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**TEACHER'S READINESS FOR MARKETING ACTIVITIES AS A
CONDITION OF QUALITY EDUCATION**

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Abstract

The article discusses the pedagogical aspects of improving the quality of modern education. As one of the ways to solve this problem, the authors suggest considering the marketing activities of teachers and the administration of educational organizations. The article discusses the essence of the modern interpretation of the notion "quality of education", as well as the role and possibilities of marketing in improving the quality of education in an educational organization. The article discusses the question of how a modern teacher (and as a result, a modern educational organization) can effectively build a system of high quality education and achieve the high satisfaction of educational process subjects with the quality of education. The authors of the article present the results of an online survey of teachers of educational organizations. This survey contained questions regarding the content of professional education of teachers, their age, work experience. The research questions were also aimed at identifying the readiness of teachers for marketing activities. The survey revealed the role position of teachers as organizers of the educational process and their willingness to accept the marketing approach as a value and methodological basis of their professional activities. The degree of readiness of teachers for self-development in the field of educational marketing was also revealed. The survey results showed the most relevant content and the most effective technologies that will be applicable in the organization of additional education of teachers in the field of educational marketing.

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Keywords: Consumers of educational services, marketing activity, quality of education, readiness for professional activity



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1. Introduction

Changes in the legal framework of the education system, reduction of state funding for educational institutions, increase in parents' requirements for educational institutions, etc. led to the search for new ways to form the readiness of teaching staff of educational organizations for professional activity in the new socio-economic conditions. The fact that for the first time in Russian history, in accordance with the Law on Education in the Russian Federation, the notion of "educational service" has been introduced, acquires particular importance.

In this situation, the Federal State Standard of Basic General Education acts as a system of parameters that are accepted as the state norm of education, representing the public ideal and taking into account the capabilities of a real person and educational system to achieve this ideal. The Federal State Standard of Basic General Education is one of the main documents defining requirements for the quality of education. The standard establishes the requirements for the implementation of programs: to the structure of the program, to the results of the implementation of the program, presented in the form of targets for basic general education, to the conditions of implementation: psychological, pedagogical, financial, to the subject-spatial environment, as well as to the staff provision. According to this document, a teacher is the main actor in the renewal of the pedagogical process; it is he/she who has to meet these new requirements.

Contemplating on the essence of the notion "quality of education", we consider it necessary to note that according to the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" dated December 29, 2012 No. 273-FZ, the quality of education is viewed from two sides: as the degree of compliance with the requirements of the state and as the degree of compliance with the needs of an individual or legal entity. As practice shows, these requirements are not identical, although they overlap. Moreover, if the requirements of the state are expressed in regulatory documents, the expectations of people are fragmented, individual, they require specific approaches to their study and the special skills of teachers to identify and satisfy them.

2. Problem Statement

The Federal State Educational Standard acts as an objective assessment of the compliance of educational activities to a certain level and direction from the state. However, neither students and their parents nor the teachers display common opinion in regards to the definition of the notion "quality of education" as "the degree of compliance of educational activities and training of students with the needs of an individual or legal entity in whose interests educational activities are carried out, including the degree of achievement of the planned results of an educational program".

Various aspects of ensuring the quality of education are the subject of research by leading Russian and international experts: V. G. Afanasyev, V. I. Baydenko, I. A. Zimnyaya, I. Ya. Lerner, V. P. Panasyuk, A. I. Subetto, N. F. Talyzina and others.

One of the ways to solve the identified problems in meeting the growing educational demands of families and children, rising the quality of education, developing and improving educational programs, and enhancing the competitiveness of educational organizations can be a marketing activity. It becomes

the part of the teacher's professional activities, since the driving force of marketing activities is the needs of pupils, parents and the state. The success of an educational organization, both at the moment and in a strategic perspective, will depend on how comprehensively these needs are taken into account (Kotler, 2005; Pevzner, Sherayzina, Donina, Petryakov, & Aleksandrova, 2017).

Rice and Traut (2006) believe that "marketing is an activity, a set of institutions and processes that create, inform, deliver and exchange offers valuable for consumers, customers, partners and society as a whole" (p. 3). Both definitions emphasize the value and significance of the balance of interests of consumers and manufacturers.

At the present stage, marketing activity is quite relevant for educational organizations, and one of its goals is to ensure the satisfaction of the educational process subjects with the educational results and mechanisms for their achievement. The solution of this task involves such marketing activities as the study of consumers' educational needs and expectations, identifying and forming public opinion, studying the infrastructure and technological prospects of the markets (including the labor market), informing and advising participants of the educational process, developing and implementing educational programs which most completely meet their expectations.

A special role in the effective implementation of marketing activities is assigned to a teacher. As noted by Ezopova (2003), "a modern teacher and a specialist of an educational organization is forced to solve a whole range of new tasks that are connected with the general policy of the state, the needs of the development of society as a whole" (p. 33).

We agree with the researcher that "marketing activity is an activity of teachers and specialists of an educational organization directed at studying demand and providing consumers with high-quality educational services aimed at meeting the needs of both children and their parents" (Ezopova, 2003, p. 34).

At the moment, some aspects of the implementation of marketing activities in education already have a theoretical justification. However, the integrated implementation of marketing in the activities of an educational organization is impossible without qualified, trained personnel who have the ability and readiness for this type of activity. For the modern teacher, readiness for marketing activities is an important component of general professional readiness. In this regard, it is necessary to analyze the concept of "readiness", to formulate the essence of the concept "teacher's readiness of an educational organization for marketing activities" and to study the degree of readiness of a modern teacher of an educational organization for marketing activities.

3. Research Questions

We consider the "readiness of the teacher of an educational organization for marketing activities" as a professionally significant property of the teacher's personality, which is a system of interrelated components including personal qualities, professional motives and interests, as well as the teacher's skills that ensure the motivational, value, informative, technological and reflective components of his/her marketing competence (Kozhevnikova, 2014; Monakhova, Malinovsky, Sherayzina, Fedotova, & Donina, 2016).

The essence of each of the components will be explained separately.

The motivational-value component of the readiness of teachers of an educational organization for marketing activities presupposes that a teacher has personal qualities and abilities that help a teacher to motivate oneself for achieving the goal of marketing activities, a positive attitude to updating, mobilizing and responding to marketing incentives coming from the manager of educational organization.

The content component of readiness presupposes the presence of certain marketing knowledge and personal qualities that allow actualizing and mobilizing this knowledge and transforming it into skills and abilities. For example, a teacher understands the essence of marketing activities in an educational organization, a teacher is able to reveal the basic concepts of marketing, knows a regulatory framework governing the provision of additional educational services, has ideas about the types of marketing research, etc.

The technological component of readiness for marketing activity is connected with the teacher's readiness to apply marketing technologies and choose the means to achieve the marketing goal. As an example, one can designate such qualities of a teacher as the ability to develop a program of extracurricular activities and offer it to parents of children; the ability to organize and conduct marketing research.

The reflective component implies readiness to mobilize and update the evaluation of the result of marketing activities. Thus, a teacher is capable to reflect on his/her own activities and to organize the self-analysis of other teachers, a teacher is able to determine the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing activities and is capable of adjusting and restructuring marketing activities on the basis of reflection.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the most significant components of a teacher's readiness for marketing activities, allowing him/her to ensure a high level of education quality by adopting marketing principles as fundamental principles of interaction between subjects of the educational process, presupposing the primacy of students' educational needs.

The authors of the study suggest that the formation of a teacher's readiness for marketing activities will be effective if purposeful and systematic training of teachers in marketing is carried out and their value orientations for partnership with consumers of educational services are formed.

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of the research is a facilitative approach (N. V. Abramovskikh, V. N. Averkin, S. N. Gorycheva, O. M. Zaichenko, P. V. Lushin, Yu. A. Lyakh, M. N. Pevzner, A. V. Petrov, A. G. Shirin, and others), suggesting the actualization of the subjective experience of each of the participants and the construction of a special interaction of subjects based on co-creation, co-development, eventfulness.

The key notions of the facilitative approach are "facilitation" and "facilitative management". The main effect of facilitation is to ensure comfort, security, success, trust and openness, which provides more meaningful results (Lyakh, 2013, 2014).

Facilitation of the teacher's marketing activities actualizes his/her inner needs and ensures that there is intrinsic motivation to become an active participant in the development of educational organization and in self-development in the field of marketing. Facilitation is hidden, implicit in nature; it contributes to the preservation of interest and encourages the person's cognitive activity in matters of marketing and promotion. Facilitation of a teacher at the level of self-management and assistance is also supportive in nature, provides the conditions for his/her productive marketing activities and develops such qualities as self-reliance, initiative, reflexive thinking, creativity, etc.

The desire to achieve individual and organizational goals fills the facilitative management with new meaning, which is associated with the provision, initiation and promotion of marketing activities of teachers on the basis of their interaction and cooperation. Facilitation management is aimed at providing pedagogical support to each member of the team, analyzing individual value orientations and readiness for marketing activities, psychological, pedagogical and professional counseling.

The facilitative approach allows providing constructive joint activities and effective communication of the subjects of the educational process, determining the development of the personality of each teacher and the development of the organization in the field of marketing in general.

To achieve the purpose of the study, the following methods were used: a theoretical analysis of the psychological-pedagogical literature on the research issues; study of legislative, regulatory and policy documents, current experience in the field of marketing in education; observation; survey method (questioning); methods of mathematical data processing.

6. Findings

The study involved 172 teachers of pre-school educational institutions of Veliky Novgorod (Russia). The purpose is to determine the degree of readiness of teachers for marketing activities. The questionnaire assumed the presence of four groups of questions related to the motivational, theoretical, technological and reflexive readiness of teachers for marketing activities.

The study was conducted in the form of online surveys. The respondents received a questionnaire by mail or in social networks in the form of a hyperlink, clicking on which they were taken to the page with posted questions. This made it possible to conduct a survey fairly quickly; it did not take much time from the respondents and provided them with the opportunity to fill in the questionnaire using various gadgets (at the respondent's choice).

The study showed that 84% of respondents belonged to the age group "40 years and older". From the point of view of readiness for marketing activities, it could mean that while receiving vocational education, most teachers did not study marketing, which testifies to the ineffectiveness of their previous marketing training and once again confirms the need to develop, build and test a model of forming the readiness of teachers of an educational organization to marketing activities. At the same time, teachers of this age largely share the principles of marketing (as shown by the subsequent conversation). They are loyal to the idea of identifying the needs of both children and their parents. Young teachers up to 25 years old made up only 8% of respondents. They could study marketing while receiving a pedagogical education.

35% of respondents have work experience of 20-30 years, 22% - more than 30 years, 22% have work experience up to 3 years. 83% of respondents have the highest qualification category, which indicates a great potential of teachers, it means that a competent choice of activities aimed at the formation of corporate culture and intra-company training could ensure success in solving the tasks of modern educational organizations, i.e. the activities of teachers and other educators will be aimed at providing consumers with high-quality educational services meeting the needs of participants of the educational process.

The survey questionnaire included both closed and open questions. As examples of open questions, we can mention the following: "How important is the desire for self-realization, self-improvement and development for you?"; "Do you take into account the requests and wishes of consumers of educational services?"; "How important for you is a competitive image of your educational institution among colleagues, parents?"; "How ready are you to apply elements of marketing in your work?"

Summarizing the results of the study, we would note the most significant of them. For the absolute majority of teachers (91%), striving for self-realization, improvement and self-development is important. Only 8% do not aspire to the above and attend professional development courses and seminars only because they "are obliged to". All teachers (100%) believe that they take into account the requests and wishes of consumers of educational services. For all respondents (100%) it is important to have a personal prestigious image as a professional among colleagues, parents, and children. Thus, it becomes obvious that the readiness of teachers for marketing activities is personally significant. For the majority of respondents (96%) it is important that their educational institution has a competitive image. Only 4% of teachers did not answer this question.

When answering the question if the teachers are ready to use marketing elements in their activities, 4% also did not respond. But 18% of respondents answered that they are already willingly using these elements (i.e., they understand them), 35% of teachers answered that they would use them to support the administration. This suggests the need to develop a corporate training program in organizations on this issue, since almost 50% of teachers are interested in acquiring new knowledge and skills and would like to effectively learn how to apply marketing technologies in their work. However, almost 50% are not ready to apply them, but only to support the administration; it indicates the need for purposeful formation of motivational and value readiness of teachers.

The overwhelming majority of teachers understand the importance of marketing activities and justify their usage in a teacher's work, namely: 61% of teaching staff want to earn more, 70% note the need to use marketing activities in order for their pre-school to be competitive in the educational market, and 74% understand the need to use marketing activities to enhance and maintain the positive image of their pre-school. 30% of respondents answered that they would only support the head of the kindergarten and a senior educator, but did not consider it necessary to use marketing activities; they "do not need extra problems". It clearly shows that their motivational readiness is not sufficiently formed.

Almost all teachers (96%) answer that they do not read books on marketing. Some respondents found it difficult to answer this question; others are ready to read what the administration offers or advises; the third group understands the necessity, they are ready to find and read the literature on this

issue themselves. Only a few research participants were able to name the books on marketing that were used during the study of this subject or in the process of training at the vocational educational institution. According to the results of the analysis of the questionnaire in the pre-school educational organizations that participated in the experiment, a library of books on marketing have been created, which could be used by any teacher.

7. Conclusion

The study showed the high motivation of teachers of educational organizations to use marketing activities. It was expressed in the interest of teachers in obtaining new knowledge and skills, their desire to use elements of marketing in their professional activities. Teachers have been active in filling out the questionnaire, and later, in the reflection of its results. They shared their experiences, educational and methodological developments.

An important result of the study was the decision to conduct corporate training on the problem of marketing in an educational organization, involving not only the formation of a system of knowledge and skills of teachers in the organization of marketing activities, but also the creation of an appropriate corporate culture in an educational organization. A part of this process was the development of documentation by the participants of the study; this documentation was later used by teachers in the organization of the educational process, it resulted in a positive response from both the parents of children and their colleagues.

The study allowed the administrations of educational organizations to identify the degree of motivational and value readiness of teachers to use marketing activities; it allowed the teachers to conduct a self-assessment of the level of readiness, as well as to define the causes and conditions contributing to the formation of readiness for marketing activities and improvement of the education quality. As a result of the study, the administrations of educational organizations participating in the study developed a system of employee motivation, suggesting their active involvement in marketing activities; the administrators also organized network training for their employees, this training was aimed at studying the essence of educational marketing and marketing technologies.

A seminar was organized for all participants of the study aimed at an open discussion of various aspects of marketing activities implementation in pre-school educational organization. The key-speakers at the seminar were practitioners in the field of marketing, PR, advertising. The leaders of educational organizations, in which marketing activities have been successfully implemented for a long time, were invited to attend the seminar and share their experience. Teachers and managers openly spoke on their successes and problems, looking for the common solutions. The facilitative approach to the discussion allowed the participants to overcome psychological barriers, start a dialogue, as a result new creative solutions were found, and new partnerships were formed.

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