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**ESSENTIAL AND SUBSTANTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF
CONCEPT OF CULTURE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' NEEDS**

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Abstract

The article is devoted to theoretical analysis of essential and substantial characteristics of the culture concept of university students' needs, which influences the training quality of competent specialists. Based on implementation of the semantic precision principle, extending to key concepts of research of the culture of university students' needs, the authors have formulated definitions of concepts of "need", "culture of needs" and taken own methodological positions on the internal structure of culture needs identifying major social qualities, the acquisition of which reflects the vocational training quality of future specialists in the university. The authors have focused on analysis of different classifications of universal human needs, revealed the system of needs that allows identifying the social needs for self-affirmation, communication, cognition and self-expression as the most affected in the university educational process. This required disclosure of substantive features of each of them and development of definitions of culture of each of these needs, thereby emphasizing their social significance when forming the culture of university students' needs. This theoretical analysis has also contributed to development of indicators of assessing the level of the formed culture of university students' needs. One of them is goals at the heart of one's satisfaction of socially significant needs. This approach has contributed to determining the problem state, which indicates the real level of culture of university students' needs in modern Russian.

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1. Introduction

Over the years, researchers have given the leading role to intellectual abilities, treating them as one of the most effective tools for successful implementation of learning activities. But the socio-economic development of modern society, often defined as a “consumer society” (Zhuravlyova, 2008; Krasova, 2012; Grunt & Mukhutdinova, 2017; Surtaeva, Krivykh, Buvakov, Kazakova & Soboleva, 2017), cannot but arouse educationalists’ concerns and require greater attention to the problem of the close connection between the need-motivational and intellectual spheres, affecting the quality of future specialists training, including vocational training of university students.

2. Problem Statement

The acute problem of the modern professional development of future specialists with the predominance of the material and prestigious-status sides in the process of their professional self-determination is the reason for drawing educators’ attention to the value aspects in the choice of individual ways to meet needs of the students’ personalities. This, in turn, requires close attention to the formation of their culture of needs. As confirmed by the experiences of life, any social norm becomes firmly acquired by a person, turns into an integral part of his inner spiritual world if it takes the shape of need and enters, in the words of V.I. Lenin, “into culture, into everyday life, into habits”.

So the urgency of this problem has necessitated the study of such a concept as “*culture of needs*”, supported through the system of needs in general, and, in particular through socially significant needs of the most affected in the educational process of the university.

The basic principles of State policy in educational sphere formulated in the Federal Education Act in the Russian Federation (amended 2017) regulate the content of modern education aimed at vocational training of competent specialists to guarantee their intellectual, spiritual and moral, creative, physical and (or) professional development, satisfaction of their educational needs and interests. Modern trends in the rethinking of the spiritual values of society are forcing teachers to revise the content of educational programs and to study in greater detail the problem of the conditions for spiritual renewal of the culture of learners’ needs, including university students’ ones.

3. Research Questions

The need to provide modern society with specialists with the high culture of needs, capable of independently elevating (spiritualizing) their needs, and inadequate conditions for the formation of the culture of learners’ needs in educational institutions served as a basis for our studying the culture of university students’ needs.

Nevertheless, in pedagogical theory the issues of the formation of culture are not new, they have been reviewed from various angles: formation of ecological culture, management culture, culture of relations, culture of consumption (Isaeva & Neyaskina, 2016). The formation of the culture of needs remains, for the time being, an insufficiently studied issue. In addition, modern processes call for the revision of the previously developed theoretical provisions on the culture of needs, since the scientific foundations of the content of this concept and the set of conditions (organizational, pedagogical, or regulatory nature) needed to form the culture of university students’ needs are not fully developed.

The theoretical and methodological basis in the research of the culture of human needs includes a wide range of works devoted to the problem. For example, such scientists as A.G. Zdravomyslov, K. Obukhovskiy, M.S. Kagan, N.B. Krylova, S.B. Kaverin, T.A. Marchenko, T.P. Mal'kova examined the philosophical and psychological aspects of understanding this concept. Some studies raise issues of the relationship between human being's consumption and construction in the process of sustainable development needs (Krylova, 1990; Obukhovskiy, 2003; Kaverin, 2011 and others). Later writings, however, focus their attention on the transformation of the culture of needs under the influence of socio-cultural environment, including educational one (Zhernov & Duranov, 1998; Kondrakova, 2004; Surtaeva et al., 2017 and others).

4. Purpose of the Study

However, the current inadequacy of the theoretical and practical elaboration of this problem requires our attention to be paid, first of all, to the essential and substantial characteristics of needs of man and his culture of needs at the current stage of development of society.

Based on the purpose of the study and the said problem, the tasks of the present study are to implement the requirement of terminological precision extending to the key concepts in the research process of the culture of university students' needs, to take own methodological positions on the understanding of the content of culture of needs, its internal structure, and also on the basis of the analysis of various classifications of universal needs to allocate in this system those distinctive systemic components which can be formed in the educational process of the university.

But the culture of human needs is an extremely complex phenomenon for the interpretation of its essential characteristics. All this requires a multifaceted study of the category "need" and the influence of culture of society on the development of individual needs. Therefore, one of the main tasks of our research is to analyze the numerous meanings of the categories in question and to develop a definition of "culture of needs".

5. Research Methods

In order to work out definitions of such concepts as "need" and "culture of needs" and to identify those components in the culture of university students' needs which are most exposed to a pedagogical impact in student age, it is necessary to conduct a theoretical analysis of the philosophical, psychological, pedagogical and sociological literature on the research problem. As a first step, let us turn our attention to the category "need".

Defining the content of the category of need being studied, it is necessary to rely on the system-activity approach to its understanding, since human needs are deepest driving forces unfolding any activity and virtually any object of pedagogical research can be represented as a system, then the cognition of these objects reflects the systemic nature of the needs of social subjects at various levels of social interaction.

In addition to understanding needs as a system, one should rely on the dialectic of the objective and subjective in nature of needs. Due to such approach, the need is used in several senses and perceived by scientists as *an objective need* (Obukhovskiy, 2003; Rubinshtein, 2008), *a mental state* (Platonov, 1982;

Bozhovich, 2009), *an attitude* (Leontiev, 2004), *a contradiction* (Mikhailov, 1981; Musin, 1989), or *a personality trait* (Frolov, 2007; Kaverin, 2011).

On the basis of the analysis of various theoretical and methodological approaches to understanding the category “need”, we conclude that the Objective-Subjective Approach to the study of needs is recognized as the leading one at the current stage of development of society (Ivanchuk, 1986, p. 11; Vorontsov, 1990, p. 18; Obukhovsky, 2003, p. 13; Orlov & Dmitrenko, 2007, p. 10). The implementation of this approach in our research involves revealing the multilevel nature of needs through a special kind of personal attitude to the surrounding world that is so called “*contradiction*”. *The need* should therefore be seen as *a system, composed of the unity of the genetic properties and acquired qualities of the subject, the objective-subjective nature of which triggers a deeply contradictory and conscious activity process revealing the subject’s specifically special attitude to the existing reality.*

But since “culture penetrates into the content of each individual need and into the structure of all the needs of society” (Vorontsov, 1990, p. 89), the culture of needs is also one of the components of personal culture as a whole. Various types of culture mastered by the personality, being the result of its implementation of the consumer-constructive activity, can be characterized by the quantitative and qualitative aspects of this process, and can also point to progressive or destructive ways of meeting material and spiritual needs. Consequently, the value-semantic content of a need satisfying process in each subject’s consciousness reflects the level of his culture of needs, revealing the material and spiritual capabilities of each person. At the same time, the process of forming an individual culture of needs is characterized, above all, by social criteria. Within the framework of the article, we call some of them that are the most significant for our investigation: the appropriateness of ways of meeting needs to the social and moral norms (Donchenko, 1982, p. 68; Zhilina, 1988, p.94); the collectivist orientation of meeting needs (Musin, 1989, p. 117); the contribution of a need satisfying process to the comprehensive and harmonious development of man (Ivanchuk, 1986, p. 25; Vorontsov, 1990, p. 66).

The aforementioned has allowed us to formulate the definition of the concept “culture of needs”. The interpretation of this concept, in our view, includes all the principal properties, and *the culture of needs should be understood as the subject’s conscious attitude to meeting his or her material and spiritual needs of the objective-subjective nature, and which reflects the ways of absorbing material benefits and spiritual values in the consumer-constructive activity aimed at the comprehensive and harmonious development of the personality as an objective necessity.*

It should be further noted that students strive to satisfy their own needs in the educational process at the university, the above-mentioned definition of the culture of needs has laid down in a basis of our study of some social and psychological features of the mechanism for forming the culture of needs during this stage of socialization. But the culture of human needs is an incredible mental fusion of various needs and the further consideration of the culture of university students’ needs requires an analysis of the existing system organizations of basic human needs in scientific literature (Simonov, Ershov, & Vyazemsky, 1989; Obukhovsky, 2003; Maslow, 2008 and others).

The most successful system of needs, in our view, is the concept of basic needs developed by Russian scientist S.B. Kaverin (Kaverin, 1996, p. 23; Kaverin, 2011). Under this concept and the principles of priority and hierarchy, all human needs originating in the main types of activities (labor, communication,

cognition and recreation) pass through *the biological, psycho-physiological, social and spiritual phases of development*. As to the substance of this statement, it can serve both as one of the main criteria for the system organization of basic human needs and as a means of identification of those components within such a hierarchical system as the culture of university students' needs which can be formed in training activities.

The theoretical analysis of different views on the problem under investigation has made it possible to reveal that an improvement in the quality of the culture of university students' needs depends more on the qualitative satisfaction side of the social needs for *self-assertion, communication, cognition and self-expression*. In the socio-psychological aspect of their consideration, educators highlight an extremely individualized nature of the processes of meeting these needs, and also single out them as some of the most powerful psychological guide in the mechanism for forming the culture of needs in the years of late adolescence (Zhuravlyova, 2008; Kaverin, 2011 and others). At this stage of socialization, on the one hand, the socially significant character of the needs for self-assertion, communication, cognition and self-expression becomes more visible. On the other hand, their close connection with the socio-cultural conditions for the society development is best seen, as well as with the educational environment implementing some qualitative changes to the formation of the culture of university students' needs in the educational process of the university.

Hence, the university faculty's awareness of the fact that it is this group of social needs that is most exposed to pedagogical impact can help to solve a number of pedagogical objectives in the training of competent professionals, but also on the basis of taking into account specific goals, conditions and results of the educational process in the university. In the socio-psychological aspect, the structural components of the culture of university students' needs are conditioned by a wide range of activities arranged in the university – educational, special educational and cultural, recreational activities and sporting events. So the next task of our study was the identification of specific components that constitute the internal structure of the culture of university students' needs.

The analysis of the scientific literature (Aza, Begeka, & Kazachkov, 1990; Krylova, 1990; Horuzhy, 1990; Zhernov & Duranov, 1998; Kondrakova, 2004) has allowed us to come to the conclusion that the internal structure of the culture of university students' needs is determined by new *specific mental formations*. The culture of university students' needs is not only the development level of the whole system of universal needs satisfied in the main types of the educational and extra-curricular activities, but it is also an indicator of the qualitative aspect of forming the unity of such social qualities of future specialists as *knowledge, skills and habits required for a specific professional activity, the ways of absorbing material benefits and spiritual values, corresponding to social and moral norms, as well as certain feelings*.

Thus, the implementation of the requirement of terminological precision applicable for the key concepts of the study has made it possible to identify the two main indicators characterizing the culture of university students' needs. Firstly, the effective formation of any new mental formations, including the culture of university students' needs, depends, first of all, on the quality and unity of the acquired professional knowledge, skills, habits, sensory feelings, and ways of absorbing material benefits and spiritual values that correspond to the social and moral norms. In Didactics these social qualities are perceived as essential, stable properties (Aza, Begeka, & Kazachkov, 1990; Krylova, 1990; Zhernov &

Duranov, 1998; Kondrakova, 2004). Secondly, the socially significant needs for self-assertion, communication, cognition and self-expression can serve as a criterion for assessing the level of the formed culture of university students' needs.

Then the next stage of our study is marked by the development of the definition of each of these needs as socially significant components within the system of the culture of needs. Having examined the socio-psychological concepts of need, culture of needs, different systematizations of needs, which are documented in the scientific literature, we have formulated the content of each of the socially significant needs (for self-assertion, communication, cognition and self-expression), and also their culture. In the framework of this article we will show only the essence of the developed definitions of the culture of each one.

The culture of need for self-assertion is the subject's conscious attitude to self-evaluation and assessment of oneself by others, reflecting a specific style of consumption of material benefits and spiritual values in the consumer-constructive activity.

The culture of need for communication is the subject's conscious attitude to exchange of cognitive or emotional information, experience, knowledge, skills, habits in interpersonal interaction, and which reflects the ways of exchanging material benefits and spiritual values in the consumer-constructive activity.

The culture of need for cognition is the subject's conscious attitude to acquisition, assimilation and application of knowledge, and which reflects the ways of learning material benefits and spiritual values in the consumer-constructive activity.

The culture of need for self-expression is the subject's conscious attitude to self-manifestation of one's individuality, and which reflects the ways of creative embodiment of material benefits and spiritual values (ideas and knowledge) in the consumer-constructive activity.

6. Findings

Furthermore, within the framework of the theoretical substantiation of essential and substantial characteristics of the concept of culture of university students' needs, the goal was to assess the real level of the formed culture of university students' needs. The ability to assess it, in our view, can be a number of such socio-psychological indicators as:

- goals underlying the satisfaction of needs;
- an attitude to the need as a means of achieving the goal;
- a style of consumption as a way of satisfying needs of the individual;
- a degree of satisfaction in the realization of the socially significant needs.

It is this set of indicators that determines the spiritual and moral focus on a certain type of the subject's activity in which he becomes active "to bring benefits to society" or "live for oneself", and points to the specific culture of self-assertion, communication, cognition, self-expression. The format of this article does not allow us to consider in detail each of them, therefore we will consider the essence of only one of them and its practical application in diagnosing the level of the culture of university students' needs.

It is known that one distinctive characteristic of activity is its goal-setting. Social and professional activity is always aimed at achieving a goal, i.e. at satisfying the whole system of needs, as peculiar to man. So the goal is one of the main indicators at the heart of the satisfaction of individual needs. The sign of this

indicator is the ability of university students to relate their own learning goals, their implementation in the educational process and the expected results with the training goals of the university.

In this regard, the goal of one of the needs assessment surveys based on the formulated indicators was to find out what goals students are guided by in choosing a profession and obtaining higher education. This type of survey in 2017 was conducted among the first- and second-year students of such universities as Saint-Petersburg State Institute of Film and Television and Saint-Petersburg named after V.B. Bobkov branch of the State Educational Institution of Higher Education “Russian Customs Academy”, the total number of students participating in the survey was 117. So according to the survey data, there are the following main goals, indicating the characteristic of the content of the university students’ socially significant needs:

- the need for self-assertion – 1) the attitude towards higher education as a guarantee of future material well-being (material and status aspect), 27.4 % of students responded to this point;
- the need for self-assertion – 2) the attitude toward higher education as a guarantee of the improvement of the person’ social status (prestigious and status aspect), 18.5 % of students need to make progress in their careers;
- the need for communication – the desire for interpersonal communication, acquaintance with interesting people, 16.7 % of students expect this experience;
- the need for cognition – the understanding of the learning goals as the acquisition of the knowledge necessary for future profession: 23.6 % of students responded to this point;
- the need for self-expression – the desire to reveal their creative potential and to achieve professional self-actualization, 13.8 % of students think about it.

7. Conclusion

The survey data on each of the socially significant needs show that when young people choose a higher educational institution, their orientations are mainly shifted toward the material and status side in a need meeting process. Thus, the identified dominant needs as the most socially significant are the distinguishing feature of the culture of university students’ needs, and also of the social system of today’s Russia. It should also be added that this method of assessing the state of the problem reflects only one characteristic feature of the culture of university students’ needs in the early university years. Better diagnosis in accordance with changes made in the formation of the culture of university students’ needs at all stages of university education requires the university faculty to decompose the system of the main criteria and indicators into smaller components, since their number may vary due to the specificity of the object under examination.

At this stage, it is important to take stock of all of the above-mentioned. Based on the implementation of the system-activity approach and the principle of terminological precision extending on the key categories and concepts of the research, the content and structural features of the concepts of need and culture of needs have been revealed. And in accordance with the principle of hierarchy, the leading needs for this age group (self-assertion, communication, cognition, self-expression) and the content of the culture of each have been identified. This theoretical analysis has also contributed to the development of a system

of indicators for assessing the level of the formed culture of university students' needs, as well as to the studying of the state of the problem of its formation in the early university years.

The results of this research would draw the attention of the academic faculty to the existing methods and developing analytical tools for diagnosing the level of the formed culture of university students' needs. One of the major indicators of the pedagogical diagnostics can be the satisfaction of the socially significant needs of university students (for self-assertion communication, cognition, self-expression). The number of diagnostic indicators and the mechanism of their application in the educational experiment depend on the development of a conceptual-categorical apparatus, goals and objectives of specific research work.

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