

Conference Paper

The Purpose of Cultural Education in the Conditions of Russian Social and Cultural Modernization

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Abstract

Based on the theory of socio-cultural modernization and the concept of the human development, the author analyzes the processes taking place in education. The issue of the prospects of cultural education, the tasks of which are revealed in the context of acquiring the skills of the XXI century, becomes urgent.

Keywords: socio-cultural modernization, education, cultural studies, cultural education, human capital.

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1. Introduction

The constantly changing conditions of modern life necessitate transformations of all the structural elements of the social system. Modernization processes of the last twenty years in Russia have indicated the diversity of changes, and their effectiveness is being doubted. The problem of the need for reforms in education is closely related to the response to the challenges of the time: the ability of the system to provide adequate answers and ensure self-development. Reflection on the processes taking place in education ranks as one of the urgent issues.

The research into the issue of educational practices makes sense in line with the general analysis of modernizing society.

The article is aimed at defining the goals of cultural education in the context of the ideas of modernization and development of human capital.

2. Methodology

The research is based on the conceptual principles of the cultural-activity psychology (L. S. Vygotsky, A. N. Leontiev, A. R. Luria) and social constructionism (P. Berger, T. Lukman, K. Gergen), and this contributes to the understanding of education as a special social

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space in which the process of learning/awareness/acceptance of cultural values is under way. The educational practices are interpreted by means of analytical methods (expert evaluation method and extrapolation method).

3. Discussion

Modernization as a process of renewal of social systems in order to bring in line with the requirements of the time is well studied by historians and sociologists. Conceptually, the ideas of modernization go back to the understanding of the transition from agrarian to industrial society (K. Marx, M. Weber, and O. Cont) and are described in the logic of “jump” in societal development. The catch-up nature, unevenness and implementation “from above” are usually called as specific features of the Russian modernization. Broadly speaking, the historical experience of the Russian modernization is described as inconsistent, cyclical, fragmented, and incomplete (L. I. Semennikova [5], L. V. Shepotko [7], etc.).

An important clarification in the understanding of modernization is the emphasis on its socio-cultural basis. We accept the opinion of N. E. Tikhonova who defines socio-cultural modernization as the formation of a certain type of consciousness and the behavioral practices of individuals determined by it. The process occurs in the internal unity with the formation of corresponding social institutions [5, 6]. Another thing is that in the Russian context institutional transformations dominate over changes in behavioral practices and do not always lead to the formation of a new (modernized/innovative) type of consciousness (The issue of the nature of the modernized or innovative consciousness requires separate consideration. Within the scope of the research, it should be noted that under the modernized or innovative type of consciousness we understand the readiness and ability of a person and/or social group to make conscious changes in accordance with the processes taking place in society. This type of consciousness can be called “open”, that is one with a focus on development, as opposed to “closed”, which is inflexible, with a focus on maintaining the status quo. The research team led by N. E. Tikhonova defined 21 indicators of the degree of modernization of consciousness and behavior of the Russians [6, 11]).

Criticism of the forced modernization “from above”, notably its focus on the transformation of technology and the introduction of scientific and technical ideas in isolation from the emancipation of the individual and the development of human capital, can be attributed to many phenomena that have had a negative impact on what is occurring in

the Russian education. In this regard, there is a need to readdress the ideas on which the modernization of education was grounded.

Researchers connect the prospects of development of society with radical changes in education. A. G. Asmolov in the article with the symbolic title “Strategy and methodology of socio-cultural modernization of education” rightly emphasized the role of education in ensuring the competitiveness of the country, its social consolidation on the basis of the developed values. The key concepts of socio-cultural modernization of education are “formation of human identity in a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional and multicultural state”, “ensuring social mobility of the individual, the quality and availability of education as factors reducing the risks of social stratification”, “construction of social norms of tolerance and mutual trust between the members of different social groups, religious and national cultures”, “successful socialization of the younger generation”, “improving the competitiveness of the individual, the society and the state” [1, 5-6]. The definition of the vectors of education development made it possible to notice fundamental disadvantages of the ongoing reforms: disregard for motivating individuals, negative social experience, dominance of economism when modernizing only one branch of social life in isolation from the whole system.

A. G. Asmolov brought forward a national program of socio-cultural modernization of education, which has such qualitative characteristics as openness (“supra-departmental” nature), advanced development (education leads to the development of society, including the creation of labor markets, despite the fact that in the short-term vision there may be “redundancy of education”), and innovative management.

Partly, the ideas voiced by the education reformers laid the foundation for the emergence of the new federal state educational standards (hereinafter – FSES HE) and were embodied in the competence approach and the national Project On education. However, the decades of reforms have indicated the irresistibility of the crisis and internal instability of the educational space.

In practice, there is a large-scale project of socio-cultural modernization of education which has been transformed into a list of activities, probably significant per se, but not transforming education into a new quality.

The success of socio-cultural modernization is possible if human capital (a set of skills, knowledge, abilities and other qualities embodied in people and contributing to personal, social and economic well-being [4, 4]) is purposefully developed. According to the theory of human capital, put forward in the second half of the XX century (T. Schultz, G. Becker, R. Solow, etc.), achievements in the field of education are considered as one

of the tools that ensure the development of society and the innovative nature of the economy [3].

One can say that the possibility of human capital development as a source of innovation and technical changes defines the promising implementation of certain modernization strategies (According to the value of the human capital index calculated by the World Bank for 157 countries, Russia ranks 34th and is included in the group of countries with a high level of human capital [4, 5]). Therefore, when calculating the human capital index, it is suggested taking into account how education contributes to the development of “flexible skills”, or “skills of the XXI century”, that is functional literacy of students and fostering of positive attitudes, motivation for learning and readiness to live in an era of change.

In this regard, the issue of the promising cultural education becomes particularly relevant.

In the conceptual provisions of the modernization of education, the words “culture” and “values” sound quite convincing, and the cultural approach is declared as the development of the principle of cultural conformity, formulated by A. Diesterweg. In the published Concept for the draft federal Law On culture, culture is considered as “a social phenomenon that enables transmitting to new generations the system of values, concepts of ethics and morality, inherent in the Russian civilization and giving the opportunity to observe, understand and appreciate the beauty and imaginatively absorb the world outside” [2].

One would like to positively describe the cultural vector of education, and more broadly – the social policy, but the life experience shows the opposite. Ideally, one should speak about the unity of education and culture, their interdependence which creates the basis for social development, but in practice education and culture are separated on a sector-specific basis, and they “intersect” almost exclusively in the situation of the narrowly understood creative initiatives.

The orientation to the person with the developed critical thinking and capable to productive communication and creative activity has been declared, but in practice there is a substitution of concepts: instead of orientation to the formation of “the person of culture” there is a project “the person-machine”.

With the society increasingly immersed in consumerism, the culturologists reveal the mechanisms of cultural development and frankly talk about what the people are, what kind of world they live in and which values, in fact, are priorities. The pedagogical potential of such activity is extremely high. Cultural Studies is a reflection not only on the past of culture, but also, primarily, on the present, which implies a critical attitude to

reality. It considers the present in the context of the history of culture, and personality – in the perspective of development, setting the horizon of understanding the relevant modernity.

In this sense, cultural education is much broader than the subject Cultural Studies. This is an opportunity for the development of outlook and the formation of self-reflection on one's own reasons. However, the transformations taking place in cultural education not for the better (reduction of academic hours, "washing out" of the subject from the university curricula, cutting the enrollment of students on vocational training programs) reveal a deep contradiction between the declaration and the social practice.

One of the most important tasks of cultural education is the readiness to participate in the social and humanitarian expertise of various spheres of public life. It is significant that among the numerous experts who discuss education, there is no place for cultural expertise, which provides assessment of what is happening in the context of the formation of the value basis of the individual.

4. Conclusions

The problem of socio-cultural modernization of the Russian education largely depends on the prospects of cultural education: the preservation of cultural education as a field of training; the cultural content of universal competencies of specialists in various fields; the cultural component of general and further education of children and young people. The timeliness of the issues raised about the importance of the cultural vector in the socio-cultural sphere can make a conversation about the "civilizational code of the nation", which culture transmits, and not only verbally.

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