

Technologies for Assessing the Quality of Preschool Education

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Abstract: The article discusses the quality problems of preschool education and analyzes the processes of methodological support for the professional activities of young specialists of preschool educational organizations. The possible nature of the relationship between the quality management of pedagogical activity in the system of preschool education and the quality of the results of pedagogical activity is analyzed. During an empirical study, the authors analyze the responses of students studying at the Altai State Pedagogical University (Barnaul, Russia) and review the answers of specialists in the field of preschool education to define the concept of “quality of preschool education.” As part of a questionnaire survey and an associative experiment, the authors provide and discuss highly valuable results on the the quality of pedagogical activity of young teachers working in preschool educational organizations. In addition, the article focuses on the possibility of implementing the main provisions of the Program of Scientific and Methodological Support for the Professional Activities of Young specialists in the Altai region of the Siberian Federal District (Russia).

1. Introduction

With the implementation of a number of regulatory documents in the system of Russian education, the direction of the vector of state educational policy towards weakening the role of the state and strengthening the importance of social order in determining the quality of education has become apparent. This provision is associated with a change in the paradigm of professional-pedagogical activity, which implies a transition from teaching pedagogy to developing, aimed at the formation of individual characteristics of students taking into account their self-determination and self-realization. The indicated positions actualize the identification and assessment of integral indicators of the quality of education.

The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature and practice indicates the absence of an unambiguous definition of the concept of “quality of preschool education,” as there is no generally accepted model for assessing the quality of educational results at the stage of preschool childhood. The relevance of this provision is confirmed by the international seminar on the topic “Improving the quality of preschool education in preschool educational organizations,” held on February 14-15, 2019, in Moscow. A regulation on the creation of a National Catalog of Preschool Education Quality Criteria was developed at the seminar. It was noted that the tool for assessing the quality of preschool education would fundamentally differ from the criteria applicable in the system of activity of a school or higher educational institutions.

In this regard, the need to justify our position in determining the quality of preschool education arose. The following requires clarification: principles, quality management conditions for preschool education, life quality indicators of preschool educational organizations, quality components (standards), the content of a comprehensive assessment of the quality of professional activity of preschool teachers.

A. M. Moiseev characterizes the concept of “quality” as an essential indicator of the success of the educational organization, the main system-forming task, and the direction of the management system in the educational organization [1].

T. I. Shamova, P. I. Tretyakov, believe that “the quality of education is the resultant of the following components: the needs of the individual and society, target priorities, the predicted process and the result” [2].

D. Sh. Matros, D. M. Polev, N. N. Melnikova understand the quality of education as “the ratio of goal and result, the measure of goal achievement” [3]. From this, it follows that we need to learn how to measure in equal units the goal set for the educational organization and the result achieved by this educational organization. Each property of the object, for example, graduates of a school, university, preschool educational institution, each indicator should have not only a qualitative but also a measurable quantitative characteristic (score, grade, percentage, level, coefficient, etc.).

We believe that “the management of the quality of education is a comprehensive and targeted impact on the educational process, the system of activity of the educational organization in order to achieve certain, pre-planned results in accordance with the mission of the educational organization; an interconnected hierarchy of characteristics and indicators of the state of an object that should be evaluated from the standpoint of education quality” [4].

Analysis of management practice suggests that its structural components allow us to highlight the following main aspects of the creation and effective implementation of the process of managing the quality of education in an educational organization:

- 1) The purpose of the educational process and professional-pedagogical activity should be as technologically advanced as possible. Pedagogical technologies are used for this;
- 2) Organization of systematic monitoring of the state of the educational and developing subject-spatial environment in the preschool educational organization, its impact on the development of the personality of children (students);
- 3) Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the content of the educational program in the integration of the activities of children centers for further education, activities and practices of interaction with parents and society.

The purpose of our study is to clarify the criteria for assessing the current and potential level of activity of a preschool educational organization from the standpoint of the quality of its results. In addition, we conduct an effective assessment of the professional activities of graduates of the Institute of Psychology and Pedagogy at the AltSPU, taking into account the implementation of the program for supporting the professional activities of young preschool education specialists.

We suggested that if graduates of a pedagogical university carried out a focused process of forming ideas about the quality of preschool education, this would help increase their motivation for high-quality pedagogical activity, creative self-realization at the beginning of their professional formation. From these positions, the management of the quality of education at a pedagogical university governs the connections between the properties, the specifics of the taught disciplines in the educational process, enriching the maturity characteristics of students in preparation for professional activities, as well as the indicators of their social, intellectual, and spiritual development, taking into account the implementation of the Program for Supporting the Professional Activities of Young Specialists in a preschool educational organization.

In our opinion, to assess the quality of education, it should be based on reliable and comparable data on the educational results achieved, their degree of compliance with the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standard for Preschool Education, and social and personal expectations of both parents and teachers.

2. Materials and Methods

Currently, there are many indicators of the quality of education. In our study, we conducted a comparative analysis of most of the proposed indicators, their correlation, and reduced all indicators to a minimum of integral quality indicators.

As part of our study, the survey was conducted among teachers of preschool educational institutions of the Altai Territory, with at least three years of experience after graduating from university. Also, senior students of Altai State Pedagogical University in the field of training 44.03.05 “Pedagogical Education” (with two training profiles) and 44.03.01 “Pedagogical Education: Preschool Education” were interviewed.

For the survey, we developed questionnaires in which both open and closed questions, questions with a choice of gradation of answers were presented. In the questionnaires, teachers and students were offered to choose an association and completion of the proposal. The survey included an associative experiment to determine a sample of preschool education quality assessment [5].

Over 1000 teachers, full-time and part-time students of AltSPU took part in the survey in the 2017-2019 academic year. The following questions were included in the questionnaire, “What do you mean by the quality of education in a modern preschool educational institution?,” “What results allow us to conclude about the quality of education of preschool children?”. Respondents' views on the concept of “quality” were discussed: what can affect quality, what can and should be changed to improve quality, and what should be discarded in the system of activity of an educational institution. For an associative experiment, tokens reflecting properties, indicators, and qualitative characteristics that determine the content of the concept of “quality” have been proposed. It was proposed to introduce associations to such words and phrases as “quality management,” “preschool child,” “educator.”

3. Results

Clarifying that the quality of the educational process is a combination of its properties, organized in a particular educational system, determining its adaptability to the organization of social goals for the formation of participants in educational relations, we analyzed the results of a survey and an associative experiment of teachers of preschool educational institutions of the Altai Territory and AltSPU students.

We ascertained that the quality of the educational result is personality traits fixed through categories of culture, social and civic maturity, levels of knowledge, skills, creative abilities, value orientations, motivation, i.e. level of professionalism. Based on this, we found that only 13% of respondents noted that “the professionalism of the teacher,” “the level of education of the teacher,” “the implementation of modern educational technologies” affect the quality of education. Thus, we concluded that the respondents do not adequately assess the quality of the educational process itself.

Also, according to the results of the survey, a ranking of the reasons affecting the assessment of the quality of preschool education was compiled. Reasons include the following (purposes listed in descending order of mention): the quality of the child’s preparation for school (20%); conditions aimed at developing the creative abilities of students (individual work, study groups, electives, additional services, events, contests) (17%); the friendliness and courtesy of the teacher (15%); professional competence of teachers (13%); circles, sections in the system of preschool and continuing education (10%); successful socialization of a preschooler in the types of children's activities (8%); conditions aimed at preserving and improving the health of children (7%); material and technical security of the institution (condition of the building, staffing with office equipment and inventory) (3%); catering in kindergarten (2%). According to respondents, the remaining indicators together accounted for 5% of the reasons affecting the assessment of the quality of preschool education.

The result of the associative experiment allowed us to assess the characteristics of personal development, both in the professional and spiritual plans of the respondents who took part in the survey. This was determined by their ideas about the quality of preschool education, ensuring the quality of life of the preschool educational organization.

Next, we give the most common answers to the questions and characteristics of the associative series of words: “Quality” – “sound,” “excellent,” “high,” “professional in any business”; “quality management” – “a system of order,” “clear organization of activities,” “unity of all requirements in the profession,” “Quality of one's labor”; “preschool child” – “rainbow,” “sun,” “wonderful flower,” “happy day,” “warmth and light.” This indicates a holistic, systematic approach of teachers to preschool education and, above all, to understanding the essence of preschool childhood.

Thus, in relation to the sphere of preschool education, the quality is the normative level to which the “products” of this field of activity must correspond.

One of the options for the methodological support of the activities of young teachers, which can affect the improvement of the quality of the educational process and the results, is the program “Social and pedagogical support of the professional activities of young teachers of preschool educational organizations”

developed and tested by the authors. The methodological basis of the program is due to the fact that the personality of the educator, as a subject of professional activity (pedagogical, innovative, collective self-government and self-development), acts as a system-forming component of preschool education. An important direction in the implementation of this program is its managerial aspect, including changes in the content of management, its structure, and managerial relations. In the course of the implementation of measures, the main provisions of the Program, managerial and methodological activities act as ways to effectively develop the personnel potential of a preschool educational organization through active interaction with each other. This provides a new quality of activity for a young teacher, taking into account the continuous improvement of his professionalism within the activities of a preschool educational organization. By participating in this program, the novice educator improves theoretical knowledge; develops professional skills; personal qualities, forms an individual creative pedagogical style, comprehends the values of his/her profession [6].

Thus, we can conclude that the quality of preschool education depends on the quality of goals, its conditions, the holistic educational process, and the quality of the results of activities.

We will characterize these indicators in more detail:

- a) The quality of the goals: the goal and the result should be presented finite, measurable over time, marked and described in the same parameters, allowing to verify the compliance of the result with the set and y achieved goals;
- b) The quality of conditions includes the following: managerial (monitored by a really defined managerial analysis) - planning - control - organization - coordination (regulation); personnel; scientific and methodological; material and technical; psychological; sanitary;
- c) The quality of the educational process is the quality of the content of the educational program (invariant, variant, personal level), the number of mastering and implemented educational and pedagogical technologies, innovative processes.
- d) The quality of the final results of the activities of the educational organization, staff, and a specific teacher.

4. Discussion

The identified indicators, quality properties of preschool education integrate the position of continuing education at all levels.

The data obtained indicate that the knowledge model of preschool education, which implies the transfer of knowledge and skills necessary for the realization of the cultural, social, economic, and other functions existing in society by society and assigning to younger generations, is gradually becoming a thing of the past.

On the other hand, the modern approach to education is focused on the need of society for change and development, which is possible only through the preparation of the younger generation for high-quality professional activity. In this case, education provides the child with not only the appropriation of cultural and historical experience but also the acquisition of the ability to master new types of activities and relationships between people. This view corresponds to the so-called developing model of education. In this regard, education is not a narrow branch of practice, but the universal and only form of development of a growing individual, and through him and society as a whole. Such an understanding of education makes this area a priority area for the development of society, fundamentally changing the approach to assessing the quality of preschool education.

5. Conclusion

During the study, the original provisions of the original hypothesis were confirmed (taking into account the implementation of the requirements of the Program of scientific and methodological support for the professional activities of young specialists of the preschool educational organization). It has been reliably established that a systematic internal assessment carried out by the most qualified leaders, pedagogical

workers, and an external assessment carried out by parents (persons replacing them) of pupils, members of the public, provide an opportunity to obtain objective data on the quality of preschool education.

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