

TRAINING COMPETITIVE SPECIALISTS IN CONDITIONS OF EDUCATION DIVERSIFICATION



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Abstract. The article deals with students' competitiveness development at institutions of higher learning. The authors analyze the nature and components of individual competitiveness and discuss education diversification as a prerequisite for effective training of competitive professionals at institutions of higher learning. Developed professional competencies will add to university graduates' competitiveness at the labor market.

The authors also analyze the effectiveness of the student competitiveness development management system in the conditions of education diversification.

Keywords: *management, competitiveness, competitive professional, education diversification, student competitiveness development management system*

Introduction

The profound and rapid socio-economic, political and educational transformations in Ukraine because of its integration into the civilized world community, as well as the crisis phenomena in the world economy have aggravated the problem of youth unemployment and increased rivalry among young professionals at the labor market.

The existing challenges call for educational reform, modernization of higher education, the search for new democratic management models. In this context, it is very important to train competitive professionals wanted by the labor market who are capable of flexible adaptation to changing professional environment, self-assessment, self-development and career making.

Problems of youth education, economic socialization, social development and engagement in social and economic life are in the focus of attention of different sciences. Socio-economic changes and the development of a socially oriented economy in Ukraine require the development of youth economic culture, which would promote their economic activities and allow assessing these activities from the perspective of social benefit and morality, rather than economic profitability.

Analysis of latest publications. The essential characteristics of students' competitiveness have been addressed, among others, by I. Bogomolova, S. Borisenko, N. Borisova, N. Dyachenko, R. Krivtsov, L. Kurzayeva, M. Lebedev, A. Romanovsky, V. Shapovalov, R. Fathutdinov, the structure and characteristics of competitive personality have been studied by V. Andreev, T. Andriyako, N. Borysova, L. Mitina, S. Hazova), the distinctive features of students' competitiveness development have been investigated by a number of scholars, including V. Bondar, S. Borisenko, I. Saratseva, O. Tarakanova, V. Hapilova.

Different aspects of economic culture have been investigated by sociologists, economists, educators and psychologists, who represented different scientific schools. In particular, they have been studied by P. Heyne, A. Smith, A. Peccei, A. Maslow, F. von Hayek, D. McClelland, F. Hertzberg, R. Ruttiger and T. Peter.

Objectives. An important way of vocational training modernization is its diversification, all-sided development and deep integration of all subsystems and educational processes. Modernization of vocational training is caused by the need to resolve the existing conflicts between the need for a variety of educational services and corporatism, departmental disunity of educational institutions and their isolation in content, organization and staff. Therefore, modernization of higher vocational training is impossible without its diversification.

Discussion. With the expansion of academic freedoms, autonomy and variability, institutions of higher learning are able to change their strategy of managing the process of training competitive specialists through the updated content, methods and forms of management of this process and appropriate organizational and educational support.

At the same time, despite diverse studies, researchers have only partially revealed the issues of managing the process of training competitive transport industry specialists and do not take into account the current diversification of educational processes, which create new mechanisms for the management of individual

competitiveness development and put forward new requirements for professionals' competitiveness.

An important way of education diversification is the cooperation between the academic community and business partners and employers [4].

This cooperation includes university management, teaching, technical development, formation of new university units, establishment of formal ties with organizations, business community and the industrial sector, as well as provides for continuous analysis of the needs for training programs and training of competitive professionals.

Close and long-term cooperation between universities and employers implies the development and updating of students' profession-relevant competencies to meet the needs of both the labor market and the requirements of university training programs. Employers' supervision of students during their university studies in accordance with the agreements with universities provides active mutually beneficial interactions between universities, employers and student (future employees). This results in employers' finding the best future employees, graduates' getting guaranteed employment, and universities' having reliable partners who promote their development, which is based on demand and supply, being the basic law of competitiveness. The main objectives of the joint work of organizations, businesses and universities in training future specialists is developing students' decision-making skills, responsibility for their actions, professional knowledge and economic culture [6].

The cooperation between universities, their partners and employers allows the universities to monitor their graduates' careers and professional and personal competitiveness development. Today, university graduates' careers and competitiveness determine the reputation of the university at the labor market. For university applicants and their parents, the most convincing indicators of the university rank (and thus, quality of training) are its graduates' social and financial statuses.

Monitoring of university graduates' career growth is needed by universities not only to perform PR-tasks, but also to assess their work. In addition, the analysis of graduates' careers allows understanding the dynamics of the labor market for adjusting university relationships with business partners [11].

In the narrow sense, a career is associated with an individual's work and professional life. The main questions to be answered by university management include: What determines the choice of profession? What determines the direction, speed and duration of career making? What do students consider professionally important? What are students' professional needs and aspirations? How much are the graduates satisfied with career opportunities? What social and/or personal factors affect career making?

Successful university graduates' careers play an important role in positioning universities at the market, assessing the quality of university teaching and training, shaping university images, assessing the employers' demand for university graduates, etc.

However, with the development of modern technology and higher requirements for employees, university graduates should possess such unique competitive advantages that would make employers select them. Besides a university degree, the determining factors here may also include knowledge of foreign languages, another university degree, post-graduate degree, awards, diplomas and certificates of advanced training, etc.

The main competitive advantage of specialists at the labor market is their professional experience and the ability to apply the acquired theoretical knowledge to practice. Most employers prefer experienced professionals, rather than young unexperienced university graduates. Therefore, guaranteed employment is critical for university graduates, because their lack of professional experience can be made up for by their professional potential and intellectual abilities [6].

Competitive professionals should have good knowledge of self-marketing, self-management, image policy, etc. A job-seeker acts as a creator and seller of his/her own workforce. In order to get a prestigious, well-paid job, a job-seeker must know how to offer themselves at the job market and what employers want.

Besides, he/she should have a good strategy of job-finding (providing a winning information about him/herself and demonstrating good interviewee skills) and be a good self-manager.

Competitive professionals should be autonomous, and therefore, should use non-traditional work styles, be stress-resistant, reasonable non-conformists, purposeful and independent decision makers.

Besides, in our opinion, competitive professionals should be creative, i.e. they should take interest in the new and unknown, have developed intuition, be willing to take challenges, be resourceful and curious. According to N. Bereznoi [3], it is creative freedom that allows a person to improve his/her living conditions, the environment and themselves.

Today's market economy is characterized by rapid changes in the market, labor activity and labor motivation. This requires the professionals to find the ways to achieve work goals. Because the traditional ways are sometimes ineffective or inappropriate, there is a need for new creative approaches to professions. This creativity implies finding of new, non-standard ways of solving professional problems and analyzing professional situations. Professional creativity may produce a new understanding of the content of work (new models, technologies and rules aimed at obtaining fundamentally new work results) and attract new consumers, etc. In any organization, individual creative and innovative abilities determine efficient professionals.

V. Hapilova [7] in her concept of self-efficacy argues that the main source of competitiveness are the actively developed knowledge and actions that allow workers to modify their own behaviors in accordance with the work tasks and situations. Individuals who realize their own effectiveness in rivalry, are better at carrying out complex tasks, than those who have doubts about their own capabilities. In addition, good work results improve self-esteem and strengthen readiness to solve other problems, whereas the focus on their own incompetence reduces work efficiency, motivation and competitiveness.

Discussing emotional intelligence, E. Nosenko [12] highlights its various aspects, noting that it is a very useful criterion for staff selection and a feature to develop. The

researcher shared the views of S. Kagan, who distinguished two forms of emotional intelligence: interpersonal and intrapersonal.

Interpersonal intelligence involves personal ability to: resolve conflicts (conflict negotiation and mediation, consensus-building, understanding and recognition of other people's emotions, tolerance, adequate non-verbal emotional expression); interact (to establish good relationship with colleagues and clients, to maintain friendly relations, to manage emotions while interacting with others; to understand people's motives, to show sympathy); work in a team (organize team members, plan their own and team activities, motivate others, cooperate with people, promote professional activities through positive emotions); be communicative (to cause enthusiasm, sympathy, influence people at the emotional and subconscious level, to be open to new experiences and to be able to defend their own views). In other words, it implies personal independence, which is manifested in competitive relationship with colleagues, given age, education, gender and professionalism differences.

Intrapersonal intelligence involves individuals' meta-knowledge (self-observation, awareness of their own emotions and feelings, regulation of their own emotional states in accordance with behavioral norms, morality and self-reflection), self-esteem (formation of an adequate model of self, respect for the individuality and uniqueness of others), placement of authorities and goals (intuitive anticipation, prediction of the consequences (in particular professional), self-motivation, work self-regulation, awareness of people's spiritual needs and internal states); self-regulation (regulation of their own emotional states; living in line with their own self-image and professional priorities, behaving in a way that demonstrates independence; self-analysis) [8].

We also believe that competitive professionals should have highly developed self-regulation, be able to prioritize work goals and objectives, be efficient team workers and good communicators.

Researchers often underestimate entrepreneurship, economic culture and ability to take risks as important attributes of competitive professionals. These personal attributes are especially needed in the changing Ukrainian economy and society. Besides, it is important for professionals to know not only economic, technological and organizational aspects of risk, but also

themselves and their own abilities in making effective decisions in the situations of risk.

Competitive professionals should be purposeful and determined, i.e. they should persistently pursue professionally important goals, compare work results with the required effort, control their life, create their own success and use every possibility to achieve the goal.

At the labor market, young professionals unevenly adapt to new conditions. Some of them become leaders, quickly following productive models of economic behaviors, while others get stuck at the stage of their resources mobilization and slowly adapt to new rules of professional activities. Still others even remain at the 'shock' stage being unable to produce a distinct line of rational behaviors in the face of fierce competition at the labor market. Therefore, a competitive personality must be able to adapt to a professional competitive environment.

Given that competitiveness is a characteristic of the labor market, one of the ways of competitiveness development is the professional training which teaches individuals social self-study and professional mobility [1]. The information society puts new requirements for individuals to be effective socially, professionally and personally: they should be well-educated and competent in related professions, economically cultured, socially active and professionally mobile. Therefore, it is important to develop students' professional knowledge, economic culture, skills and abilities by means of formal and informal education, which involves giving additional university services for students.

In view of this, the objective of university management is joining efforts of students and teachers for achieving common goals. Management of any university process is a targeted influence of management agents (teachers, tutors, dean staff, administration) on management objects (students), which results in the objects' quality change.

The development of efficient professionals should be based on the interests of the state and the individual. Today Ukraine, like most European countries, witnesses professionalization of specialists. In the context of the formation of a pan-European educational space, the demand for extended professionalism of different specialists has been put forward.

Vocational education has an opportunity to

manage (in the broad sense) the education of the future and develop its ability to respond quickly and clearly to the changing market needs in the system of vocational training. A modern professional should possess a number of profession-relevant personal qualities, united by the concept of 'quality formula'. Thus, Japanese researchers include in this formula morality, intelligence, skill, physical perfection, etc., while French researchers - professionalism, initiative, creativity, adaptation, dynamism, etc.

Exploring the problem of education management as a means of competitive professionals training, S. Rachina distinguishes the following factors in effective education management: clear goals and objectives of education and a clear division of functions between the agents of the

education. [13].

Thus, professionals' competitiveness is their advantages over other similar professionals due to their work result quality, which is most important for the position of their company/organization at the market.

In our opinion, professionals' competitiveness is not only their meeting the requirements of profession, but also their meeting the requirements of the employers and labor market for education, qualifications, age, gender and professional and personal attributes. To put it differently, professionals' competitiveness shows to what extent their age, professionalism, physiological and social characteristics correspond to the employment requirements of the labor market, which reflect the demand for and supply of certain specialists.

Conclusions

Competitiveness determines individuals' professional success in market conditions. Professionals' competitiveness is defined as their complex and multilevel property that allows them, in accordance with their individual traits, interests and needs, to gain advantages in competitive relationships in the chosen professional activity. Competitive professionals are career-oriented individuals with a strong need for success, knowledge, professional development and creative self-expression; they are independent decision-makers and actors, emotionally intelligent, economically cultured, adaptive to professional competitive environment, realistic and self-critical. As an integrative characteristic, competitiveness combines the realized and potential qualities of an individual, which not only meet social requirements, but also contribute to his/her success in a rapidly changing environment and promote his/her self-confidence and harmony with him/herself and the world. Professionals' competitiveness is the degree of satisfaction of employers' needs, which manifests itself in the professional activities and all spheres of human life.

Given the content of educational system management, in particular, professionals' competitiveness development management, as well as the objectives, content and forms of competitive professionals' university training, professionals' competitiveness development management can be defined as the activity of the management subsystem that is aimed at creating conditions for the effective functioning and development of university in order to improve students' competitiveness.

The managers of students' competitiveness development are the university administration, deans, heads of departments, teachers, employees, employers, heads of public organizations and student leaders. The effectiveness of students' competitiveness development management depends on the active interaction between the managers and students.

University management should eliminate, or better, prevent everything that is in the way of competitive professionals' development.

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