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Professional Adaptation of the Future Agronomist as a Psychological and Pedagogical Problem

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Abstract

The article gives a theoretical analysis of the problem of professional adaptation of future specialists-agrarians during their studying in the institutions of higher education. It is singled out the psychological, sociological, socio-pedagogical and pedagogical approaches to the research problem. The correlation between the leading categories of pedagogy and the concept of professional adaptation within the framework of the pedagogical approach to the problem of professional adaptation of future agronomists in the process of studying is established.

Keywords: higher vocational education, professional adaptation of future agronomists, Bologna process, psychological and pedagogical problems

Actuality and state of the problem research

Higher vocational education remains the most important component of the training system. Therefore the representatives of psychological and pedagogical science are constantly interested in the problems associated with the professional training of specialists for different industries. At the same time

we observe in a certain sense the crisis of higher professional education caused by:

- the need to reform the educational system in accordance with the requirements of the Bologna Declaration which foresees significant organizational and content changes in the higher vocational school;
- the need of training specialists in the context of specific labor market demands formed during the transition of the entire manufacturing sector (including AIC) into a new economic plane;
- the separation of the educational process in higher educational institutions from the needs and demands of agribusiness enterprises.

A modern graduate of institutions of higher education is required a high level of professional activity which begins to form during the years of studying; sufficient professional independence and flexibility which will ensure rapid adaptation to changing working conditions; a high level of general and professional culture through which it will be possible to relate their professional claims and offers on the labor market; formed non-standard thinking which forms the ability to solve non-standard professional tasks.

The purpose of the article is to identify the leading scientific and theoretical approaches to the problem of professional adaptation of future agronomists in the process of studying in the institutions of higher education.

The problem of professional adaptation of the future specialist in the agro-industrial sphere is maturing and continues to be resolved throughout the entire period of studying both at secondary and higher educational institutions. Therefore in psychological and pedagogical science professional adaptation is traditionally interpreted as an ongoing process requiring theoretical formulation at different age stages of the development of the individuality of the professional.

For a thorough theoretical elaboration of the problem we need to build our own research methodology. In our opinion the need for this methodology can be explained by several main reasons:

- Firstly by the interdisciplinary nature of the research problem which is at the intersection of several scientific areas – psychology, pedagogy, sociology;
- Secondly the complexity of the categorical-conceptual apparatus of the study which included both highly specialized, and general theoretical categories – “conditions”, “activity”, “training” etc.;
- Thirdly by the fact that within the scope of our research we must consider the process of professional adaptation beyond the limits of systematic and continuous professional activity, since it is about students and not about graduates of agrarian institutions of higher education.

Designing a methodology for studying the problem of professional adaptation of future agronomists we proceed from several main methodological sources:

- general philosophical methodology which gives us the opportunity to take advantages of the laws of dialectics, the general philosophy of being and development;
- general methodology of science which allows to consider the best methods of research;
- methodology of pedagogy within which the scientific apparatus of the research is formulated and its main tasks are determined;
- methodology of a separate pedagogical study, in this case – theoretical substantiation and experimental verification of pedagogical conditions of professional adaptation of future agronomists.

Basing on the four sources mentioned we consider the leading theoretical approaches to the research problem, design the categorical-conceptual apparatus, determine the general study program, outline the list of methods, generalize the results of theoretical analysis and experiment on the problem. In addition, the methodology of the research, which we are aware of, enables us to reflect the achieved results and to make timely adjustments to the research activity.

In the process of determining the leading theoretical approaches to the problem of research we proceeded from a mechanism that determines the level of development of professional adaptation, that is dialectical contradiction between the interests of certain hierarchical elements: the future specialist as the carrier of a certain amount of professional knowledge and personal qualities, on the one hand, and society as a customer and the consumer of the indicated socio-professional level of development.

The peculiarities of professional adaptation of the students in the process of studying in the institutions of higher education are determined, according to our belief, the level of their own professional motivation, the corresponding level of professional knowledge, skills, as well as personal qualities and level of their personalities and professional development.

Among the theoretical approaches to the problem of adaptation of the individual in different conditions of life (including professional activity) we note psychological approach as one of the leading approaches. According to it, in the structure of adaptation processes, different aspects are distinguished, first of all, sensory (adaptation of sensory organs to the intensity of the irritant), socio-psychological (harmonization of personality and environment) and professional (adaptation of a person to new conditions for work) (Rufova, 1999). Psychologists point out that the process of professional adaptation depends on the successful formation in the individuality of the specialist in the primary installation – the attitude – and its introduction into the structure of the psyche (Nadirashvili, 1974; Shaverdyan, 2007; Norakidze, 1970; Krysko, 2000).

Adaptation as a psychological phenomenon is defined as a process of regulating the relationship between personality and the environment by reducing the

degree of inconsistency between the named parties. Professional adaptation is largely due to the processes of self-regulation, and the regulator is the level of activity of the individual, which implements not adaptive but the transformational nature of activity.

We believe that the more active the environment, the greater the effort required by the adaptator to enter it will be; and vice versa – if the environment reduces the level of its activity – the level of activity of the subject of adaptation reduces (adaptive activity passes into the potential phase). Melnikova (1999) in her study proposed a certain hierarchy of strategies of personality behavior in various situations of professional adaptation as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Strategies of personality behavior in different types of professional adaptation (by Melnikova)

| Type of strategy in professional adaptation | Focus on the environment | Focus on oneself, on internal transformations |
|---|---|---|
| Active contact type (transformation) | Active change of environment ("strategy of a blacksmith or a warrior") | Active changes of oneself and of the inner world ("the strategy of the person who is raising himself from a stone") |
| Active avoidance type (escape) | Active deviation from the environment and the search for a new one ("flying bird strategy") | Avoiding contact with the environment and immersion in the inner world ("snail strategy") |
| Passive contact type (representation-subjugation) | Passive representation of oneself in the environment ("strategy of the pebble and stream") | Passive conquest of the environment ("Chameleon's strategy") |
| Passive avoidance type (waiting) | Passive excitement of external changes ("sail strategy in anticipation of the wind") | Passive expectation of internal changes ("ripening apple strategy") |

In psychology there are four leading stages of adaptation of a person to changing environmental conditions (in this case – professional):

1. Initial stage, when the awareness of a person's new conditions of its existence and life starts; the behavioral norms of the professional environment are assimilated theoretically, but the person is not yet ready to accept these forms of behavior as their own; student prefers to adhere to the previous (accepted in the student environment) norms and rules of conduct.

2. The stage of tolerance – the future specialist and the socio-professional group (environment of professional activity) exhibit mutual patience in relation to one another, taking into account the values and patterns of behavior, taking into account each other.

3. The stage of accommodation – the recognition and acceptance by the future specialist of the bulk of the system of values and behavioral patterns typical of this professional environment. The professional environment also adopts special rules and samples of the behavior of a specialist.

4. Assimilation – the mutual harmonization of socio-professional settings, norms and values of the future specialist and socio-professional group.

Within the psychological approach, the problem of professional adaptation of the future specialist is considered in the plane of the main mental processes – thinking, memory, attention, imagination, representation. Scientists distinguish the stages and phases of professional adaptation, based, first of all, on the condition that professional adaptation is most actively carried out after the completion of education in the institutions of higher education. Instead, the university's stage of professional adaptation is considerably less investigated in scientific works.

Sociological approach to the problem of professional adaptation of the future specialist determines the primary role of social processes, connections, assessments, norms influencing adaptation processes in professional activity. Since sociology studies social relations and relationships in their individual and personal reproduction, professional adaptation belongs to the branch of sociological theories – sociology of personality, sociology of occupations and sociology of labor (Verbets, 2005; Golovakha, 1989; Lukashevich, 1999; Zdorovskaya, 1998; Moskalenko; Tsyba). Undoubtedly successful professional adaptation of the future specialist depends on the status-role positions of the individual in the environment, on the level of his or her social mobility. In general, social adaptation and professional adaptation are interdependent processes, although social adaptation is a broader concept of the system than a professional one. Instead, social mobility and social adaptation together constitute the main factors and components of the process of socialization of the individual which extends throughout life. Within the sociological approach it is also considered the concept of readaptation – a departure from one, the usual conditions of life and addiction to new conditions of life (Semichenko, 2002).

Within the sociological approach, it is often spoken about social adaptation and its manifestations in the process of professional adaptation. The researchers single out the leading functions of social-professional adaptation which are related to the professional development of the individual in the process of studying in the institutions of higher education:

- stabilizing function, the essence of which is that the adaptation of the individual increases the cohesion and stability of the team and improves the moral and psychological climate;
- developmental function, that is the ability to realize the creative abilities of the person in the process of professional adaptation. We believe that this function may be realized in the process of studying in institutions of higher education;
- a socialization function, the content of which is the social growth of the person undergoing the process of professional adaptation while studying at an institution of higher learning.

We consider socio-pedagogical approach as directly related to the sociological approach to the problem of professional adaptation of future specialists. Social pedagogy studies the problems of socialization of the individual in the system of social institutions and institutions at different age stages that fully corresponds to the concept of adaptation within the profession. Socio-pedagogical approach to the problem of professional adaptation unites sociological and pedagogical approaches. The pedagogical approach to the problem of professional adaptation of future specialists is presented in the scientific works of Alekseyeva, Kapustina, Melnikova, Moroz, Nain, Redlich, Hamidulin, Shcherbinina and others (Kapustin, 2002; Melnikov, 1999; Nain, 1982; Redlich, 1999; Khamidulina, 2000; Scherbini, 1987; Moroz, 1980). The biggest number of the studies we analyzed relates to professional adaptation in the process of training future educators and teachers of educational institutions. Scientists also pay enough attention to the professional adaptation of officers, officers of internal affairs bodies, social psychologists.

Within the pedagogical approach professional adaptation is considered in correlation with the leading pedagogical categories – education, upbringing and development as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Interconnection of the leading categories of pedagogy and the concept of professional adaptation and within the pedagogical approach to the problem of professional adaptation of future agronomists in the process of learning

| Category of pedagogical science | Relationship with the notion of professional adaptation of a future specialist |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Learning | The learning process ensures the acquisition of a range of professional knowledge by future professionals, influences the formation of professional skills and abilities. Professional adaptation in the learning process provides the basis for the successful professional adaptation of a young specialist after graduation from in the institutions of higher education |
| Education | The educational process in an agrarian university should be aimed at forming a system of professional values that form the basis of the motivational component of professional adaptation to work in the agricultural sector of the economy. |
| Development | The result of successful adaptation of a future specialist and at the same time a factor of this adaptation is the professional development in the learning process, which subsequently becomes the basis for professional self-development |

The specificity of the pedagogical approach to the professional adaptation of future specialists foresees that within this approach many adjacent categories and concepts related to professional adaptation are considered – professional orientation, professional competence, professional self-realization, etc. In addition, the pedagogical approach provides an opportunity to trace the development of methodological and organizational-pedagogical provision of the process of professional adaptation within the higher education, as well as the possibility of designing and implementing innovative technologies of professional adaptation. This forms the basis for designing models and technologies for professional adaptation.

Conclusion

The implemented theoretical analysis of professional adaptation as scientific and pedagogical problems gave the possibility to find out its interdisciplinary character and influenced the choice of the leading theoretical approaches (psychological, sociological, socio-pedagogical, pedagogical). Scientific approaches selected in the course of given theoretical analysis provide the opportunity to identify and analyze the categorical and conceptual apparatus of the study what we consider as the prospect of further research.

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