

Studying Motivational-Axiological Component of Professional Competence of a College Teacher

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ABSTRACT

Present article addresses the problem of changing requirements towards professional competencies of higher school teachers due to the introduction of new educational standards. Motivational-axiological component of college teacher's professional competence gets a central position. The article provides the authors' view upon the concept of axiological-motivational component and criteria of its development; it models the tentative levels of motivational-axiological component development, which can be used by the teachers as directions for self-analysis and creation of professional self-development programs. The results of a pilot study of the actual level of motivational-axiological component development in teachers of mono-subject and multi-subject college departments present a special interest.

KEYWORDS

professional competence of a higher school teacher,
professional and personal development,
motivational-axiological component, axiological
attitude towards a profession, level of motivational-
axiological component development.

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Introduction

Higher education system in Russia is currently at the stage of reformation, which is conducted with the background of social changes. During the past decade in our country, a rather large number of official documents, more or less related to the educational system modernization, was passed, however, their actualization in practice did not bring the desired results. The state has not yet developed a clear and thought-through policy in the field of fundamental reformation of higher education, although it became aware of the significance of this problem (Protasova, 2013).

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A key figure in the educational reforms is a teacher; because of this, the pace and the nature of educational modernization largely depend on teaching staff and universities' directors (Vasilenko, n. d.).

A number of studies state that higher educational institutions' teachers found themselves in especially difficult position: decrease of social recognition of the value of the profession, turnover and ageing of the teaching staff and personnel deficit (Bogdan, et. al., n. d.; Zamfir 1983). Professional identity crisis and motivation in the field of higher education, combined with a significant increase of difficulty of a modern college teacher's work, are considered to be a separate problem (Bogdan, et. al., n. d.; Abidova, n. d.; Myalkina and Zhitkova, 2016).

In these conditions, colleges have to search for internal resources for supporting the educational and mentoring process on a qualitatively new level.

Modern education's transition to the competence model of teaching defines the need in reviewing the requirements towards college teacher's professional activity. A teacher's the main goal becomes the creation of a developmental learning environment, which facilitates professional and personal development of a prospective specialist, rather than the translation of complete knowledge to students. This, in turn, requires rethinking the concept, structure, criteria and levels of development of higher school teacher's professional competence, as well as the conditions of its improvement.

One of the core components of college teacher's professional competence is motivational-axiological component. Philosophical aspects of the problem of motivation towards intellectual activity are present in the works of S.N. Bulgakov, N.I. Nadezhdin, V. Frankl and E. Fromm.

Internal and external factors of work motivation and social-psychological problems of working activity motivation are addressed in the works of A.G. Zdravomyslov, K. Zamfir, T.G. Kalacheva, A. Maslow, H. Heckhausen and V.A. Yadov.

Various aspects of sociology of regulation, including the ones on motivation as a function of regulation, are reflected in the works of national and international authors (V. Komarovskiy, Yu.Yu. Galkin, V.A. Gordienko, A.M. Anokhin, and others).

The problems of work motivation in the field of higher education are addressed in the works of the following psychologists, economists and sociologists: V. Bobkov, V. Kokorev, V. Korolkov, S.A. Lunev, N. Malikov, O. Mineva, L. Romankova, N. Solntsev, A. Shipilov, and others.

Psychological studies (I. Andreeva, N. Bogdan, E. Mogilevkin, V. Dubitskiy, D. Endovitskiy, A.Yu. Antropova, V.V. Dubitskiy, T.A. Zhalagina, K. Zamfir, S.I. Maslakov, L.G. Matyash, L.V. Khazova, and others) list the following values and goals of higher school teachers: intellectual and spiritual development, opportunity for creative activity, attitude towards the profession as towards a value, education and responsibility. The works of K. Zamfir separate internal and external motivation towards working activity. It is appropriate to talk about

internal motivation when the activity *per se* is significant for the person. In case when professional activity motivation is based on the urge to fulfill other needs, which are external towards the content of the activity itself (motives of social prestige, wages, etc.), it is appropriate to talk about external motivation. External motives themselves are divided into external positive and external negative motives. External positive motives are, obviously, more efficient and more desirable from all perspectives in comparison with external negative motives (Gutsu and Kochetova, 2015).

The results of empirical studies of professional activity motivation in college teachers, which were conducted by different authors, are highly controversial.

For example, according to the data of N.N. Bogdan and E.A. Mogilevkin, motivational core of the professional motivation of higher school teachers includes the motives, which are more related to the content of work (urge to fulfill one's pedagogic calling and to pass on knowledge and experience, self-actualization in scientific-pedagogic activity) and to the work conditions, specific for higher school (desire to stay in the intellectual environment, to work in a university, which has a stable position on the educational services market and to have an opportunity for a promotion). Moreover, the motivational core does not include the motives, which are specific for higher school (motives of research-scientific work, self-education and communication with the youth), which, according to the authors, might be considered as a sign of crisis of college teacher's motivation for professional activity. Very low significance of the motives of teacher's work prestige and dissatisfaction with the results of work also point to the crisis of higher school teachers' motivation (Bogdan, et. al., n. d.).

Summarizing the results of various empirical studies, including the ones we conducted (Gutsu, 2012; Gutsu, 2014; Gutsu and Kochetova 2015; Gutsu and Smirnova 2015; Gutsu, et.al. 2014), it is possible to state that the dynamics of professional activity motivation of a higher school teacher does not have a single conventional vector and is rather defined by individual trajectory of personal and professional development and by specific conditions of the professional activity.

The significance of professional activity conditions for the development of work motivation in a college teacher is highlighted in the work of N.V. Volodko and T.M. Sorokina. The authors analyze the motivational field changes in a college teacher in the specific professional activity conditions in the structure of multi-subject college department. According to the results, dynamics of motivational and axiological field development manifests in gradual transition from motivational individualism (personally-significant understanding of goals, means and criteria of one's own professional activity efficiency) to motivational mutual understanding. It occurs in the conditions of professional interaction and allows teachers of different subjects to interact productively (Volodko and Sorokina 2009).

Aim of the study

The aim of present work is to study the actual level of motivational-axiological component development in higher school teachers, who work in the conditions of mono-subject and multi-subject departments. Mono-subject departments are the departments, which unite the specialists of one single field (for example, psychology, pedagogics, etc.). In multi-subject departments specialists of different profiles (psychologists, pedagogues, etc.) are united by the single space of the department.

Methods

We made an attempt to comprehend and specify the essence, criteria and levels of motivational-axiological component development in the structure of professional competence of a higher school teacher. In order to create a diagnostic inventory, we separated the following criteria of the motivational component: attitude towards the profession as a value; understanding and experiencing its significance for the society, as well as for one's own development; interest towards the taught subject and questions of education in general; engagement in the science and urge towards constant professional self-improvement.

In order to reveal the essential characteristics of the motivational component of a higher school teacher, we created a diagnostic inventory, which includes the following methods: "Motivation for professional activity" (by K. Zamfir in the modification of A. Rean), "Questionnaire for revealing a teacher's skill of self-development" (by T.M. Shamova, adapted by E.G. Gutsu) [8], "Questionnaire for revealing the factors that stimulate and prevent learning, development and self-development of teachers" (by T.M. Shamova in the modification of E.G. Gutsu) (Gutsu, 2011).

In order to evaluate the significance of differences between the percent proportions of two subject samples, we used the ϕ^* criterion – Fisher's angular transformation (Fisher's criterion), which evaluates the significance of differences between percent proportions of two samples, in which we registered the effect we were interested in.

Subject sample: participants in the study were 80 teachers of higher educational institutions, 35-60 years old, who were divided in two groups:

1st group (45 people) – teachers of mono-subject departments (SD);

2nd group (35 people) – teachers of multi-subject departments (MSD).

Results

We conducted a pilot study of the level of motivational-axiological component development in higher school teachers, who work in the conditions of mono-subject and multi-subject departments. The results of the study are presented in table 1.

Table 1 – *Levels of development of the characteristics of motivational-axiological component of professional competence in the teachers of mono-subject (SD) and multi-subject (MSD) departments (%), (n=80)*

Criteria	Levels of development					
	High		Average		Low	
	SD	MSD	SD	MSD	SD	MSD
Attitude towards the profession	52,46	51,68	39,13	40,36	8,41	7,96
Awareness of the significance of the profession	41,64	47,12	48,72	44,47	9,64	8,41
Interest towards the discipline and the adjoining sciences	31,15	59,86	60,89	30,50	7,96	9,64
Engagement in the science	39,18	37,65	41,84	42,04	18,98	20,31
Need for self-perfection	38,47	42,24	41,46	38,78	20,07	18,98

Discussion

Analysis of the obtained results demonstrates that, out of five selected criteria, the most defined criterion in the teachers of both samples is “*Attitude towards the profession*”. Over a half of all teachers, who participated in the study, showed high level of this characteristic. This manifests in robust positive motivation towards professional activity; moreover, manifestations of motivation are relatively independent from the specific conditions. An opportunity to conduct professional pedagogic activity is comprehended and experienced by these teachers as an independent value. Attitude towards the profession, which corresponds to the average level of development, is characterized by unstable emotional attitude towards it, attitude’s dependence from a specific situation, work conditions and combination of positive motives of professional activity with specifically-personal ones. It was revealed in 39.13% of SD teachers and 40.46% of MSD teachers ($\varphi^*_{\text{emp.}} = 0.34$, the differences are not significant). Low level, which manifests in undeveloped motives of professional pedagogic activity or the dominance of specifically-personal pragmatic motives, was revealed only in a few single cases.

Significant differences between the two samples (SD and MSD) were revealed for the “*Interest towards the discipline and adjacent sciences*” criterion ($\varphi^*_{\text{emp.}} = 2.35$, the differences are significant). It is possible to state that the teachers of mono-subject departments have a more pronounced interest for “their” field of science and the content of the taught discipline, whereas the interest towards adjacent sciences and wide problems of education occurs

episodically. This characteristic corresponds with the average level of development of the studied characteristic, which was found in 60.89% of mono-subject departments' teachers. In the majority of cases, multi-subject departments' teachers presented robust cognitive interest, which is not limited by the ranges of the taught discipline, but includes a wide field of adjacent disciplines, problems of psychology, pedagogics, didactics and methods of college education, as well as the questions of education in general. This corresponds to the high level of development of this criterion, which was revealed in 59.86% of the MSD teachers. Low level of the criterion development, which manifests in the absence of interest towards the questions of education and episodic presentation interest towards the taught discipline, was not typical for the teachers (7.96% of SD and 9.64% of MSD). It is necessary to point out that this criterion is the only one, which showed the difference between the two samples. Teachers of multi-subject departments initially showed greater interest towards wide questions of modern education, while the teachers from mono-subject departments demonstrated greater interest towards the academic science and "their own" educational discipline.

"*Awareness of the significance of the profession*" criterion corresponds to the high (41.64% of SD and 47.12% of MSD) ($\varphi^*_{emp.} = 0.23$, differences are not significant) and average (48.72% of SD and 44.47% of MSD) ($\varphi^*_{emp.} = 0.54$, differences are not significant) level of development in the teachers of both samples. Teachers with high level of development of this criterion are commonly aware of and experience the significance of professional pedagogic activity for the society, and this awareness has a significant emotional tone. Awareness and experience of their own responsibility for the delayed results of their activity manifest vividly. Understanding of the professional pedagogic activity significance for themselves, for their self-actualization on personal and professional levels is also typical. Manifestation of the average level is unstable awareness and experience of responsibility for the delayed results of their own professional activity. Awareness and experience of the value of pedagogic activity for self-actualization manifests in separate situations, and emotional attitude towards it is unstable and controversial. Low level of development of this characteristic was revealed only in a few single cases.

High level of development of "*Engagement in the science*" characteristic was demonstrated by 39.18% of teachers of mono-subject departments and 37.65% of multi-subject departments ($\varphi^*_{emp.} = 0.34$, differences are not significant). These teachers systematically conduct research activity, publish in scientific issues, work on writing monographs, creating textbooks and handbooks. Content analysis revealed that teachers of mono-subject departments show greater interest towards academic science, while teachers of multi-subject departments conduct active research activity not only in the field of the taught discipline, but also in the field of higher school psychology and didactics. A significant number of teachers from both samples (41.84% of SD and 41.04% of MSD) ($\varphi^*_{emp.} = 0.25$, differences are not significant) demonstrated unstable activity in the research-scientific field; they stated that they conduct it episodically, which corresponds to the average level of development. Low level of engagement in science was revealed in about one fifth of teachers, who participated in the study. A typical

characteristic of the low level was the fact that research activity of these teachers was defined primarily by some external circumstances, for examples, by the need to formally match their position. Their scientific activities lack internal motivation, and therefore, the need to conduct them might cause negative feelings.

In our opinion, the integrating characteristic of motivational-axiological component is mindful, emotionally significant need for personal and professional self-perfection. On the high level of development, it was demonstrated by 38.41% of the teachers of mono-subject departments and 42.24% of the teachers of multi-subject departments ($\varphi^*_{\text{emp.}} = 0.84$, differences are not significant). A typical trait of the high level is the presence of teacher's thought-through and validated program of professional self-development, which contains not only the goals but also the means and conditions for reaching them. The average level of development of this criterion (41.4% of SD and 38.78% of MSD) ($\varphi^*_{\text{emp.}} = 0.96$, differences are not significant) is characterized by unstable manifestations of this need and its reliance on various external factors. Having a certain program of goals, the teachers could not state an adequate program of actions and put their professional development solely in dependence from external conditions (post-graduate courses, seminars organized by the college, etc.). The request to define the types and field of their own responsibility for perfecting their professional activity caused difficulties for this group of teachers. On the low level, the need in self-perfection was revealed in 20.07% of teachers of mono-subject departments and 18.9% of teachers of multi-subject departments ($\varphi^*_{\text{emp.}} = 0.64$, differences are not significant). They demonstrated the belief that the actual level of their professional development provides the successfulness of their professional activity and does not require constant perfection.

The obtained data show the need in more thorough analysis of the motivational component of professional competence in a higher professional school teacher.

Conclusion

Therefore, the obtained data show the need in more thorough analysis of the motivational-axiological component of professional competence in a higher professional school teacher. The question of searching the ways of perfecting this characteristic is also significant.

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