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STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TO STUDY

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Abstract

Higher Education is an important part of the reproduction of the human capital. There is a clear tendency to decrease the quality of higher education in contemporary Russia. On the one hand, this process has the objective reasons related to the difficulties of education reform and the reduction of its funding. On the other hand, there is the reduction of personal students learning motivation which makes the formation of a universal basis for their future professional activity and further development very difficult. The study has investigated the system of motives that determine students' attitude towards their educational duties and the factors affecting the formation of these motives. Our investigation has revealed the main student's motives. They are the communication motives, that is, the desire to expand the circle of friends, the social motives, which mean getting a higher status in the society and the pragmatic motives dealing with getting a high salary. Educational and professional motivations of the students were not as pronounced as those listed above. The main factors affecting enhancing students' leaning motivation and reproduction of their capital are students' confidence that knowledge gained at university will help them to achieve success in their professional activity and the desire to work hereinafter on the received specialty at the university. The study has elucidated that the future professionals need not only specialized knowledge in their field, but they also need some universal methods by which they are able to develop themselves throughout subsequent labor activity.

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1. Introduction

Education is an important social and socio-cultural institution where a person develops. The isolation of the educational process from the real needs of the economy and the lack of job security after graduation emphasizes that at present the role of higher education acquires a higher significance in the life of each person and in the development of the country as a whole. In the modern world the need for specialists of high professional competence, non-standard creative abilities and high personal qualities increases. Therefore, one of the most urgent issues of modern education is the formation of a highly motivated student's personality, able to live and work in changing economic conditions. It, in turn, predetermines a change in the motivational sphere of the educational process.

The study and development of the theory of motivation has been conducted since the end of the 19th century. Suffice it to mention such authors as Mayo, Maslow, Skinner, McClelland, Herzberg. At the present such researches are carried out by Yadov, Zdravomyslov, Leontiev, Yakobson and others.

It should be noted that these researches have been going on for a very long time, and it is still relevant today. There are two main approaches to the study of the person's activity motives. The first approach is based on the study of the motivation content. The theories included in it are based on the study of human needs, which are the main motives for their behavior. This approach includes such well-known sociologists as (Maslow, 2003; Halyautdinov, 2001; McClelland, 2007). The essence of their theories is that a person is motivated by his internal needs, which should be learned to understand correctly for an effective and productive human activity.

The second approach to the study of motivation uses process theory of motivation, with the help of which the human needs are considered as one of the components of his \ her life activity, connected with a concrete situation. Such theories include: the framing theory E. Locke; equity theory S. Adams (Adams, 1965), expectancy-value theory V. Vroom (Utkin, 2000) and others. At the heart of all their theories there is the idea that the individual needs to correctly allocate his \ her efforts and to make choices about a certain type of behavior in order to achieve the desired results that are based on the specific goals of the person.

In general, all the theories of motivation are designed in such a way as to explain that any behavior of an individual depends on many factors that, in the final analysis, can be defined as motives of human behavior (Halyautdinov, 2001).

In our study, we, to a greater extent, relied on the theory of domestic sociologists such as the theories of VA. Yadov and A.G. Zdravomyslov. V. A. Yadov argues that the decision-making by a person is influenced by a number of factors that constitute a special hierarchical system, which, in turn, is influenced by many determinants that change their significance depending on the situation and time. Thus, Yadov, like the American psychologist A. Maslow, developed a hierarchical system, with the help of which he explained the influence of this dispositional system (motives) on human behavior (Yadov, 1975).

Zdravomyslov's motivational theory is mainly devoted both educational and labor activity. He reduces all the variety of motives to four groups:

1. Material interest means person's work for the sake of acquiring certain life benefits necessary for the employee and his \ her family. In order for the motive of material interest to be realized, it is necessary to constantly pay attention to the methods of assessing the labor contribution of workers - the earnings must

be proportional to the labor contribution. Otherwise, there is a contradiction between the material interests of different groups.

2. Person's interest to the content and results of the work performed - the need to maximize his \ her ability in the labor process, which means the emergence of initiative motives and creative attitude to professional activity.

3. Man's collective attitudes, associated with the natural desire of everyone to be among people, and to actively participate in the life of the work collective.

4. Awareness of the meaning of the work, its social significance (Zdravomyslov, 1986).

As for the motives for education, in this theory there is an analogy between the motives of educational and labor activity. Hence, for example, students have also such motive as material interest. A government-subsidized student understands well, the better his \ her academic performance, he is highly likely to receive a scholarship, that is, there is also a motive of material interest in educational activity. The next group of motives is an interest in the content and results of the work performed. In the process of training, as well as in work, it is also one of the important motives. If a student is interested in his \ her studies and wants to show his \ her creative and intellectual abilities, he \ she will have motives for realizing his \ her creative and personal potential. The third group of motives includes collective attitudes of the person towards the educational activity of the individual. In an actively working group of students each student wants to make some kind of profit for him\herself and for the whole group. Thus, we see that the motives of the man's collective attitudes are also successfully applied to educational activities, since in the process of learning the team of like-minded colleagues and its influence on the individual are very important.

It can be concluded that any theory of motivation begins with the study of the each individual motive, influenced by different determinants such as needs, goals, desires, external conditions and impacts, values, and so on. That is, in order to determine what motivates an individual for a particular behaviour or action, it is necessary to study a number of factors affecting him \ her.

2. Problem Statement

In the last two decades, the value of higher education as a way of getting in-depth knowledge and becoming a highly qualified specialist has dramatically decreased. On the contrary, there is a growing tendency among young people to acquire an education for the sake of a diploma. This situation has developed from many negative consequences that the education system has been undergoing for decades. Hence, for example, young people have a question about the importance of choosing a specialty and professional activity in the future. Meanwhile, students and future graduates have no confidence and guarantees that after graduation they will be in demand specialists in the labour market. Another issue of the education system is the difficult economic situation in society and in the country as a whole. A lot of young people who have a high intellectual potential do not always have the material opportunity to enter and study at the university where their knowledge will find the most productive application. This is due to the fact that not all the parents have the opportunity to support their child at the time of his \ her education, and the students themselves are quite difficult and sometimes impossible to combine study and work. That is, young people have to choose that specialty and future profession that will correspond to their capabilities,

rather than desires and preferences. In other words, there is a process of changing the students' motives for obtaining higher education, preferences and interests.

That is, it is important for students to know that their future specialty will not only satisfy their own desires and preferences, but also it will correspond to the Russian labour market, professional and status growth. In other words, for young talented people, not only the issue of earning money is important, but also the possibility of self-realization and personal development. Therefore, in today conditions, the issue of motivating students, defining the role and place of higher education, and the influence of factors on the perception of higher education in the students' attitudes is considered to be especially relevant in the educational sphere. The following indicators can be attributed to the effectiveness of this process: the students' value orientations, satisfaction with the choice of a specialty, and with a higher education institution, a clear idea of the social status associated with the choice of a profession and the possibilities of finding employment after graduation.

Thus, in this study we will try to find out the role and place of higher education in the students' life, and also we will study the factors influencing the students' motivation..

3. Research Questions

Proceeding from the understanding of the motive as a material or non-material object for which a person performs certain actions and that motivation is a system of motives for activity and behavior we investigated the following questions:

1. What is the students' value system?
2. What is the role of higher education in the students' life?
3. What is the dominant students' motivation for obtaining higher education?
4. What factors influence students' motivation for obtaining higher education?

4. Purpose of the Study

In the modern world, under the influence of political and economic factors, there is a growing need for specialists with a high level of general development, professional competence, creative abilities and creative thinking. One of the most urgent issues of modern education is the formation of a highly motivated personality of a student who is able to live and work in changing economic conditions. At the same time, sociologists note a significant decrease in the students' motivation for the qualitative mastery of the learning material. The isolation of the educational process from the real needs of the economy and the lack of job security after graduation emphasizes that at present the role of higher education acquires a higher significance in the life of each person and in the development of the country as a whole. Our research is devoted to studying students' motivation for learning activities and is focused on solving urgent problems in the field of education..

5. Research Methods

The theoretical basis of the study was motivation theories of A. Maslow, M. Weber, T. Parsons, V. Yadov, A. Zdravomyslov. The research methodology combined both qualitative and quantitative

approaches. The primary data was collected using questionnaires and focus-groups. The research was conducted in three large universities in the city of Chelyabinsk.

6. Findings

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the students' value system. The study has determined not only the most significant values in the students' life, but also the education value in the students; value system. 83% of the respondents answered that the family is the most significant value (42.5% of girls and 40.5% of boys from the total number of respondents). The value of "love" was chosen by 58.5% of the respondents. Almost equally important are the values of "material prosperity" (47.5%) and "friendship" (47.0%). 45.0% of the respondents note that health is also a significant value. Thus, we have identified the five most significant values in the students' life. Self-development and self-education (40.5%), children (35.5%) and career (33.5%) are important students' values. Other values, including education, are not particularly significant for the students. Education as a significant value is noted only by 18.0% of the respondents, meanwhile, only 20.0% of the respondents agree that education in modern society is not of special value. Our study has fixed that for 41.0% of the respondents education is a way of personal development, for others it is an important element of socialization (31.5%).

The next important task of this study is to identify the students' motives for obtaining higher education. To solve it, respondents were asked to select the main factors that influenced their decision to obtain higher education. According to the results of the research, one of the most significant motives for obtaining higher education is the possibility of further successful job connection (50.5%). That is, this fact indicates that the main motive for obtaining a higher education is to obtain a diploma, through which they will have the opportunity to find a more promising job than without a diploma.

Our research has determined the other popular motives for obtaining higher education by the students. For a large number of students, interest in their specialty, on which they study, is an important motivation for obtaining higher education (44.5% of the respondents). Another important motive is "the desire to acquire new knowledge", this answer was chosen by 43.5% of the respondents. And the last popular motive is the "parents' opinion". 35.0% of the respondents notes that the parents' opinion influenced on their decisions to obtain higher education. Less important motives for obtaining higher education are: "school influence" (9.5% of the respondents), "the opportunity not to work during training" (6.0%) and "the opinion of friends" (5.0%). Our research has revealed that the motives for obtaining higher education do not depend on the direction of students' training. They depend on the form of training: for the government-subsidized students, it is much more important to obtain new knowledge. And for the fee-paying students important motives are: interest in the specialty, as well as obtaining a diploma for further employment. The government-subsidized students enter the university because of their interest in knowledge in general and the fee-paying students enter it because of their interest in a particular specialty.

The study has shown that the motive for obtaining higher education is related to the prospect of further successful employment. Meanwhile, in the process of training a lot of students start to doubt it. Hence, 73.0% of the respondents note that training at the university does not give any guarantees and confidence that they will be able to successfully find a job.

For the majority of the students the most important thing in learning is to get quality knowledge. This fact can be noted as significant and positive. 42.5% of the respondents define their study time as an opportunity to develop their abilities and qualities. The study has shown that for the majority of the respondents (72.5%) academic progress is an important moment in the learning process, mainly because of the possibility to receive a scholarship as well as to increase self-esteem.

As part of the study students were asked to determine what they were guided by when choosing the university. The study has revealed that there are five main factors affecting students' choice the university: the location of the university, the prestige of the university, students' own interest, the ability to become a government-subsidized student and the parents' advice. Our research has revealed that such factors as the location of the university and the possibility of becoming a government-subsidized student depend not only on the students' desire to study at this university, but also on the financial possibilities of the student and his \ her family.

As part of the study the hypothesis was tested: is there a correlation between academic achievement and psychological climate in the group. The study has fixed that then there is better the relationship between students in a group then there is the higher the students' academic progress. The psychological climate in the group is, highly likely, not the main impetus for students' successful learning, but it influences the educative process.

It should be noted that it is the school that should prepare future students for adulthood especially teachers should be interested in their students' activities. This is especially important for pupils of grades 9-11, because during this period future graduates and students decide where to enter, what specialty they will get, what they will be able to do and the most importantly where they will want to work. Therefore, an important task of our research work was to determine the relationship between the level of school preparation and the motivation of students. To solve this problem, a number of indicators have been developed. It turned out that the school and the teachers did not have any influence on the students' decision to obtain higher education. About the two-thirds of the respondents notes this fact. At the same time, in the majority of schools, various occupational guidance for prospective students are conducted to prepare students for admission to the university. More often it is students' participation in the "Open Doors Days", additional classes in individual subjects and various tests to determine the interests and inclinations of students to a certain type of activity. This method (questioning or testing), according to students' opinion, is just a "direction". That is, such a method can help determine which direction is better to move for the students, but it does not give any deep information about where any skills and abilities could be useful in a greater degree. More important in terms of determining occupational guidance for prospective students is, in the students' opinion, the organization and conduct of excursions to educational institutions and to enterprises. But such activities are practiced only in the every fifth school.

The next research question in this task was to determine the level of school training. For this purpose, students were asked to evaluate their former educational institution (school, lyceum, college) on a five-point scale. Our research has revealed the majority of the students says that their former educational institution was worthy of a high estimation in terms of training and education (52.5% of the respondents) and of very high (31.5% of the respondents). That is to say, we see that the majority of the students have good and decent school training. And this, in turn, indicates that young people entering the university have already the necessary "knowledge bag" for further training in a higher educational institution. Correlation

analysis has shown that for those students for whom it is necessary and important to obtain higher education, the level of school preparation is "very high" or "high". Therefore, the school has a great influence on their motivation. The weak influence of school training is observed among the students for whom education does not matter and the level of school training is medium and low. The lower the level of school training is the less students' motivation to study.

7. Conclusion

Obtaining a higher education is an important stage in the life of young people. Education as any other social institution fulfills its functions: socio-cultural; socio-economic; socio-political. At the moment, higher education is called upon to form a highly motivated personality of the student, able to live and work in changing economic conditions. And it, in turn, predetermines a change in the motivational sphere of the educational process.

For a deeper understanding of the issue and obtaining objective results, sociological theories of motivation were considered and a sociological study was conducted.

Any theory of motivation begins with the study of the motives of each individual, on which the imprint of various determinants (needs, goals, desires, external conditions and impacts, values, norms, possibilities, etc.) is postponed. Hence, in sociology a lot of theories have been developed by Russian and foreign researchers, dealing with classification of motives. Thanks to these theories and conducted sociological research, it is possible to determine the students' motives for obtaining higher education and to classify them. Our research has determined that education is necessary and important for the majority of students, since it plays an important role in the development of their personality. The study also has shown that education an improved yield is not the only value of importance. Priorities have been defined as follows: family, love, material well-being, friends, health and education. Our research has revealed how the significance of certain values varies depending on the course of training. Hence, for junior courses material well-being stands on the third place, and for senior courses it stands on the fifth place. A There is also a discrepancy in the students' estimation of the education value when comparing students' responses depending on the form of training. There is no correlation between the presence of higher education in parents and the desire to obtain it by students.

For almost all students academic progress is very importance. For government-subsidized students it is because of increased scholarships and increased self-esteem; and for the fee-paying students - a personal interest in the specialty. The relationship between the level of school training and motivation of students has been revealed: the lower the level of school training is the less pronounced the motivation for obtaining higher education.

The main factors influencing the students' motivation for obtaining higher education are: the location of the university, interest in their specialty and the opportunity to obtain quality knowledge. It is important to note that the factors influencing motivation are very different for students of the regional center and other cities in the region: for the latter, the location of the university and the possibility of becoming a government-subsidized student are very important motives. For students in the capital of the region the prestige of the university and its own interest are important.

Thus, education plays an important role in the student's life. The main motives for obtaining higher education are: the possibility of further employment, obtaining knowledge and student's interest.

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