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ESTIMATING CIVIC-INFORMATIONAL COMPETENCE OF POLITECHNICAL UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES

Introduction

The need to nurture civil participation as a topmost component of moral rights, which manifests itself in the desire and the willingness to accept and implement state laws in addition to upbringing such virtues as courage, justice, piety, law obedience, has been considered the main objectives of education since antiquity.

Modern society demands that university graduates would demonstrate civic responsibility which means active participation in public life in an informed, committed, and constructive manner [Gottlieb, Robinson; 2002].

The aim of the research was to estimate the level of students' civic-informational competence through questioning them about the values they find most important in people around them.

Active citizenship as "participation in civil society, community and/or political life, characterised by mutual respect and non-violence and in accordance with human rights and democracy" [Hoskins, 2006] can be measured through civic competence and its composition. Civic competence involves knowing and respecting human rights and freedoms, possessing self-confidence and dignity as well as confident social interaction with the public, community, team, partners on the basis of tolerance, respect and social mobility.

To live in a democracy and being civic-minded also engages intellectual analysis of the information the person gets in all social roles: he should be able to gather, analyze, interpret, summarize, evaluate and present information in a most effective way [Gottlieb, Robinson; 2002].

The given approach suggests that the society wants graduates to possess the skills of both civic and informational competence to be able to achieve new techniques of getting the requisite information and self-developing at a workplace.

Civil-informational competence is considered by the authors to be an integrative personal quality, it is a combination of knowledge, skills and ability to carry out educational, social and professional activities on the basis of conscious reflection of information in civil legal relations and values.

Civil-informational competence also means the necessary ability to continuous self-improvement, providing adequate responsibility for professional activities.

To analyze whether polytechnical university undergraduates possess the civil-informational competence the research has been conducted. The questionnaire constructed on the basis of the “Scale of Values” (test by I.G. Dolinina) was given to 46 polytechnical university students aged 18-23 years old. The respondents were asked to define their attitude to civil values, rating them from 1 to 10 (1 – it isn't important at all, 10 – it is significant). The questionnaire includes 16 civil values (Figure 1). The medium data (simple average) of the given answers are shown in the figure.

The highest points got the following civic values: *freedom* (8.9 out of 10), *peaceful settlement* (8.5), *human rights* (8.2), *nonviolence* (8.1), *legality* (7.8), *order* (7.8). The lowest points were given to the following civic values: *patriotism* (6.5), *civic consciousness* (6.5), *civic duty* (6.4), *civic participation* (4.7). Estimating civil values, respondents highly measured *freedom* (8.9) and *human rights* (8.2) that, in our opinion, testifies the tendency to know and embody the democratic rights and freedoms, and also shows that the students want to work within the bounds of constitutional rights in a nonviolent environment. High points are given to the categories *peaceful settlement*, *legality*, *non-violence*, *order* - all these values are connected with law observance and loyalty as well as safe coexistence which is very important for peaceful cooperation among nations.

Whereas young people want to get fair recognition, support and respect of their rights, the research shows the lack of wish to work actively for the benefit of society (which for young men might mean service in the army), patriotism and

civic responsibilities. Citizenship, in practice, turns into a politicized personal quality, so alien to young people, who are not ready to actively implement social initiatives in social activities and prove the civic-informational competence scarcity.

Relying on the research materials, the authors find it acute to construct the model of molding civic-informational consciousness as "moral quality which basic elements are harmoniously combined international feelings, morality, tolerance, orientation to human rights observance and equality" [Dolinina, 2012]. Its goal is to develop students' professional skills to answer the purpose of the global society challenges.

Abstract

The article considers the civic-informational competence as an estimated result of higher education, its integral components being focus on civic consciousness and the weighted response to the information around. The conducted research of civic values assessment, based on the survey of university undergraduates, has shown the lack of their interest in civic participation. They demand fair recognition and respect of their human rights but do not want to work actively for the social benefit. Citizenship is perceived as politicized quality, which leads to a reluctance to implement initiatives in social activities. The conducted research confirms the necessity of systematic approach while molding civic-informational competence.

Keywords

citizenship, civic competence, informational competence, civil values, high school

References

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