



Features of Students' Economic Competence Formation

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ABSTRACT

The paper provides the verification of a proposed technique aimed to develop students' economic competence and considers criteria of students' economic competence formation: Motivational that is characterized by personality's qualities and properties, tolerance and psychological readiness for future profession; cognitive that identifies the level of economic literacy development, assimilation of knowledge, mastering a complex of concepts, categories, laws; activity-based that assumes mastering actions that have an economic focus; abilities of rational labour organization; use of knowledge in non-standard situations; realization of design, organizational and implementation skills necessary for economic activity. On the basis of proposed criteria the authors revealed problems in the levels of students' economic competence formation, and the technique was elaborated to enrich cognitive, motivational and activity-based components that feature the degree of experts' readiness for vocational activity. Materials from the article can be useful for teachers of economic disciplines to select and structure the training content for students specializing in economic disciplines.

Keywords: Economic Competences, Students, Economic Specialties, Technique

JEL Classifications: A2, A20, I2, I25

1. INTRODUCTION

The human of present days is considered as a potentially comprehensively developed, initiative, and entrepreneurial person, possessing profound knowledge, abilities and skills to be competitive in multi-structural market economy. In this regard, modern education has to focus on the formation of economic competence as a necessary element of competitive personality's business potential.

It is obvious that economic competences mastered by students specializing in economic disciplines enrich the content of their vocational activity as accountants, economists, financial experts, auditors etc. In this case, the formation of a graduate's economic competence is one of educational process results. This issue is studied by such authors as Ivanova (2005), Zeer (2002), Zimnyaya (2003), Kal'ney and Shishov (1999), Shishov (1999).

Economic competences are understood as the synergy of economic knowledge and abilities, and the possibility of their successful application in vocational activity in the field of economy (Ivanov et al., 2015). The objective necessity to form economic literacy of students of all training directions and profiles makes actual issues concerning specification and classification of economic competences. The analysis of FSES educational model of the third generation confirms it. Within this model competence-based approach means obligatory acquisition of those qualities which help the graduate to adapt to changing conditions of modern post-industrial society.

Analyzing the content of common cultural and vocational competences within general educational programs for many profiles of training, it is easy to notice and single out an essential economic component that is employed in the majority of common cultural and vocational competences. Proceeding from the aforesaid, we understand economic competences as a set of

gained economic knowledge and abilities, and the possibility of their successful application in professional activity in the field of economy, and solution of corresponding questions arising in the course of social-economic relations with people, organizations, state and other economic institutions.

The proposed classification is based on the division of economic competences that are obligatory for all students irrespective of the direction and profile of their training (major) and vocational competences. Vocational competences represent specific (that are realized in professional activity of graduates of non-economic profiles and are applicable in a specific field of activity) and pure (that form collectively with personal qualities professional competence of graduates - students of economic profiles) competences.

Economic competences formation of students studying at pedagogical, technical, medical, juridical, humanitarian, construction and other directions demands another approach and is connected with many objective and subjective problems and issues. This sphere is still insufficiently studied, though works of Markina (1994), Dolgova (2001), Ivanova, (2003), Andreeva (2006) are of certain interest.

The analysis of literature revealed that the research of economic competence formation is, first of all, connected with the need to specify criteria necessary to evaluate, single out peculiar features, and define characteristics of various training conditions taking into account such sciences as psychology, pedagogics, economy, sociology to prevent (minimize) social-economic conflicts.

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The model of an expert developed by Fatkhutdinov (2002) was considered in the paper. From Fatkhutdinov's point of view highly-qualified economists should:

1. Be able to set high personal goals of self-expression, to have normal lifestyle, to be fit, to increase qualification constantly, to enunciate thoughts clearly and intelligibly, to be pure, responsible, dedicated, and to dress smartly.
2. Be able to predict scientifically the strategy of a company development, efficiency and competitiveness of manufactured goods, to study and estimate factors influencing competitiveness, to be able to prove own ideas in verbal and written communication.
3. Be able to form goals of other people, to understand the character and features of the personality, to estimate themselves and other people adequately, to support normal moral-psychological climate in the team, to remove stresses, and to smooth conflict situations.
4. Know technical and technological features, principles according to which purchased, manufactured or sold objects act, to understand issues of manufacturing unification, standardization, specialization and automation.
5. Be able to analyze, forecast, economically estimate, and make decisions in conditions of uncertainty.
6. Be able to focus oneself and the staff on the achievement of goals; to carry out functions of a distributor of resources,

dispatcher and coordinator, to delegate functions and responsibility according to management levels, to encourage workers to implement marketing concepts, to improve the quality and increase economy of resources.

According to this model, we defined three criteria of students' economic competences formation: Cognitive, motivational and activity-based. In compliance with Markova (1996) we understand a system of criteria as an ideal model with which a real phenomenon is compared and the degree of their correspondence is established. The proposed criteria can be referred to as objective ones as we determine with their help the degree to which the graduate of a vocational educational institution corresponds to economic imperatives as an expert.

Each criterion is revealed by a system of empirical indicators reflecting the degree of a separately taken component development. The indicators, i.e., measuring instruments of singled out criteria were the following:

1. The cognitive criterion is characterized by knowledge of economic terms and concepts, ability to explain their sense; manifestation of interest in economic problems of the present situation; ability to plan expenses; application of knowledge to characterize economic problems; ability to analyze and establish cause and effect relationships of economic problems; ability to detect regularities of market mechanisms functioning; application of economic knowledge for the solution of stereotype and non-standard tasks.
2. The motivational component includes: Observance of saving regime at an educational institution and home (thrift), planning and regulation of behavior in economic situations (independence), calculation of volume of work and costs of its performance (rationality), quality performance of charged work (diligence), efficiency of work performance and solution of problem economic situations (entrepreneurship), need for economic activity as prerequisites of society and production sustainable development; understanding the necessity to form economic competence.
3. The activity-based criterion is characterized by the ability to analyze economic situations and to find possibilities to increase their efficiency; ability to transfer knowledge into practical activities; the necessity of external management for economic activity; ability to prioritize to achieve results in economic activity; manifestation of independence to set goals, selection of ways to achieve a goal; ability to model economic activity; preference of innovative and/or short-term projects.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Results of the Experiment Stating Stage

During the stating experiment the following was revealed: Students had insufficient social and economic knowledge and abilities; inadequate depth of key concepts awareness; incomplete formation of vocational orientation (interests, valuable orientations, motives, and readiness for educational-vocational activity). Positive dependence of practical abilities, professional position, and self-assessment on the nature of students' secondary employment - students' work according to the chosen specialty was revealed.

3.2. The Content of the Experiment Forming Stage

During the forming experiment, students' own experience in achievement of success in educational and vocational activity was updated; problem study of social and all-professional disciplines content in the context of future vocational activity was conducted; systems of tasks, assignments on the basis of practical experience of local enterprises and algorithms of their solution were developed; study guides on the analysis of production, economic and selling situations were drawn up; teaching guides providing theory and practice were applied; tasks and the content of work practice were worked out; study guides concerning practical training and independent work organization were elaborated; themes of term papers and diploma works aimed at economic competences formation, complex study of competition problems, and mastering ways to achieve success in competition were introduced.

3.3. Diagnostics of Motivational Component Formation

The motivational component is defined by a system of students' valuable orientations. Let us compare the nature of rank places of valuable orientations before and after the experiment (Table 1).

At the end of the experiment, self-confidence moved to the first place instead of life quality, and career success moved from the 4 to the 8 place; freedom of self-realization moved from the 6 to the 3 place. Thus, self-confidence, quality of life and freedom of self-realization become leaders in the structure of valuable orientations; that testifies to students' focus on their future profession. In fact, students began to evaluate possibilities to set up their own business more soberly; they understood that only the availability of certain abilities and qualities contribute to career success; and it in its turn is the result of activity.

3.4. Diagnostics of Cognitive Component Formation

Economic knowledge and abilities in the field of management and marketing were estimated in compliance with their depth, sufficiency (completeness), and demand to increase knowledge.

Some parts of the following sections (subjects) of knowledge were exposed to evaluation: Microeconomics and macroeconomics, marketing researches, competition on the market of commodity and services, pricing.

Table 1: Nature of students' motivational and valuable orientations

Values	Rank place	
	At the beginning of the experiment	At the end of the experiment
Career success	4	8
Quality of life, financial security	1	2
Interesting job	5	5
Money	3	4
Freedom of self-realization, selection of activity	6	3
Own business	7	9
High status in society	9	6
Self-development, self-improvement	8	7
Self-confidence	2	1

The degree of abilities formation was estimated: Ability to plan production and sale, methods of marketing researches, ability to choose the most rational ways of decision-making, technique of economic analysis of enterprise activity, rules and forms of business and commercial correspondence, ability to conduct business negotiations.

Table 2 presents generalized results of evaluation according to the specified levels of formation.

3.5. Diagnostics of Activity Component Formation

The formation of this component was verified in the course of students' work practice as it is the most effective means to expand ideas of a future profession.

The comparative analysis testifies to positive dynamics: Before the experiment 26% of students made a high level, after the experiment it was 34% (the increase made 8%). The number of low-level students decreased: From 40% to 24% (the difference made 16%). 63% out of 34% that made high-level students worked in different areas of an economic and production sphere. The qualitative analysis of results obtained by questioning, observation, interviewing, and conversations revealed a number of tendencies and features of students' vocational orientation formation.

In the course of training, students are attracted by the opportunity to establish links between theory and practice, to master algorithms of practical tasks solutions, and to analyze situations.

The results of the forming experiment testify to the efficiency of the proposed experimental technique. Most students enriched cognitive, motivational and activity-based components that indicate the degree of experts' readiness for professional activity.

4. DISCUSSION

The issue of graduates' economic competence formation at vocational educational institutions was specified in Russian pedagogical and psychological science long ago; its theoretical researches were conducted in various scientific directions. So, for example, outstanding pedagogues Blonsky (1979), Sukhomlinsky (1988), and Shatsky (1962) on the basis of theoretical works and practical experience claim that children's and teenagers' direct participation in production of national wealth, in the process of their distribution allows them to understand the essence of economic transformations and processes, to assimilate main ways of rational economic behavior and business communication.

Philosophical researches of Zdravomyslov (2008), and Uledov (1985) consider economic education and upbringing in interconnection with other directions of teachers' educational and training activity.

Methodological bases of economic competence formation in educational process are revealed in works of Kurakov (2004), and Baranchev (2007). The issue of economic knowledge formation is studied in works of Abramov (2004), Igolnikov (1995).

Table 2: Dynamics of students' knowledge increase

Knowledge, abilities	Levels of formation, %					
	Low		Middle		High	
	The beginning of the experiment	The end of the experiment	The beginning of the experiment	The end of the experiment	The beginning of the experiment	The end of the experiment
Microeconomics	28	12	46	50	26	38
Macroeconomics	34	12	54	56	12	32
Marketing researches	38	10	46	62	16	28
Competition on the commodity and services market	36	10	48	56	16	34
Pricing	24	8	44	48	32	44
Ability to plan production and sale	38	22	40	42	22	36
Mastering marketing research methods	32	16	46	42	22	42
Ability to choose rational ways of decision-making	42	28	58	48		24
Technique of enterprises activity economic analysis	26	12	42	48	32	40
Rules and forms of business correspondence	36	12	30	44	34	44
Ability to conduct negotiations	42	26	58	56	-	18

The content, organization and technique of economic education of student youth are presented in works of Naperov (1999), Yudina (2002), Borisova (1996).

Psychological aspects of this issue are considered in works of Andreeva (1980), Druzhinin (1999), Dushkov (2000).

It should be noted that philosophical foundations of public economic education were regarded in works of Ilyin (2000) and Zavyalova (1996) they present the essence of Russian economic consciousness at philosophical, economic and sociological levels.

Sociocultural aspects of economic competence formation are studied in works of Kondratyev (2001), Deryabina (2005), Andreeva (2004) they investigate the interrelation of national economic mentality and functioning of economic sphere of society, its openness, legality, and efficiency.

The stated resources designate the idea that the development of future economists' ability for system vision of business-problems and their creative solution makes the basis of competitive experts' economic competence. In this regard, scientific substantiation and practical implementation of students' economic competences formation in the context when their educational activity is closely connected with vocational activity represents an actual pedagogical problem. Such professional and activity-based orientation of training is provided by the following factors: Focus of training material on experts' vocational training; complex nature of profiling that cover all links of an academic discipline with corresponding disciplines, term and graduation papers and other types of students' research activity; the priority of applied tasks necessary for students to master the chosen profession at laboratory and practical lessons; students' orientation to master a profession according to an individual program that considers their cognitive features, motives, disposition and other personal qualities; focus on the development of expert's creative personality able to act independently; creation of conditions for students' professional and personal self-determination: Development

of professional and valuable orientations, establishment of a professional position, formation of need and readiness for professional self-improvement. These factors cover all main actions that make professional activity: Formation of knowledge significant in professional, political, social and economic, special and scientific, psychology, pedagogical and methodical activity; formation of economic skills necessary in vocational technical activity; formation of personal qualities that define social and economic, professional and informative orientation.

5. CONCLUSION

Thus, the criteria of levels of students' economic competence formation proposed in the paper (motivational that is characterized by qualities and properties of the personality, tolerance, and psychological readiness for future profession; cognitive specified by the level of economic literacy formation, assimilation of knowledge, mastering a complex of concepts, categories, laws; activity-based that assumes mastering actions having economic focus; abilities of rational labour organization; use of knowledge in non-standard situations; realization of design skills, organization and implementation of economic activity) allowed to reveal problems and to develop a technique to enrich cognitive, motivational and activity-based components that characterize the degree of experts' readiness for professional activity. The proposed technique is aimed to update students' personal experience to achieve success in educational and professional activity; to conduct problem study of social and all-professional disciplines in the context of future professional activity; to develop the system of tasks, assignments on the basis of practical experience of local enterprises and algorithms of their solution; to draw up study guides on the analysis of production, economic and selling situations; to apply teaching guides providing theory and practice; to work out tasks and content of work practice; to elaborate study guides on practical training and independent work organization; to introduce themes of term papers and diploma works aimed at economic competences formation, complex study of competition problems, and mastering ways to achieve success in competition.

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