

V International Forum on Teacher Education

Postgraduate Support as the Condition for Graduates' Dedication to the Profession

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Abstract

The urgency of this research is caused by the need of the modern education system for the dedication of psychology, defectology and pedagogy graduates to educational organizations in the country and by immature theoretical, methodological, substantive and technological aspects of the process of postgraduate support. The purpose of this article is introduction of the analysis of university graduates' support and the description of its psychological-acmeological model. Theoretical analysis, empirical research methods (employment monitoring, questioning), modeling method were chosen as the basic research methods in this work. In the article, the psychological-acmeological model of postgraduate support is introduced. It includes three interrelated blocks: 1) goal-oriented, 2) organizational and developing 3) evaluating and resulting. Besides, the features of these blocks are revealed and the algorithm of the model introduction is developed. The model sets out to support the graduates' professional becoming, form future specialists' steady motivation for personal professional development, prepare for professional activity and personal professional self-development, and make students adapt to the profession.

Keywords: postgraduate support, employment, students, psychological-acmeological support.

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Published by Kazan Federal University and peer-reviewed under responsibility of IFTE-2019 (V International Forum on Teacher Education)

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Introduction

Difficult but ambitious tasks which face modern education lead to the new requirements for the young teacher's professional level. The priority goal of higher vocational education is orientation of educational organization to a particular type of professional activity, for which a bachelor's is being prepared according to the labor market requirements and scientific, research and material resources of the educational organization (Vinokurova & Zhuina, 2017).

Along with the problems of improvement of pedagogical higher education institutions, the problem of graduates' training quality is also an urgent issue. On the one hand, the problem is caused by a large number of experienced teachers and teachers of retiring age and also by annually increasing pedagogical personnel turnover. According to the annual statistical bulletin (2017), the number of teachers with less than five years working experience is 245,165 people whereas with working experience of 20 and more years there are 1,220,626 people. For the last three years the number of teachers who quit the job makes 8%". (Education in Russia).

Nowadays many countries in different regions of the world experience the problem of teaching staff shortage. The analysis of foreign researchers shows that "the need for school teachers will remain in the nearest future. In average, every tenth of beginning teachers in EU countries leaves school" (Yakovleva & Krasilova, 2016). Yakovleva and Krasilova (2016) make a point that "among other problems beginning teachers face with the lack of time and recognition, overestimation of capabilities, difficulties in the search for balance between work and private life".

Young teachers in Russia leave the profession due to various reasons, but this trend can be stopped if assistance in the form of comprehensive support is provided at the initial stage of professional activity.

Solution of the above-mentioned task considers employers' requirements for professional and personal qualities of young specialists and can be effectively fulfilled if a young specialist has an opportunity to approach with current problems a mentor who is a more skilled and mature professional (Zeer, 1997). This mechanism of postgraduate support is an important part of profession life promoting young specialists' effective social and psychological adaptation to the profession (Bortnik & Skachkova, 2007).

In modern research studies, postgraduate support is understood as interaction of mentors and supported postgraduates in order to solve urgent problems of the latter. Postgraduate support is defined as "a set of purposeful complex measures supposing creation of conditions for the purpose of providing successful adaptation to the profession, effective carrying out of psychological activity, adaptation to the professional environment and overcoming crisis and barriers occurring within professional activity" (Vinokurova, Zhuina, & Yashkova, 2018).

Among the problems of postgraduate support, according to Ilaltdinova and Ignatyeva (2017), there are "the top-priority ones: contribution to the formation and development of graduates' professional competencies in the chosen sphere, creation of conditions for overcoming crisis and barriers during the graduate's professional activity, promotion of the graduate's adaptation to the professional environment, creation of conditions for the graduate's steady motivation for professional activity for the purpose of formation of dedication to the profession" (Ilaltdinova & Ignatyeva, 2017).

The success of implementation in the process of postgraduate support can be assessed using the following criteria: "improvement of the quality of a graduate's professional psychological activity, adjustment of young specialists to the professional environment, striving for professional self-

improvement, steady motivation for work on the chosen specialization” (Zhuina, 2014).

The issue of tools and technologies which higher education institutions have to use in the course of postgraduate support is also quite urgent.

Research methods

Research methods

In the course of the research, the following methods were used: theoretical analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature on the problem of postgraduate support, monitoring of young specialists’ social and psychological adaptation to the professional activity, the method of psychological and pedagogical modeling.

Research and trial base

Mordovia M. E. Evseyev State Pedagogical Institute and educational organizations in the Republic of Mordovia were used as a research and trial base for the purposes of this work.

Research stages

The research was carried out at three stages:

- at the first stage we carried out theoretical analysis of the existing methodological approaches in psychological and pedagogical scientific literature and dissertations on the problem of postgraduate support and also collected empirical data; we specified the research purpose, methods, worked out the plan of the development and approbation of psychological-acmeological model of postgraduate support of young specialists;
- at the second stage we carried out a monitoring survey of employment and social and psychological adaptation of young specialists to professional engagement; we processed the monitoring survey results and made a conclusion;
- at the third stage we began approbation of the psychological-acmeological model of postgraduate support which was “aimed at activization of personal inner psychological resources, development of personal professional capabilities, formation of professional and personal mobility. Being involved in any professional activity, a graduate could fully realize his/her personal potential in the profession, and, if necessary, flexibly react to possible changes” (Zhuina, 2014).

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Results

Analysis of the results of the monitoring survey of graduates’ employment

At the first stage 525 graduates (2015-2018 years) of the Faculty of Psychology and Defectology at the Mordovia M. E. Evseyev State Pedagogical Institute took part in the research. In connection with the research tasks the monitoring survey of employment of the Faculty of Psychology and Defectology graduates has been carried out regularly since 2015. The analysis of employment showed that the majority of graduates have been employed: from 89% to 100% of 2015 year graduates, from 80% to 100% of 2016 year graduates, from 82% to 100% of 2017 year graduates, from 75% to 100% of 2018 year graduates (on October 10, 2018). Analysis of the monitoring survey results showed that only from 40% to 65% of graduates of different years and different specializations found jobs corresponding to their specialization. It confirms that there is a problem of bringing young specialists to the sphere of secondary education which makes its contribution to the problem of teachers’ age unbalance. Further, we analyzed the data on the age of specialists of psychological, pedagogical and defectological specializations working in educational

organizations in the Republic of Mordovia. The structural analysis of the age range of these specialists showed that 34.5 % of them are people with less than 3 years of working experience, along with that the prevailing part (more than 50%) of these specialists are people with more than 15 years of working experience. The percentage of educational psychologists, teachers-logopedists and speech pathologists with working experience from 4 to 15 years makes only 11.2 %. These figures are caused by the fact that the greatest outflow of young specialists happens in the fourth and sixth-years of employment history.

The monitoring survey of employment of pedagogical institute graduates allowed describing the main problems in the field of young specialists' employment and adaptation. Among them the following ones are detected: imbalance between contract vacancies and the needs for teaching staff in a particular region; low level of competence and motivation to the profession of specialists applying for the contract vacancy; lack of possibility of a young specialist's conscious career path; immaturity of the system of stimulation (material, social, insurance) for young school specialists; absence of program for developing young specialists' dedication to the profession, etc.

Young teachers enumerate the main problems of adaptation in the following way: 1) financial reasons: low salary, more favorable offers from other spheres; 2) non-financial reasons: high teaching load both in class and out-of-class activities; conflicts with experienced teachers; low standing among teaching staff; low respect among pupils; unwilling skills transfer from experienced teachers to the youth. Thus, the carried-out analysis showed that along with financial reasons there is variety of other reasons which can be affected by means of the program of postgraduate support for pedagogical institutes graduates. All these caused the need for development of psychological-acmeological model of postgraduate support for young specialists.

Structure and subject of the model

On the basis of system and activity approach the psychological-acmeological model of young professionals' postgraduate support was developed.

The created *psychological-acmeological model of young specialists' postgraduate support* includes three blocks:

1) goal-setting block within which the purpose was defined which consisted in determination of the initial level of a young specialist's professional and personal development, detecting the progress of his/her adaptation to the new workplace for the purpose of finding an individual route of the young specialist's professional development at a stage of their adaptation and involvement in the professional activity;

2) set-up and developing block representing actualization of postgraduate support defining the main directions and the content of work on the youth's postgraduate support (analysis of the problem, dealing with organizations for graduates' employment assistance, informing about professional opportunities, professional consulting, specific trainings in career and professional development and so forth).

3) resulting and evaluating block aimed to generalization of the work on young specialists' postgraduate support and determination of the efficiency of the given assistance by means of support results tracking.

Description of the process of the model introduction

Introduction of this model included the following stages:

1) development of steady motivation to professional activity by means of professional competence formation and senior students' career orientation.

The contents and forms of the work at this stage were defined, first of all, by analysis of references and working experience of various organizations concerning identification of the most typical problems that young specialists face. On the basis of the present analysis it was stated that postgraduate support has to begin during the final years of studying in a higher education institution. At this stage students were provided with information and advisory support on the problems of professional self-determination and employment. Various master classes and training seminars were organized, as well as students' practical trainings within which students acted as trainees. At the same time the choice of practice site was defined first of all by the need of the organization for young specialists trained on this program. Selection of such organizations was carried out by means of developing interaction with organizations (employers, employment assistance centers, job centers, education authorities and others);

2) determination the initial level of a young specialist's social and psychological adaptation to professional activity and readiness of the organization for his/her support.

The contents and forms of the work at this stage were defined according to peculiarities and requirements of a particular organization which employ young specialists whose working experience is less than 3 years and also according to the degree of a young specialist's adaptation.

Firstly, we analyzed together with the administrations the experience of organizations in dealing with young teachers. It was stated that each organization has some experience of that kind. The most common ways of young specialists' support were the following: methodical consulting (individual or group), seminar (training, educational and practical, scientific and practical, etc.), conference (scientific and practical, pedagogical, etc.), creative pedagogical workshop, School of a beginning (young) teacher, professional skills competition, master class and others. Representatives of various organizations defined mentoring as one of the effective forms of a young specialist's support. However, as questioning showed, introduction of this form of support is obstructed by a number of reasons: indeterminacy of the status of a teacher-mentor, no regulatory framework or methodical recommendations about mentoring process organization, low level of experienced teachers' psychological and pedagogical preparedness for this type of work though having a rather high level of method competence. With that in mind we developed and introduced an additional program of professional development "Psychological and pedagogical technologies of mentoring". Twenty experts from preschool and general education organizations took part in this program as well as representatives of higher education organizations. The teachers who have been trained within this program were considered to be the young teachers' mentors. The analysis of young specialists' adaptation degree to working conditions in the organization allowed identifying the groups of young specialists and describing their characteristics in consequence with the main aspects of adaptation: professional adaptation (matching of professional potential of the beginning teacher's personality to the requirements of organization); psychological and physiological adaptation (problems of adjustment to new working routine and psychological load); social and psychological adaptation (the problems of the worker's coming into the system of staff relationship with its traditions, values, norms, etc.); organizational adaptation (peculiarities of understanding the teacher's role and the organizational status of the workplace).

According to the degree and peculiarities of young specialist's adaptation in each organization individual supporting programs were developed which included three aspects: organizational, socio-psychological and professional. Actualization of these programs continues now. Annual monitoring is planned for the purpose of assessment of their actualization results and analysis of dedication of young teaching staff in organizations which accept psychological-acmeological model of postgraduate support.

Conclusion

Analysis of the monitoring data of the degree of the young specialist's social and psychological adaptation to professional activity shows positive dynamics of this process. The results of the research showed that actualization of the psychological-acmeological model of postgraduate support promotes the graduates' complex comprehension of the profession; allows increasing students' competence; promotes formation of students' steady motivation to personal professional becoming, preparedness for professional activity and for professional self-development, and in general to advantageous employment and successful career building. The effective mechanism of staffing which serves regional social clusters and solves regional education system problems is the model of postgraduate support.

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