The components of the social environment of a modern university affecting on a personal professional development: the experience of foreign countries

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Abstract

This paper discusses the influence of the social environment of the university on the process of students' professional development. The paper reveals the concept of «the social environment of the university», describes the main elements existed in higher education. The aim of the study is to identify the components of the social environment of the university affecting the professional development and the formation of the student's personality in higher education. Based on the analysis of foreign universities some components of the social environment of the university have been identified: value-oriented, relational, informational and spatial. The paper is aimed at sociologists, teachers, and psychological researchers, involved in the professional development of specialists in higher education.

Keywords: Social environment of the university, components of the social environment, students, professional development of student's personality, foreign system of higher professional education;

1 Introduction

In recent years, the significance of the constructive influence of the social environment of the university on students' professional development has become particularly relevant. The young person's ideological position is formed in the period of study; the norms of behavior and communication, the ways of professional activities for being competitive in the labor market are mastered. The impact of the university environment is resulted not only in general development of the personality, but also in the formation of professionally significant competences (the ability to make decisions independently, to develop and improve yourself creatively, to act effectively in complex and non-standard situations). The social environment in the conditions of the information society becomes a zone for the generation of innovative technologies and practices. It can be explained by the fact that the modern economy needs specialists who can work in conditions of uncertainty and risks, be ready for continuous teamwork and who are focused on innovation and continuous self-improvement of professional skills.

2 Analysis of the social environment in higher education

The mechanisms for the influence of the social environment on the development of personality were the subject of domestic and foreign research carried outin various historical periods (G.

Allport, J.-J. Russo, G. Manfred, L.D. Bergts, O.Yu. Melnikova, S.A. Nurmukhambetova, A.A. Khutorskoy and others). In many studies the role of the social environment is important for a grown person; however, this phenomenon in relation to students has not been studied. This is due to the fact that the existing teaching experience of universities is, for the most part, fragmented. This situation indicates an insufficient understanding of the components of the social environment of the university and the underestimation of university role in the personal development of future professionals.

The social environment is presented as a significant space of the vital activity, in which the process of a personality formation, its development and self-development are formed in the interaction with other people, communities, cultural values and traditions [1].

The structure of the social environment includes social, material and spiritual conditions in which the self-realization of the personality takes place. On the one hand, the social environment should be perceived as a significant factor in the development of personality, on the other hand, it is an object of pedagogical influence. As a result, it becomes a means of education within the university community.

The features of the social environment of the university largely affect the professional development of the student. The possibility of students' self-realization, their professional intentions, career expectations and social success depend on the specificity and conditions of this social environment.

The social environment of the university, like any system, is a synergistic interaction of four main elements, each of which is a system:

• Professional and cultural community, i.e. people with their needs, interests, goals, knowledge, ideas, emotions, etc.;

• Social connections – interactions or relationships that help people to realize their needs, goals and interests, etc. They can be formal and informal, vertical and horizontal, positive and negative;

• Social norms - various rules, according to which social connections are built and social processes are implemented;

• Social processes – any changes that can be found in the above-mentioned elements [2].

The social environment in higher education is the result of a targeted impact, the source of which is the university administrators. Their task is to develop a model of the formation of the social environment and its consistent implementation in the educational process. It is aimed at forming a set of social and individual-personal qualities that determine student's willingness and ability to interact in society productively, to develop successfully.

The universal qualities of the social environment are explained by the fact that it has certain boundaries, determined in time and space. At the same time, its structural elements depend on the functioning specifics of an educational institution, the history of the industry, corporate traditions, as well as regional or national-cultural characteristics.

This paper analyzes foreign systems of higher professional education. According to the report of Universitas 21 (U21), the social background of foreign universities is aimed at developing humanistic values, understanding and professional abilities of a student's personality [5]. Foreign universities have their own characteristics, which have been formed for many centuries under the influence of significant components of the social environment: value-oriented, relational, informational, subject-spatial [3].

The value-oriented component is a set of tasks, goals, values of training and upbringing of students, which are reflected in the educational process (in curricula, programs, student's books, in the activities of teachers). The main task of foreign universities is to prepare a qualified worker

who can be competitive in the labor market, responsible, competent, fluent in his/her profession and be ready for professional growth, professional and social mobility. The decomposition of the goals of higher professional education is reflected in the state regulatory document of a university.

Leading universities in the World University Rankings 2016-2017 such as California Institute of Technology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Nanyang Technological University, Stanford University, ETH Zurich – Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurichand others focus on the «transparent» field of active interaction [4]. The relations in foreign universities are built on the horizontal and vertical levels. The professional development of a student largely depends on his/her participation in the management of an educational organization and his/her influence on making important decisions. Features of the relational component of the social environment are reflected in the activities of student government. Students who are members of a self-governing body are organizers of the processes of goal-setting and planning of various types of activities at the university; they provide interaction of academic groups with educational, social-pedagogical, administrative services, departments, and directorate. One of the significant elements of the value-targeted component is the comprehensive program «AIESEC», the aim of which is the social and pedagogical support of the process of students' social creativity. The comprehensive program «AIESEC» involves the participation of students in various types of creative, scientific, research activities with various forms of its organization. Depending on the direction, the participation of students can be either individual or group, collective. The students themselves become the main organizers of the program, and teachers and specialists act as consultants and coordinators of the work. This program is implemented annually and during the year assumes a certain logic, dynamics of extracurricular activities of students, aimed at the active development of youth leadership, personal growth and professional competencies.

The information component in foreign universities is a source of receiving, storing, transmitting various information. It includes the implementation of educational programs through information and communication technologies. With their help, the tasks of educational and methodological support of the educational and educational process; information support of students, graduate students, teachers in various areas are solved. The University of Berlin's Center for Digital Systems (Center für Digitale Systeme (CeDiS) has managed to organize the support of the educational process most efficiently and systematically with information technologies. The Center assists in the use of digital technologies in educational and scientific activities (e-learning (ELearning): information boards, a website, social networking pages, electronic science (E-Science), web-publishing, multimedia archives, audiovisual products, etc. [5]. These technologies allow students to navigate the infrastructure of the university successfully and receive the necessary information in a short time in full.

A distinctive feature of the subject-spatial component of the social environment of American higher education systems is the presence of its own infrastructure in each building: a library, a reading room, a computer class, a resource center, blocks of educational and social-educational services, classrooms, assembly halls, and a museum. This creates the conditions for the formation of their own student subcultures and traditions. The development of the subject-spatial component is particularly influenced by the external relations of universities with an international network of organizations consisting of various institutions, universities, development partners and knowledge-sharing platforms. For example, along with the usual curricula, interdisciplinary events are organized for students in conjunction with small and medium-sized enterprises, where teachers and specialists act as advisors (curators) in carrying out projects. On the basis of universities, various forms of organizing scientific and research activities are actively used:

scientific propaedeutic courses and proseminars; research projects; problem-oriented conferences; project technologies in small research groups [6, 7].

3 Conclusion

Thus, the social environment of the university is an element created for the development of the student's personality and the regulation of value-semantic processes that contribute to the formation of professionally significant competences. The analysis of foreign universities shows that the design of the social environment directly depends on the specifics of the interaction between the administration and student government bodies, the educational and upbringing component of the university. In addition, it is reflected in the curricula, plans, projects of the university, in the organization of interaction with external partners. Interdeterministic components of the environment create conditions for the formation of the ethics of interaction between future specialists and professional communication. Besides, students receive managerial and organizational experience, the ability to work in a team.

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