frac{A}{A + A_{base}}$ | $K_A \rightarrow 1$ | $K_A = 1$ | $A = 1$ $0 \leq A_{base} < 1$ |

The values of the coefficient are as follows: A – the state of readiness to implement the competence after transformation of the variable part of the curriculum; A_{base} – readiness when measuring (surveying, interviewing a student) before transformation of the variable part of the curriculum; at $A_{base} = 0$, there is no need to adjust the variable part of the curriculum. When assigning A_{base} , the following ranking, presented is rational:

Table 02. Ranking of the parameters of specialist's readiness for moral and legal self-determination

| Rank | Condition | Purpose A_{base} |
|------|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Readiness without prerequisites | 0 |
| 2 | Willingness if encouraged | 0,25 |
| 3 | Loyalty to fulfillment in the absence of readiness | 0,5 |
| 4 | Full denial of readiness and possible fulfillment | 0,75 |

In table 2, influence of factors for moral and legal self-determination is revealed. Transformation of the variable part of the curriculum taking into account K_A should account for segmentation in the group of students. For example, at $K_A \geq 0.8$ in 75% of students, adjustment of the variable part is not required, i.e. if most of the students manifest readiness for effective moral and legal self-determination or encouraged readiness, adjustment of the variable part is not required (Arskiy, 2018).

7. Conclusion

Based on the theoretical and empirical research, the concept “moral and legal self-determination of a future customs specialist” was defined as orientation of a future customs specialist to fulfillment of official duties within the current customs legislation taking into account moral and ethical standards enshrined in public consciousness and duties of the customs officer.

The authors developed a model for calculating the readiness indicator. The mathematical apparatus makes it possible to improve the theory of development of moral and spiritual competencies based on the analysis of readiness to perform social and professional tasks.

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