

Adults' Meaning-Making during Vocational Training

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Abstract

The relevance of the research problem is defined by practical and theoretical components. Evidence of theoretical and practical significance, reliability of scientific knowledge about the nature of learning activity contrasts with the real state of affairs in educational psychology denoting the insufficient number of studies on character of motives of adults' educational activity in the system of postgraduate education, "motivational conflict" between the basic high education and the following one acquired at the faculty of vocational retraining. The purpose of the article is to identify the content and professional nature of adults' learning activities during special vocational retraining, its dependence on a number of psychological factors, the most important of which is meaning-making. Meaning-making is the establishment of links between the results of learning and the motives stimulating this activity, i.e. between the objective of training activities and its motive. The leading method of study of this problem is the ascertaining experiment. In the result a quite close relationship between motives of educational activity and the fundamental needs and attitudes to learning are revealed. The factor of effectiveness of adults' learning in the period of additional vocational education is the relationship of motives of educational activity with the need for knowledge, affiliation, achievement and dominance, which determines the "strength" of perceived learning activities and obtaining of successful learning outcomes, attitude to learning as a whole. Article proceedings are valuable for organizers of vocational retraining of educational psychologists, academics, as well as valuable in the development of recommendations for policy-making in additional education in the area of "Practical Psychology in Education".

Keywords: adults vocational retraining, motives of training activities, training efficiency

1. Introduction

The social practice needs for development of increasingly of problems, especially the motives of training and labor activities, and motives for choosing the profession. The issues of motives research as a factor of the adults training effectiveness is difficult to solve, without relying on the psychological essence of the process of their becoming, keeping and development. After the motives of adults training activities arose, they become an important link in regulating the future of new professional activities.

It is equally important to examine the features of conscious motives of adults training activities, affecting the efficiency of training during the vocational retraining.

The interrelation of motives of adults training activities with the needs for knowledge, affiliation, achievement and domination acts as a factor of training efficiency. The presence of that interrelation defines the "power" of conscious training activities and the obtaining of successful training outcomes, and the structure of attitude to the whole training.

As the methodological basis for such research the theory of professional formation and consciousness of Klimov (2004), and Gabdreiev (2001), the concept of professional identity of Pryazhnikov (1999) acted, as well the modern research data of Salikhova (2013), and Bayanova (2011).

2. Materials and Methods

The questionnaire developed by the staff of the Department of Pedagogical and Medical Psychology I in the MMI named after Sechenov-Yu, Orlov, and Bestuzhev-Lada (1974), was used as the study basis. To get an idea about the predominant and conscious motives of training in the first versions construction of "raw" questionnaires designed to the followed expert and experimental treatment, we used the method of conversation.

The “raw” questionnaires were subjected to the validation by the method of known groups, which included the trainees with the “low” and “high” needs, identified by the mentioned above methods. The final version of the questionnaire included those statements that have a frequency of choose not less than 10% and no more than 90%. Then that list was subjected to expertise by the psychologists.

To protect the results from the distortions caused by the desire to appear in a better light before the examiner, 10 statements taken from the scale of lies in the MMPI questionnaire were placed in the questionnaire. Trainees, who received a high score on a scale of lies, were excluded from the total experimental array, included in the statistical processing.

Our list of motives turned out to be exhaustive, since among 1592 people surveyed by us, only 14 made postscripts, but even those motives were the synonyms of data in the list.

In order to determine what influence the motive has on the training activities we used the following interaction detection mode: If the academic performance of those, who chose this motive, is higher than of those, who didn't choose this motive, and if this difference is statistically significant, then we claim that the motive has a positive influence on the training success in getting a new profession. If it turns out that the academic performance of those, who chose this motive, is statistically significantly lower than of those, who didn't choose the motive, that motive has a negative influence on the academic performance. If the academic performance in both groups, chose and didn't choose this motive would be the statistically identical, homogeneous, i.e. the differences are not statistically significant, the given motive has no influence on the training activities, i.e. it's neutral (Table 1).

As a dependent variable we took the numerical characteristics of respective groups, which have a certain sign of academic achievement, satisfaction with training and the like. Those characteristics tend to be expressed in percentages. We have applied the nonparametric Pearson's chi-square, because it doesn't require the normal distribution of data. The Chi-square values were calculated by us not only for the tables in general, but for its columns, what gave us more options to interpret the data.

Table 1. Influence of motive depending on the academic achievement

Trainees groups	Total of trainees	Number of achievers only with an excellent mark
Chose the motive	89	15.0 %
Didn't choose the motive	72	5.2 %
Expected number	161	10.1 %
Pearson's chi-square	63.24	$P < 0.01$

The differences in the number of honors in both groups of 15% and 5% are due to the sign on which the grouping of data occurred. It is statistically significant, since the criterion of Pearson's Chi-square reaches 63.24, at one degree of freedom. The probability of error when dropping the null hypothesis is quite low $P < 0.001$.

In what follows the assessment of the influence of motive's choice to any variable we will made in accordance with the specified model.

3. Results and Discussions

The meaning of motives is objectively established as a result of “what the need is embodied in the given motive”; because, on the one hand, we can say about the need only in the language of motives (Leontev, 1971, 2005; Petrovsky, 1977, etc.), on the other hand, the content of motive becomes defined, namely, “thanks to” the need. One and the same motive may embody different needs. It is important to know the qualitative and quantitative process characteristics of transformation the needs into the motives during the vocational retraining of adult. In accordance with that approach we investigated the connection of each of the 27 selected by us motives of training activities with the needs. The choosing of needs is conditioned by the fact that the studies have shown the influence of needs for knowledge and achievements on the level of academic success. The need for affiliation was studied by the foreign psychologists widely enough (Murray, 1998; Nuttin, 1990; Veroff, 1998; Atkinson, 1997, etc.). According to the studies of Orlov and Tvorogov (1988) it has an indirect influence on the efficiency of adults training activities and is considered as an external with respect to it. However, according to the studies data of Orlov (1976), the internal and external needs detect the interrelation among themselves.

The influence of the need for achievements on the efficiency of training activities is studied quite a long time in Psychology.

Its role in the motivation of activities is more fundamentally studied by the foreign authors, in particular by McClelland (1998), Atkinson (1997), Nuttin (1990), Maslow (1994) and others, as well by such domestic scientists as Orlov (1976), Wiseman (2002) and others. The need for achievements by itself promotes the increase of efficiency of activities, including the training activities.

The need for dominance is seen in the desire of the subject to have the active influence on the social situation, behavior, thinking, tastes and activities of other people.

This need was studied by such foreign psychologists as: Murray (1998), Veroff (1998), as well by such domestic scientists as: Jacobson (1969), Chkhartishvili (1958), and Orlov (1976).

A special feature of the need for domination is that it can be considered as a desire for leadership and as a dominance, which is characterized by the authority and rude selfish behavior. Among the psychologists there is no uniform scientific understanding of the need for domination. For example, P. M. Jacobson considers the domination as a self-affirmation, although this term has a broader definition than the dominance (1969).

Sh. N. Chkhartishvili means by the need for domination the desire of the individual to freedom and independence, as well as the need for social control (1969). H. Murray—as the need for authorities (1998).

For the purposes of this study, we mean by the needs for dominance the desire of the adult personality to control and manage the training activities, social situation and interpersonal influence during the vocational retraining.

For the further study we made the grouping of motives (Table 2). Some motives have entered into the various groups, for example the motive of preservation the status “I do not want to be among the worst and slow learners”—it is both the motive of personal prestige and preservation of the status. This grouping of motives was prepared according to the content assessment of representation of fundamental needs for them and by the independent characteristics.

Table 2. Grouping and prevalence of conscious motives of training activities

Group of motives	Motive “I’m trying to learn better, because ...”	Probability to choose the motive
1	2	3
I.	The cognition of new things brings joy	0.63
Cognitive motives	I like new things, which I learn	0.47
	I just like studying	0.36
II.	New knowledge will be useful in the future, in the professional activities of the psychologist	0.72
Professional motives	To work with people, we must have a comprehensive and deep knowledge	0.80
	I like my new chosen profession	0.80
	In the future I want to become a good specialist in the field of Psychological Counseling	0.84
III.	In the future I think to do the scholarly work in the specialty	0.35
Creative achievement motive		
IV.	I want to be more useful for people in the future	0.79
Broad social motives with the altruistic directivity	I want to be a respected group member	0.34
	I do not want to fail my group	0.30
	I want to our group be a real intellectual team	0.28
	I study for my career	0.16

V.	I want to get a diploma of retraining to have the economic benefits in the future	0.15
Social motives, reflecting the personal intentions of:	I do not want to be among the slow learners	0.36
1. Personal experiences	I want to be among the best	0.29
	I want to be in a good standing with the faculty members	0.11
2. Preserving and enhancing the status	Once at the Faculty of vocational retraining, I'm forced to learn to complete it	0.09
	I need to receive a diploma of vocational retraining	0.11
	I continue the family tradition. My family members have learned throughout their lives	0.10
	It's easier to get into the professional community for the educated person	0.10
	It's a pleasure to bring joy to myself with my own success	0.54
3. Self-fulfillment	I want to develop my mind	0.56
4. Self-affirmation	The knowledge give the self confidence	0.77
5. Material motives	I want to receive a higher salary in the future	0.55
	My level of material security in the future depends on my knowledge	0.26

Those studies show us a close connection between the motives of training activities and the fundamental human needs and its relation to learning. At that, the following psychological features were revealed:

- The verbal formulation of motive and its connection with the need can't be detected by the verbal expression of motive and the need's identify. For example, the verbal prestige motive "I want to be among the best" shall be positively related to the need for domination, but in reality it is not. Therefore the study of motives, even the conscious one, always requires the accurate measurements;
- The "power" of motive, its "energy" is determined by that need, which is expressed, recognized in such motive in the adult;
- The study of the activation "power" of motive, its impelling and guiding function can't be understood solely on the basis of the situation in which the motive operates, this also requires the knowledge of that need, which is realized, finds expression in the certain motives of adults training activities during the vocational retraining;
- The motivational structure of attitudes towards the training consists of the conscious motives.

4. Conclusion

The analysis and systematization of ideas about the theory of motive have shown that the motives of adults training activities can be considered as the intentions, related to responding to the needs for getting a new profession of the subject. The special group of motives that actually operate in the adults training activities during the vocational retraining are: cognitive motives; professional; creative achievement; social motives, reflecting the personal intentions (personal prestige, preservation of status, self-fulfillment, self-affirmation); and material.

The interrelation of motives of adults training activities with the needs for knowledge, affiliation, achievement and domination acts as a factor of training efficiency. The presence of that interrelation defines the "power" of conscious training activities and obtaining of successful training outcomes, and the structure of attitude to the training a whole.

The motives of adults training activities are related not only to the academic success, but also with other indicators of the training activities efficiency: reduction of its difficulties (cognitive, creative achievement); satisfaction with the training (cognitive, professional, social motives with the personal directivity, broad social motives), reduction of time spent on achieving the training goals (cognitive, broad social motives with the altruistic directivity), development of positive attitudes towards their future profession during training (cognitive, professional, broad social motives with the altruistic directivity). The negative motives of satisfaction with training and attitude towards the new profession is the motive of preservation the status.

The educational environment that minimizes the coefficient of "unevenness of motive", which characterizes the spread degree between the needs and satisfaction with training of adults, promotes the adequate organization of

professional retraining and the “motivational conflict” problem solving between the basic higher education and the subsequent education.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the motives of adults training activities have the dynamic nature and are determined by the consciousness of primary vocational training, content and forms of training activities during the professional retraining.

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