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Modern Tools for Sustainable Development of Territories. Special Topic: Project Management in the Regions of Russia

TRAINING STAFF OF PROJECT TEAMS FOR MODERN BUSINESS

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of the problem of training personnel for participation in the activities of project teams. In the work, the essence of team projects, their purpose, structure, functions of participants and the leader are determined by the example of the activities of teachers-managers. The paper describes the developed methodological system for training teachers and managers of the essence of project teamwork and the formation of their willingness to act as the head of the project team. The study presents the results of an experiment conducted after testing the methodological system of teaching the basics of project team activities to the undergraduates training in the field of “Education Management”, confirming the effectiveness of the developed methodology and its practical significance.

The relevance of studying the specifics of the formation of a project team is argued from several perspectives. First of all, the development of project management concepts requires constant theoretical and methodological improvement. In addition, any management related to the human factor is always an urgent problem for researchers, since personnel management must be constantly improved, taking into account the individual needs of each person. It is necessary to have people who create a team to complete the tasks for effective management of any project. After all, the future of the project will depend on how efficiently it is formed. In this regard, the problem of individual readiness for project teamwork is a very important and relevant problem of modern science and pedagogical practice.

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Keywords: Training of managers, staff, teachers, project, project team, managerial educators.



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1. Introduction

There is a wide variety of various educational institutions at the present stage (state, original, private, etc.), the leaders of which in modern conditions need the skills to organize project team activities of teaching staff. In this regard, the problem of training representatives of the administration of educational institutions in the theoretical and methodological foundations of team project work in the provision of educational services is being updated.

2. Problem Statement

An analysis of recent studies indicates that a number of works by Russian scientists in the framework of the general theory of project management are devoted to the problems of theory, methodology and practice of project management by teams.

An analysis of publications in this field (Akulov & Rudakov, 1995; Haraziy, 2016) makes it possible to distinguish two basic concepts underlying the study of the formation of project teams, namely:

- in the framework of project management
- from the point of view of the general functioning of teams as a way of organizing the work of people (Akulov & Rudakov, 1995; Haraziy, 2016).

The problems of researching teams in joint activities are extremely wide: quantitative and qualitative composition, team genesis, its structure, instrumental (cooperation, differentiation, self-organization, coordination of functions) and expressive (imitation, suppression, sympathy, antipathy, empathy) processes, norms and values, management, intergroup interactions and the like, external and internal marketing to the formation of interaction within the team and with external partners (Kotler, 2005; Porter, 2005; Rice & Traut, 2006; Pevzner, Sheraizina, Donina, Petryakov, & Aleksandrova, 2017; Pevzner, Petryakov, Donina, & Shaydorova, 2018).

Most of the modern works devoted to the study of team systems, models of collective behavior and group management models discuss methodological approaches to the general problems of team management, however, issues related to the effective activities of managers in the field of project team management, in particular in the educational field, are not sufficiently addressed. Also, a comprehensive approach to the training of educational managers and to the formation of their readiness to lead project teams remains outside the field of vision of scientists. So, the purpose of this study is to determine the nature of personnel training (teaching staff) in the formation of a project team.

3. Research Questions

The key concepts of the problem we are studying are “team” and “project”. In a broad sense, a team is a group (an association of people who carry out joint activities and have common interests), able to achieve their goals autonomously and in concert with minimal control influences (Bushueva, 2010). This definition is fully consistent with the specifics of project activities, in which the team principle of the organization is leading. The project team is one of the main concepts of project management.

It is advisable to consider the project as a time-bound process with a definite beginning and end, usually limited by date (but may also be limited by financing or achieving results), which is carried out to achieve unique goals and objectives, usually to lead to beneficial changes or to create an added cost. The temporary nature of projects contrasts with business processes, is a repeated, permanent or partially permanent activity for the production of products or services. In practice, the management of the above two systems is often different and thus requires the development of individual technical skills and the use of distributed management of them (Haraziy, 2016).

Thus, project management provides for the implementation of the project as efficiently as possible, given the volume, quality, time, resource and financial constraints. Currently, project management stands out in a specific area of knowledge on planning, organizing and managing resources in order to successfully achieve the goals and complete the tasks of the project; it combines investment, industrial, construction, consulting and engineering aspects of activity (Zub, 2014).

A project team is a certain number of people who work together to achieve a common goal. They directly work on the implementation of the project and are subordinate to the project manager (manager). The project team is created for the period of the project and after its completion is dismissed (Akulov & Rudakov, 1995).

The project team management system includes:

- organizational planning;
- project staffing;
- creation of a project team;
- implementation of the function of control and motivation of the project's labor resources for the effective work progress and completion of the project.

The system is aimed at leading and coordinating the activities of the project team, using leadership styles, motivation methods, administrative methods, staff development at all phases of the project life cycle.

The process of forming a project team (team building) is usually considered as the formation of a single, integrated team of managers capable of achieving the project's goals effectively.

The value of teamwork for the implementation of the project lies in the possibility of a synergistic effect from combining group efforts, knowledge and the development of group management decisions, that is, in achieving a state in which the whole is larger than the sum of its components (Beshelev, 1980).

Similar to the project life cycle, the project team has its own life cycle, in which researchers identify five main stages:

1. Team building.
2. Cohesion of participants (harmony).
3. The functioning of the team.
4. Reorganization.
5. Dissolution.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to describe the idea of developing and implementing a methodological training system for project group leaders, who will subsequently be able to form and coordinate cooperation between project groups of educational organizations.

5. Research Methods

The following methods of scientific knowledge were used to achieve the objectives of the study: analysis of theoretical literature on the research problem, analysis of experience in implementing team projects in various professional fields, study of the theory of pedagogical coaching, as well as empirical methods (testing, observation, questionnaires, pedagogical experiment).

The goal of the team activity was evaluated according to the following criteria:

- the project is fully implemented in the planned period of time and gives the planned profit (utility);
- the project is fully implemented in the planned period of time, but the result does not correspond to the planned;
- the project could not be implemented in the planned period of time.

Four main approaches are taken into account in the formation of the team and implementation of its activities:

- goal setting;
- interpersonal;
- role-based;
- problem oriented.

1. Goal-setting (based on goals) allows team members to better navigate the processes of selecting and implementing common group goals for project implementation.

2. The interpersonal approach is focused on improving interpersonal relationships in the team and is based on the fact that interpersonal competence increases the effectiveness of the team. Its goal is to increase group trust, encourage joint support, as well as increase internal team communications.

3. Role-based approach - holding discussions and negotiations among team members regarding their roles; it is assumed that the roles of team members overlap partially.

A problem-oriented approach (through problem solving) involves the organization of pre-planned series of meetings with a group of specialists within a team having common organizational relationships and goals. The approach includes the consistent development of procedures for solving team problems and then achieving the main team task.

The success of the project team, first of all, depends on the qualities and professionalism of its leader, who has the following functions:

- goal setting management, creating conditions for a clear understanding of goals by all team members;
- ensuring the achievement of the goal of team collaboration during the work on the project;
- managing the formation of effective interaction in the team, which allows working on new projects after the implementation of the project;
- management of the process of delegation of authority, when each member of the team can effectively work in the assigned segment of the project;
- management of team work on a project, when a team effectively interacts in the process of working on a project for creating corporate unity;
- managing the competitiveness of the team, creating conditions for the advantage of the team, based on the development of professional and human qualities of team members;
- managing the flexibility and adaptability of a team that can quickly reorient to work on another project, to work on a project in new conditions;
- management of continuous improvement and growth of competencies of team members, when after the implementation of the project team members acquire new professional and personal skills.

In our opinion, the management of the project team, which fits into certain time periods when the project is implemented directly can be considered as effective management, taking into account the above criteria (functions). That is, the management of the project team should be considered effective when the best results are achieved in a shorter period of time.

6. Findings

The result of a theoretical study of the aspects of the activities of the project teams was the development of a methodology for teaching pedagogical staff - students of the Institute of Pedagogy, Psychology and Inclusive Education of the Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy (branch) of FSAEI "Crimean Federal University named after S. I. Vernadsky" in Yalta in the direction of training "Education Management" (master's level). The aim of the development and implementation of the methodological system was the training of project team leaders, who subsequently will be able to form and coordinate the cooperation of project groups in the context of educational institutions. The developed methodological system includes two main blocks:

- theoretical, involving the training of undergraduates in the conceptual foundations of project teamwork;
- methodical, which consists in training future representatives of the administration of educational institutions of various types and levels in the methodology of preparing teaching staff for work in the project group;
- practical, involving the participation of undergraduates in the direct work of the project team.

It was decided to implement the methodology during the 2018-2019 academic year among graduate students of the Institute of Pedagogy, Psychology and Inclusive Education of the Humanitarian Pedagogical Academy (Branch) of FSAEI “Crimean Federal University named after S.I. Vernadsky” in Yalta, students in the direction of training “Education Management” to test the effectiveness of the methodology (20 people).

The theoretical and methodological unit was implemented in the course of specially designed lectures and seminar classes, included in the content of the main special disciplines.

The practical block included the direct work of undergraduates in the project team. Students were combined in two teams of 10 people to work on the project. The task of undergraduates was to develop a methodological system for organizing the areas of environmental education in an educational institution, including the concept, software, material and technological support, scientific and methodological complex.

At the end of the work of the project teams projects were defended, analyzed and adjusted in the presence of an expert commission from the teaching staff, after which the finished methodological systems can be used by teachers in educational institutions at the place of work.

However, the presence of developed projects did not guarantee the formation of the qualities of the project team leader among the participants in the experiment. It was decided to conduct a diagnostic experiment in order to verify the readiness of graduate students to work in the project team and the qualities of its leader. The participants of both teams went through two stages of testing:

1. Testing that determines the knowledge of the basics of project management in education by the participants in the experiment.
2. Practical tasks during which the team leader changed.

The analysis of the results of the first block of tests showed that 18% of respondents were ready to lead the project team at a high level, 67% at a sufficient level, and 15% at an initial level.

The practical test results were as follows:

- 79% of the respondents of the experiment showed efficient and professional management that allows solving the tasks assigned to the team, and actions as the team leader contribute to effective, well-coordinated and conflict-free teamwork;
- 16% of participants in experimental diagnostics control are not effective and unprofessional in management, actions as a leader do not contribute to the solution of tasks, complicate the work of the team and introduce elements of inconsistency and conflict into the team work;
- For 5% of participants, project manager ignores management; this component of teamwork develops spontaneously and unsystematically.

Based on a generalization of the results, we can conclude that at the theoretical level, many educators need to improve their knowledge, which will be realized in further unceasing self-education. However, in the course of practical activity, 80% of the participants in the experiment showed high results both as participants in the project team and in the role of leader.

7. Conclusion

At the present stage of development of the state, society and education, one of the most important skills of managers and personnel of any industry is the ability to constructive project activities, implemented as a team. In this regard, it is necessary to form the readiness of undergraduates to work in project teams and to manage it when preparing representatives of the administration of educational institutions, since the success of managing a project team largely depends on the effectiveness of project management, the introduction of innovations and competent leadership.

Testing the developed methodological system described in the study allows us to talk about its effectiveness and high practical significance, which consists in the possibility of applying the methodology for preparing teachers to work in project teams in higher education institutions.

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