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**ANALYZING THE PERFORMANCE OF GENERAL-EDUCATION
COMPLEXES WITH REGARD TO IMPLEMENTING
CONTINUITY**

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Abstract

The practice of creating and developing general-education complexes, as innovative educational organizations, has brought about the need to look into the issue of continuity – both across a complex's structural units and different levels of general education. The problem is that most of today's research related to implementing continuity deals primarily with vertical continuity, while less attention is focused on issues related to horizontal continuity. In pedagogics, there currently lacks thorough research on issues related to the analysis of how well general-education complexes are implementing continuity across their education system, there being a want of proper criteria for evaluating the performance of general-education complexes with regard to implementing continuity and a lack of conceptual foundations and methods of analysis. The purpose of this paper is to explore analyzing and evaluating the performance of general-education complexes with regard to implementing continuity.

The performance of general-education complexes with regard to implementing continuity determines the match between the needs and potential existing within a complex and the changes implemented in terms of interlinking the elements of the education system. The authors base their empirical study, on the use of the following indicators:

- the degree to which pedagogues are aware of the need for continuity;
- the degree to which pedagogues are prepared to utilize the resources at hand to implement continuity;
- the degree to which pedagogues are aware of the difficulties inherent in the process of implementing continuity.

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1. Introduction

The domestic practice of the development of general education is currently characterized by a focus on innovation amid changes in the structure of educational organizations, which is facilitating the creation of new general-education complexes varying in the level, scale, and efficiency of activity (Goglova, Novikov, & Chernobai, 2013; Komarova, 2014; Novikov & Glotova, 2004; Pokosovskaya, 2015). General-education complexes can incorporate general-education organizations, preschool educational organizations, and institutions of supplementary learning.

Those in charge of the education system have the following issues to address: how to put together a single education system; how to pool all available educational resources to make them available to all learners; how to build a single managerial and organizational culture; how to alleviate the reluctance of pedagogues to work in a single team and focus on enhancing the quality of learning at that (Kharisova, Novikova & Shukaeva, 2017). A change in the structure of a unified educational organization may result in changes in its overall education system. These changes are expected to cut across the institution's actual educational process (including its goals, objectives, and content), learning technology, outcome evaluation techniques, existing conditions and potential opportunities, legal and financial systems, governance system, and organizational culture.

Today, most general-education complexes are entering the stage of innovative transformation, i.e. a development mode. For the purposes of this study, an innovative general-education complex is to be construed as a general-education organization that engages in innovative activity that involves identifying existing issues in the educational system, searching for and selecting particular innovations, and implementing these innovations. Innovative activity can be viewed as the focused transformation of a school's education system by members of its pedagogical staff with a view to enhancing its capacity to achieve fundamentally better learning outcomes (Lazarev, 2015; Novikova & Afanas'eva, 2016; Kharisova, 2016).

Most educational complexes are focused on achieving the following objectives:

- creating the conditions that will enable learners to electively choose from an extensive spectrum of educational services;
- building large, robust educational organizations that will enable learners to plot their own individual learning route;
- building robust pedagogical teams that will have the capacity to implement cutting-edge best pedagogical practices;
- fostering continuity across objectives, content, and technology among various levels of education to ensure the psychological comfort of participants in the educational process;
- fostering the economic efficiency of the educational process, which implies treating education as a seamless system that lends itself to scrupulous management;
- expanding the potential for meeting the educational needs of learners and actualizing the pedagogical potential of teachers.

2. Problem Statement

One of the key concerns at the initial stage in the development of general-education complexes is the issue of continuity – both across the different levels of education (preschool, primary, basic general, and secondary general) and across the educational organizations within a complex. There are currently difficulties in the area of cultivating a solid management culture, organizing the educational process, interlinking curricula and educational programs, motivating pedagogues to work together in one team, meeting novel requirements, maintaining a solid organizational culture, facilitating the psychological adaptation of learners, and some others (Vinogradova, 2000; Kustov, 1987; Oreshkina, 2009; Kharisova, Novikova & Shukaeva, 2017).

3. Research Questions

Continuity is reflected through objectives, content, educational technology, outcome assessment techniques, the psychological comfort of both learners and pedagogues, resources and conditions (HR, regulatory/legal, material/technical, research/methodological, and organizational/managerial), and pedagogue motivation.

4. Purpose of the Study

To work out an algorithm for analyzing the performance of general-education complexes with regard to implementing continuity.

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis for the authors' analysis of the performance of a general-education complex is V.S. Lazarev's theory of the development of educational systems and the concept of organizational development (Lazarev, 2015; Lomakina, 2013).

The object of this study is analysis of a complex's performance with respect to implementing continuity.

Analyzing and evaluating how well a complex is implementing continuity may require completing the following steps:

- establishing how to construe performance;
- identifying a set of criteria for evaluating the performance of a general-education complex with regard to implementing continuity;
- establishing the level of implementing continuity (substantive vs imitative) in general-educational complexes;
- developing the structure of activity on evaluating the level of continuity;
- developing a methodology for analyzing and evaluating the performance of a general-education complex with regard to implementing continuity.

6. Findings

When someone talks about the calibre of some form of activity, they normally refer to how well one is fulfilling its purpose and how well the outcomes of that activity match the objective requirements set for it. Performance reflects the relationship between the objectively required outcomes of one's activity and its outcomes achieved in actuality.

The performance of general-education complexes with regard to implementing continuity determines the match between the needs and potential existing within a complex and the changes implemented in terms of interlinking the elements of the education system, including with respect to:

- the objectives and content of education and learning technology;
- the management and organization of the educational process;
- the fostering of pedagogue motivation;
- the facilitation of the psychological adaptation of learners.

Implementing continuity is a tall order indeed. This issue has always been a major concern for educational organizations of all levels, a rather hard one to resolve. Thus, for instance, implementing the Federal State Educational Standards for general education, likewise, requires observing continuity in fostering universal learning skills, in designing the objectives and content of education, and in cultivating metadisciplinary skills. Most of the time, research of this kind is aimed at identifying and resolving issues of vertical continuity across the levels of general education and continuity in the development of learners (Tyunnikov, 2013). For the purposes of this paper, continuity is viewed in the horizontal plane with a focus on educational organizations forming an educational complex. Gaps in continuity have been observed across the following problematic blocks: didactical, organizational/resource, motivational, and psychological.

The authors have identified the following as the key criteria for the performance of general-education complexes with regard to implementing continuity:

1. Performance with regard to interlinking educational objectives, curricular content, learning technology, and outcome evaluation techniques.

It is determined by:

- pedagogues' level of awareness about the need to foster continuity across objectives, curricular content, and educational technology;
- pedagogues' ability to make use of the resources at hand to interlink objectives, content, and learning technology;
- pedagogues' level of awareness about the difficulties inherent in the process of interlinking objectives, content, and learning technology.

2. Performance with regard to interlinking existing mechanisms and resources in organizing the educational process:

It is determined by:

- pedagogues' level of awareness about the need to foster continuity across the forms and methodologies of organizing the educational process and management styles;
- pedagogues' ability to make use of the resources at hand to implement continuity in organizing the educational process;

- pedagogues' level of awareness about the difficulties inherent in implementing continuity in organizing the educational process.

3. Performance with regard to creating a proper motivation environment for pedagogues with a view to implementing continuity.

It is determined by:

- pedagogues' level of awareness about the current deficiencies in continuity;
- pedagogues' ability to evaluate existing mechanisms for boosting pedagogue motivation in implementing continuity;
- pedagogues' level of awareness about the difficulties inherent in implementing continuity.

4. Performance with regard to creating the conditions and mechanisms for boosting learners' psychological adaptation.

It is determined by:

- pedagogues' level of awareness about the current deficiencies in learners' psychological adaptation;
- pedagogues' ability to evaluate existing mechanisms in fostering learners' psychological adaptation;
- pedagogues' level of awareness about the difficulties inherent in fostering learners' psychological adaptation.

Depending on pedagogues' level of awareness about the current issues (the calibre of problematization), their ability to evaluate the potential for implementing continuity (the calibre of comprehension of existing potential), and their ability to handle the difficulties they normally experience in resolving particular issues (the calibre of realization of existing potential), the authors suggest differentiating between substantive implementation of continuity and imitative implementation of continuity.

The authors suggest considering a complex's performance with regard to implementing continuity as solid if the policies undertaken with regard to the development of its education system have resulted in improvements in the quality of education. Thus, if the quality of education has improved across the entire general-education complex overall, as opposed to within just some of its structural units, the institution can be regarded to have succeeded in implementing continuity across the educational organizations within it.

The subjects of the authors' analysis of continuity are pedagogues of general-education complexes (members of a complex's senior personnel, primary grade teachers, one-subject teachers, preschool general-education teachers, and supplementary education pedagogues).

To evaluate continuity in a complex, the authors established the following substantive attributes of the levels of continuity.

The substantive level of implementing continuity is characterized by pedagogues having high levels of awareness of the current issues in continuity, being proficient in identifying existing resources, being proficient in ranking these resources according to significance in helping resolve the current issues in continuity, and being proficient in identifying the difficulties in implementing continuity across the following areas:

- the objectives and content of curricula, learning technology, and learning-outcome evaluation techniques;
- the structure, forms, and ways of organizing the educational process, the resource base, and management styles;
- pedagogue motivation to work in a single team within the complex;
- the psychological adaptation of learners at the general-education complex.

Educational complexes whose performance with regard to implementing continuity is solid will, normally, try to identify as many issues as possible, prioritize carefully the resources that are available at the moment, and identify all of the difficulties encountered in implementing continuity.

The imitative level of implementing continuity is characterized by pedagogues having low levels of awareness of the current issues in continuity within the general-education complex, being deficient in identifying existing resources, being deficient in ranking these resources according to significance in helping resolve the current issues in continuity, and being deficient in identifying the difficulties in implementing continuity across the following areas:

- the objectives and content of curricula, learning technology, and learning-outcome evaluation techniques;
- the structure, forms, and ways of organizing the educational process, the resource base, and management styles;
- pedagogue motivation to work in a single team within the complex;
- the psychological adaptation of learners at the general-education complex.

Most educational complexes implementing continuity at the imitative level are not aware of the current issues, i.e. their calibre of problematization is quite poor. Most pedagogues at these institutions are ignorant of the resources available, have no clue how to resolve these issues, and have no idea where to get those resources. If the institution's senior personnel and pedagogues do nothing to help implement continuity in organizing the educational process, create a single educational resource base, motivate pedagogues, or monitor the process of implementing continuity, then, of course, no difficulties will arise. Only solid performance in implementing continuity will "produce" didactical, organizational, psychological, and resource-related difficulties (Lomakina, 2013).

To evaluate the performance of general-education complexes with regard to implementing continuity, the authors suggest employing an ordinal point-based scale that will feature a set of values for performance.

A point-based score for indicators of the calibre of problematization, the calibre of comprehension of existing potential, and the calibre of realization of this potential is the sum of scores for the indicators. However, an integral score for a complex's performance with regard to implementing continuity is not the sum of scores for all the indicators, as the indicators are in different weight categories. The main indicators are the calibre of problematization and the calibre of realizing existing potential. If these indicators have high scores, even if the level of awareness of existing potential is medium or low, the overall level will, still, be high.

You will need to set up on an ordinal scale a total of 5 values for the calibre of problematization, the calibre of comprehension of existing potential, and the calibre of realization of existing potential: high, higher than medium, medium, lower than medium, and low. Each value is represented by a numeric value.

Once you have determined your numeric and level values on each criterion, you can then proceed to calculate your integral score for the calibre of continuity. An integral score is computed based on the sum of all the numeric values via the following formula:

$$CI = C1+C2 +C3+C4, \text{ where}$$

C1– continuity across the objectives of education, the content of education, learning technology, and outcome evaluation techniques;

C2 – continuity in management, organizational culture, and resources;

C3 – continuity in enhancing pedagogue motivation;

C4 – continuity in activity related to learners' psychological adaptation.

The authors conducted their empirical study, aimed at analyzing the performance of general-education complexes, and tested their methodology based on general-education complexes operating within the city of Moscow. The study found that 42% of all general-education complexes implement continuity substantively, i.e. to a high standard of quality, while 58% just imitate their activity.

7. Conclusion

Thus, it will help to analyze and evaluate the performance of educational complexes with regard to implementing continuity based on compliance with the following principles:

- ensure scientific substantiation of the practical issues inherent in implementing continuity;
- ensure thorough analysis of a complex's education system;
- ensure your criteria for continuity are well-founded and integrative;
- ensure that your analysis covers all of the participants in the educational process;
- ensure verification of your proposed analysis mechanism;
- ensure that your analysis results are reliable and valid.

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