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**METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO STUDY
PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL WELL-BEING OF
TEACHERS: PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES**

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Abstract

This work presents the results of our sociological study aimed at evaluating the professional and personal well-being of teachers of Yakutia, as well as the issues of a methodological nature that stem from the topic. The purpose of this research is to study the professional and personal well-being of teachers, including their satisfaction with their work, factors leading to professional 'burnout', means for overcoming professional crises, formation of basic professional competencies, evaluation of teachers' quality of life, as well as the level of satisfaction with additional professional education. Additionally, the paper looks at the issue of development and self-development of professional competencies of teachers. The paper presents the results of our sociological survey of teachers that was held in 2015-2016, covering various aspects. The conducted research confirms the necessity for scientific rethinking of the values of the system of forming professional competencies in the current changing conditions.

The results of the research are used in the work of North-Eastern Federal University Institute of Continuing Professional Education to develop additional professional programmes of further education and retraining, organize workshops and training sessions. This article has practical value for education managers and teachers who are interested in personal growth.

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Keywords: Professional and personal well-being, professional pedagogical activity, assessment of quality of life, professional satisfaction, professional competence, self-development.



1. Introduction

Today, there is a growing need for highly qualified and competent teachers, whose success largely depends on their understanding of the essence of their professional activities. Specialists must possess a variety of universal, professional and cultural competencies, as the modern labour market requires them to demonstrate exceptional levels of qualifications, psychological and moral stability as well as flexibility and ability to navigate in the constantly changing world.

Additionally, the issue of professional and personal well-being of teachers is one of the most pressing issues within the context of continuing conceptual developments in education (Berezovskaya, 2016; Volkov, 2015). Since job satisfaction is an integrative indicator that reflects the well-being of an individual in the context of his/her professional occupation, both job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction, as well as satisfaction and dissatisfaction with professional relationships can determine the quality of professional work (Shamionov, 2008). Self-awareness, one's personal and professional qualities, adequate assessment of one's professional competence, as well as the attitude towards oneself based on that assessment predetermine the behavioural component of a teacher's professional identity. In this context, satisfaction refers to the ratio between the motivation-value sphere of a teacher's identity and the ability to achieve the success in his/her professional and educational practices (Molochkov, 2005). Therefore, largely, a teacher's personal satisfaction depends on the position that his/ her professional activities occupy within the system of his or her value system.

2. Problem Statement

The issue of professional and personal well-being is closely connected to the problem of life quality. In this regard the major defining aspect of this study conducted among the teachers of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) in 2015-2016 was a comprehensive approach.

The research consists of two parts, with the first part focusing on the study of professional and personal well-being of teachers and their satisfaction with their professional activities, and the second part focusing on the issue of teacher professional development and self-development of competencies.

3. Research Questions

The analysis of definitions allows us to adhere to the following point of view: professional competence of a teacher depends on various qualities of his/her personality and is characterized by a constant desire for general improvement and self-development, professional growth, integration of theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

4. Purpose of the Study

The research objectives were to identify teachers' assessment of the quality of modern education in the region in comparison with previous years; formation of 'burnout' factors; impact of crisis-prone factors on personal and professional lives; overcoming these crisis-prone factors; formation of basic professional competencies; evaluation of teachers' quality of life; and the level of satisfaction with additional

professional education. Additionally, the research looked at the need for scientific rethinking of the values of the system for the formation of professional competencies within the changing society.

5. Research Methods

Methods employed in this research included surveys (questionnaires and interviews) and the analysis of reflective essays written by teachers at the end of professional training courses.

In this research study, we understand the norm in professional occupation of a teacher to be: 1) an adequate level of basic professional competencies; and 2) teacher's understanding of meaning and prospects of individual professional occupation in the context of personal life (Dumcheva, 2015). The lack of professional competencies and absence of spiritual and mental reasoning for professional work and continuing professional development are regarded as a deviation from the norm, as well as a sign of professional deformation (Murzina, 2012).

Additionally, in the second part of the research, we understand that the need for transformations stems from the search for new approaches and methods of developing professional competencies among specialists. This enables them to realize the need for timely expansion of their existing competencies and learning of new ones to keep up with the constantly changing social conditions.

6. Findings

6.1. Professional and personal well-being of teachers

The survey poll included more than 1,000 teachers. We are currently compiling the final draft of the analysis of the data on teacher training courses for the year 2016 (more than 3,000 teacher profiles), as well as the after-the-course reflexive essays of teachers. The following are the results of the survey on the assessment of teachers' quality of life: 4.9% of the respondents rated their quality of life as low; 24.2% - 'neither bad nor good'; 1.1% preferred not to answer the question; 61.0% assessed it as 'good' and 8.9% as 'very good'. 50.5% of the respondents are satisfied with their health condition, 3.8% are fully satisfied, 22.9% are not satisfied, and 3.5% are very unsatisfied with the state of their health, 19% answered 'neither one nor the other', and 0.4% preferred not to answer the question. On the question 'How satisfied are you with your life?' the respondents answered as follows: 1.9% 'not at all', 6.9% and 32.2% 'a little' and 'moderate' respectively, 51.1% and 7.1% 'substantially' and 'excessively' respectively, and 0.8% preferred not to answer the question. On the question 'Is there a meaning in your life?' 1.1% of the respondents responded negatively, 5.4% provided the answer 'a little', and 0.4% did not answer the question. 27.1% of the teachers indicated that their life is filled with a meaning to a 'moderate' degree. Out of all the surveyed teachers only 54.8% found their lives filled with a definite meaning.

6.2. Professional competencies of teachers

150 teachers from educational institutions of the Republic took part in the survey. The analysis of their responses identified problematic areas which if resolved under certain conditions of self-development may enable the implementation of the educational process at a higher level.

The answers to the questionnaire in part 1, 'Development of Universal Professional Actions', show issues that need to be resolved through deep self-analysis and corresponding correction in the field of regulatory and communicative actions.

For part 2, 'Conforming to Professional Standards', it is necessary to point out that professional duties are partially unfulfilled in methods of teaching, organizing individual development of students, and active approach to education.

For part 3, 'Competence in Using Information Technologies', the general level of competence is at 70%. Teachers have some issues when working with the English-based software and setting up computer equipment, as well as poor skills of online communication.

7. Conclusion

7.1. Professional and personal well-being of teachers

The problem of conducting research on personal and professional well-being of teachers is closely related to the problem of life quality, which is influenced by many factors. We consider the ideological component to be an important factor, specifically an educator's awareness of his/her professional occupation within the context of his/her personal experiences. In this regard, the most important tasks of continuing professional education of teachers should be the development of competencies of teachers in the field of reflexive capabilities and types of reflections in professional practice, as well as organizing spaces for reflexivity.

7.1. Professional competencies of teachers

The analysis of results show that most teachers who took part in our study have an average level of both the development of general-purpose educational actions and professional competencies. While they have deep knowledge in area of their own subjects, teachers mostly have only fragmented knowledge of the issues related to person-oriented, individual development of students. Furthermore, they experience difficulties with integrating subject and psychological knowledge, and do not always understand the need for such integration. Therefore, focusing on self-improvement is not a priority in their lists and is not considered when educational programmes are developed.

It should be noted that the study identified a problem of teacher communication, which should not be a problem at all and cannot be considered typical for the teaching profession. This leads to the conclusion that the present-day social state of society is a cause for concern.

The need for self-education is presented at a relatively low level, only 50% of respondents have knowledge in the field of modern technologies and methods of teaching, even though the skills of searching for information are at an appropriate level for most respondents.

The results of the research show the urgency of the issue of development and self-development of teacher professional competencies and additional training of modern teachers.

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