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**FEDERAL UNIVERSITY:
SYNCHRONISING TRENDS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
OF A UNIVERSITY AND REGION**

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Abstract

Transformation processes are taking place under the pressure of national and global social and economic changes. It has become obvious that entire education systems have been affected throughout the world by recent trends in globalization. The purpose of this research is to conduct an integrated evaluation of the present state of the system of additional professional education in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) and to identify the trends and patterns of its development.

A model of a regional integrated system of additional professional education has been developed in the Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University based on the integrated evaluation of the existing system of additional professional education in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) and the study of people's opinions in the republic concerning lifelong education (their views were obtained with the use of a sociological survey).

The survey of over 3 thousand people showed that additional professional education has a lifelong character only in certain cases and is mostly fragmental in nature (once every three or five years). The working population, especially in remote areas, prefers distant and digital means of education.

The article is intended for those undertaking studies in the fields of lifelong learning, adult education and all forms of post-compulsory education. It seeks to combine practice with theory and identify the directions for further research. It recognizes that practice precedes theory, although field practices are based on theoretical foundations.

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1. Introduction

This article presents a sociological study undertaken in NEFU that is of key importance for further development and implementation of effective mechanisms of controlling transformation processes in the field of continuing professional education for sustainable development. The sociological study examines the modernisation processes transforming Russian education as a complex socially organised system. Transformation processes are taking place under the pressure of national and global social and economic changes. Additionally, the traditional movement of people from rural areas to cities continues. The balance of rural areas in the exchange with urban areas is negative. Migration processes mostly involve working age people, who make up three quarters of the total migration turnover.

The issue of outward flow of working age population is exacerbated by the aging of existing specialists and the lack of intergenerational continuity. This is confirmed by the results of a population survey carried out by NEFU subdivisions within the frames of Integrated Evaluation of Development of Education in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) until the Year 2050 Project. A total of 3,007 educators from 32 regions of the republic were surveyed (including the city of Yakutsk). The survey results have consolidated the position that teacher education should recognize and promote the sociocultural and co-constructed nature of continuing professional development more generally by promoting and developing reflective practice. Self-evaluation through reflective practice has the potential to narrow the gap between theory and practice.

There are some general indications that investment in learning, training and education offers the highest rate of return. Of course, this is not so easy to prove, but it is natural to refer to the fact that the Nordic countries, which have the highest rates of participation in adult education and training in the world, also did very well economically in the second half of the twentieth century. Writers often attribute this to a high level of continuing professional education.

The process of change accelerated dramatically during the last decades of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century. We have considered literature which provides an insight into various change processes (Andreev, 2002; Chorosova, 2002; Howard & Donaghue, 2015; Illeris, 2011; Jarvis, 1983; Kazepides, 2010; Kolesnikova, 2007; Lengeling, 2013; Lomakina; Russian State Programme, 2013). A number of key themes have emerged as a result of reading Holmes (2003). The increasingly wired world that stimulated the globalization of commerce brought along with it new challenges for governments, organizations and especially individuals. No longer sheltered from the vagaries of economic downturn overseas, each has been subject to the rapid and brutal swings of the global economy. For many people this has resulted in them being downsized (or 'right-sized' as it is termed today) as major corporations cut headcount in order to improve profitability and competitiveness. For those that remain in employment, their working lives have become more insecure, less responsible and, if we are brutally honest with ourselves, less fun. But as well as the coarse changes that have occurred, such as headcount reduction, there are more subtle ones which have arisen from the increasing use of technology, such as the dumbing down of the workforce. In this situation the role of continuing professional education is more than important. A variety of the author's studies report benefits for professional development and development of leadership skills. This typically involves professional growth and job satisfaction (Modern Educational Systems, 2013; Chorosova, 2016; Holmes, 2003).

2. Problem Statement

When one speaks about education for sustainable development, one means education that is aimed at formation of personality and developing of qualities that lead to noospheric consciousness and worldview, the ability to think and operate on a planetary level (a feeling of belonging not only to a specific people but also to the entire human civilization) (Subetto, & Fetiskin, 2015). Unfortunately, modern education does not always meet these criteria and, in many countries and regions, does not have enough resources to implement them. That is why it is justified to talk not about the modernisation of education as a complex socially organised system, but about influencing transformation processes in Russian education and education in Russian regions, which are already taking place under the pressure of national and global social and economic changes, so that one can model the future of a region.

A number of factors influences the possible future of education, but one thing is certain: the decisions that we are taking and the choices that we are making today can influence, change, and model the future. The objective situation today is that in any country, education really is one of the main priorities of state policy, and the standing of countries in the modern world is defined not by the military and economic capacity, but the intellectual one. Furthermore, priority is given to lifelong education.

Sahlberg's (2011), Kurakbaev's (2013), Johnson' (2006) papers have consolidated the position that teacher education should recognize and promote the sociocultural and co-constructed nature of continuing professional development more generally by promoting and developing reflective practice. Self-evaluation through reflective practice has the potential to break down the research-practice divide (Kurakbaev, 2013) and help the teacher to narrow the gap between theory and practice. Reflection can lead to more sustained research (e.g. action research) and this also helps provide more bottom – up accounts of teaching.

This sociological study undertaken is of key importance for further development and implementation of effective mechanisms to control the transformation processes in the field of education for sustainable development.

Scientific novelty of the research lies in a complex interdisciplinary nature of the research of transformation processes in the educational space: socio-pedagogical, medical and psychological approaches, as well as a comparative study of lifelong pedagogical education and general education systems. Contemporary real conditions actualize the problem of quality of life as a conceptual framework of social and economic programs of federal and regional development. Overcoming poverty, filling the quality standards of living with real content are identified as the main development priorities of the country and a given region. Teaching activities, special features of the position, attitude towards various aspects of life at different career stages have not yet been objects of special studies.

The influence of global trends and integration processes in the context of intercultural dialogue between Russia and other countries, active cultural exchange with preservation by national culture of its identity result in qualitative changes in the outlook and attitude of teachers as indicators of transformation of the educational space of the North-East of the Russian Federation. Thus, transformational changes in education are associated with a change in the orientation of education paradigm. Relevant issues of adult education in today's conditions are linked to comprehension of education as a cultural phenomenon, a cultural imperative, as a value, to identifying its role and place in intercultural interaction; its adaptive

properties in the context of globalization, expansion of information technologies, enhanced industrial development of the North-East of the country, including the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). Cultural and educational globalization embraces the domain of interaction between educational systems representing national cultures, and is a powerful transformative force. However, cultural and educational process in the mainstream of globalization is developing unevenly, resulting in different regions and cultures acting either as the initiators of deep fundamental changes or being restricted to a peripheral part of these processes. At the same time, the strengthening of global ties in cultural and educational sphere, all national educational systems will inevitably have to face changes, including systemic ones. In this regard, we are facing a need to develop conceptual foundations of regional model of advanced adult education, based on the strategy of education development in Russia.

Modern educational institutions that incorporate within them cyber-universities and digital and electronic universities via network technologies allow their students to receive higher education without the need to be physically present at the university. Taking into account the experience of leading European and Asian universities it is necessary for the Institute of Continuing Professional Education to introduce mechanisms for expanding distant education using the capacity of Moodle system. The survey shows that the educators of the republic prefer distant and electronic forms of education (Diagram 2).

Another trend of external development is the continuing or lifelong education and especially professional training of already employed specialists. The key target in the sphere of adult education is: by the year 2020, the share of the population of the republic between the ages of 25 and 64 who have completed or who are enrolled in continuing education programmes of the university should be no less than 55%.

3. Research Questions

Paradigmatic orientations of contemporary education. Education, as an integral part of culture, at this stage of development of the entire world community plays a determining role in the processes of human adaptation to the changing conditions of the present multicultural world, and co-adaptation of human and society. That is why we can speak of a paradigmatic orientation of modern education, especially continuing professional education, when education is considered as a cultural phenomenon, as a cultural imperative for development of civil society; educational activity - as a cultural, transforming, adaptive activity; teacher - as a subject of transforming cultural activities. This approach is associated with a new philosophy of human development, which resulted from the need to overcome our technocratic thinking, to abandon material- and resource-driven criteria of progress, to change anthropocentric standpoint to biocentrism, allowing humanity to move towards sustainable safe development. Innovative potential of continuous education system – an integral characteristics of progressivity and relevance of knowledge, the novelty of information and educational technologies, which the system of continuous education possesses. The main criteria are: priority, emergence, controllability, purposefulness of using economic, social, and organizational resources, synergy, adaptability to changing requirements of the environment, etc. Today, the university is entering a new phase of its development: we are defining the priority directions of NEFU for the next decade. The main

goal is to become a leader in the international scientific-educational space, which requires clarifying of strategic goals while preserving the continuity of earlier strategies.

4. Purpose of the Study

The main goal of this research is to conduct an integrated evaluation of the present state of the system of additional professional education in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) and to identify the trends of its development.

Modern research shows that large-scale changes in education are inevitable within the next few years. The following external trends will define the development of the university:

- competition for students, globalisation of educational markets, establishment of a large-scale extra-university educational environment;

- substantial increase in information flow, intensive development of digital and mobile technologies, coming of the ‘digital’ generation;

- development of networked communities, increasing importance of networks;

- increasing demand for post-university education;

- increasing demand from employers for the development of metasubject competencies for environments with increasing uncertainty;

- intensifying issues of urbanisation, because of which it is necessary to develop programmes for equalising territories and to train specialists who are prepared to work in rural areas;

- dynamics of social and political processes, growth in internal and external migration, which requires resolving the issues of integrating migrants and improving the tolerance of the younger generation;

- increasing demand for innovations aimed at resolving the issues of intensive social and economic development of the Russian Far East and Arctic, leading to increased requirements for innovative activities of the university.

Therefore, the following should be the priority activities of the university:

- optimal use of university’s potential and its competitive advantages for the formation of personalities;

- early involvement of students in scientific and applied activities, implementation of interdisciplinary Masters’ programmes;

- active recruitment policy aimed at stimulating research efficiency and attracting leading foreign and Russian researchers and specialists;

- forecasting and timely response of the university to changes in the country and the world, continuous search for ‘growth areas’;

- concentrating resources on strategically important directions of activity.

5. Research Methods

A model of regional integrated system of additional professional education has been developed in the Ammosov North-Eastern Federal University based on the integrated evaluation of the existing system

of additional professional education in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), and study of the opinions of the people of the republic concerning lifelong education, conducted in the form of a sociological survey.

6. Findings

6.1. The analysis of development of leading world universities

The analysis of development of leading world universities shows that development of online education becomes an important aspect of changes in their activities. Educational technologies have changed significantly owing to the fast development of computers and the Internet:

- there is a sharp decrease in the number and duration of lectures;
- student self-study is on the rise;
- the role of libraries and electronic study resources for education is growing.

6.2. Some results of the survey from 32 regions of the republic

Figure 1 shows the answers of people to the question of what do they think justifies the need for continuing professional education.

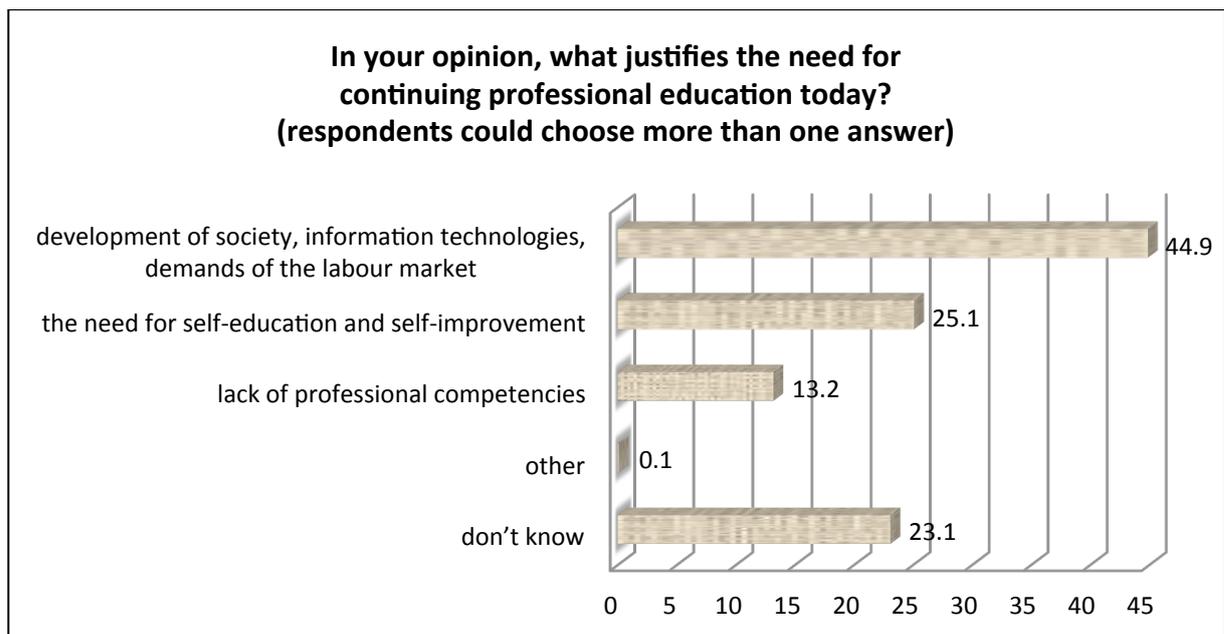


Figure 01. The answers to the question of what do they think justifies the need for continuing professional education

Those who chose 'other' clarified it as one of the followings:

- competition in the labour market,
- refocusing of the labour market.

Today, when all of us are forced to keep up with demands of information society, when we talk about the economies of knowledge, everyone understands the importance of lifelong education.

Each one of survey respondents from 32 regions of the republic (not including Lensk, Srednekolymsk and Nizhnekolymsk regions) and various social backgrounds (Diagram 4) understands the need for lifelong education in his or her own way (Figure 2).

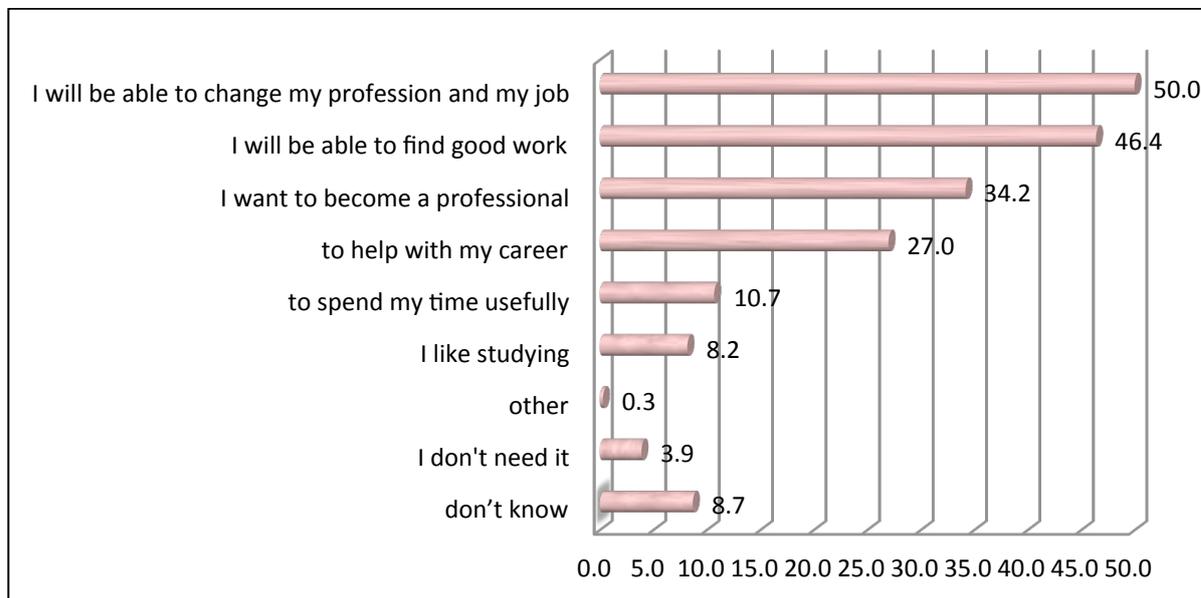


Figure 02. The answers to the question of “Why do you think continuing professional education is necessary?”

The university has developed real mechanisms for developing continuing education for the purposes of implementing the programmes of sustainable development of the region. Continuing education programmes are offered by 19 subdivisions of the university.

In 2015, the 165 continuing education programmes attracted 8,420 employees of companies and organisations of the Far Eastern Federal District, including 7,326 in continuing education courses and 1094 in professional retraining courses. In 2015, 4,910 teachers and 1,154 doctors from 8 regions of the Far Eastern Federal District completed additional training courses.

However, in the process of transformations in the system of continuing professional education within the frames of the integrated educational system, fundamental scientific research often lags behind the practical experience. Organisational practice is oriented towards market demands and educational needs of the population, including its needs for continuing education.

Therefore, the conditions for the efficient transformation of continuing professional education for all categories of specialists in North-East Russia include, in addition to the generally accepted ones: communicative conditions (functioning of flexible and democratic bodies and projects for managing the system of additional professional training for specialists); diversification of educational activities in accordance with demands of the real labour market; assistance for the priority development of the real sector of economy, social sphere and business; support for sociocultural and educational initiatives through implementing quality programmes of continuing professional education with the use of modern technologies; development of network organisation on regional, district, federal and international levels; synchronising the management of transformation processes in all elements of the integrated educational system etc.

7. Conclusion

The university has always played an important role in society of not only producing and disseminating knowledge, but also of developing the future generations of researchers and professionals. Today, we live in the time of transformations, the changes in the world are occurring very rapidly, there are many new ideas, technologies, opportunities and limitations. Our way of life has changed considerably in recent years thanks to the development of digital technologies and their widespread use. Intensive development of information technologies has considerably affected the system of values of modern young people. That is why the issues of defining the educational priorities in university education remain highly relevant. Who is this 'cultured person' in modern society? What qualities does he or she have, what values motivate him or her? How can we develop a system of upbringing a 'cultured person' who has the internal strength of a citizen of his or her country, a person who is spirited, active, caring, with a proactive attitude, can apply creative approaches to solving professional challenges, and who can inspire people? That is why the goal of the university as a federal state autonomous educational institution of higher education is first and foremost the development of a dynamic sociocultural university environment for the formation of universal competencies and improvement of functional, cultural, economic, political, and economic literacy of our students.

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