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The "Service" model of the competences of the municipal employee as the basis of vocational training: Russian experience

S.E. Martynova, O.G. Maslennikova

Tomsk State University, 36 Lenin Ave., Tomsk 634050, Russian Federation

Abstract

Competences of the municipal employee are considered in a context of the "service" concept of the public and municipal administration. The results of the sociological researches reflecting estimates and expectations are the basis for a model of the competences, connected with local authorities. In the article the technology and the results of the selection of the applicants for a reserve for the municipal positions are presented on the basis of the offered model of the competences also. From the point of view of the purposes of the vocational training the offered model of the competences can act as a basis for a formation of the curriculum.

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1. Introduction

Societal transformations of the post-industrial period motivated the emergence of a certain trend for the administrative and state reforms which have captured the countries of the different continents [2; 5; 13; 16, etc.], including Russia. In order to comprehend an essence of the administrative transformations and to project their further development, we will address to the characteristics of a post-industrial sociality.

So, during the post-industrial period knowledge, intelligence, creativity became the main productive forces. As a result the independent, active personality, capable to define and realize own vital strategy acts as the main subject of the social development. Such factor is in need to be guarded not only by the state, but also in a creation of the conditions for the realization of the personal potential. Therefore, the model of the public management is

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +00 -000-0000-0000

E-mail address: lena1977@sibmail.com

transformed from paternalistic into "service", considering authorities as the organizations for providing public services. The specified meanings «public service, public service-oriented organizations», including at a local level, are revealed in a set of scientific works [1; 4; 6; 9; 10; 14; 15, etc.] . Public service activities are normalized and measured due to the standardization and the regulation that removes subjectivism of the service quality in a servant's understanding.

The "service" concept logically causes new requirements to the civil and municipal servants. A new definition "public service motivation" has been appeared in the scientific literature [3; 8], taking into account the statement of "altruistic motives" for the sake of the society interests. From the positions of the competence-based approach we set the purpose to go further and to create the complete model of the competences of the municipal employee, corresponding to the "service" concept of public management. Practical application of this model is based on the diagnostics of the applicants' competences for involving them into the reserve of the leading municipal positions and the curriculum for the selected candidates is planned. The technology described in this article can be used not only for the solution of such task. We believe that the presented experience can be applied for the diagnostics of the key competences, and also for the development and correction of the students and employees' curriculum who already work at the bodies of the municipal management. The approach to the formation of the reserve of the municipal employees, based on the "service" model of the competences, in principle, will promote development of a new concept of the public management. And as this concept is focused as we have already mentioned, on the creation of the conditions for the realization of the potential of the society members, this model will promote also to the social development as a whole.

The done work preceding a formation of the model of the competences included carrying out the sociological research. Opinion of the citizens was put in the basis of the determination of the competences of the municipal employees. In particular, we used data of the sociological research of the population satisfaction about the activity of the local governments of the city districts and municipal areas. The research was conducted under the leadership of S.E. Martynova in Tomsk region in 2010. 18 city districts and municipal areas out of 20 were surveyed; the total amount of the selection came to over 10 thousand people. The selection is proportional to gender and age and territorial structure of the population (aged from 18 years), the error on each area and the city district doesn't exceed 4% at a confidential probability 0,95. The method of the data collection was interviewing "face to face".

2. Main text

Satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the activity of the administrations and the heads of the municipalities were served as the most significant information for the formation of the model of the competences. So, the most important characteristics of the representatives of the bodies of the municipal management for citizens became: 1) orientation to the requirements of the society; 2) orientation to the achievement of the result; 2) empathy, responsiveness; 3) competence and responsibility. These characteristics noted by society, are agreed with the main principles of functioning the "service" model: orientation to the citizens, management by results.

The specified characteristics initiated the foundation to the formation of the model of the competences of the municipal employee. In the determination of the competences we share the point of view that those are abilities, the purposes, values, motives, knowledge, skills, the strong-willed and emotional qualities promoting effective professional activity and defining models of the behavior [7, page 298-299; 12, page 22]. Concerning a set of the elements in the model of the competences we adhere to the number which doesn't exceed 12 [11, page 171].

In order those competences could be revealed, we offered the dictionary of the competences (their definitions). The sense is in the basis of the definitions which is the most adequate to the public estimates and expectations. For example, the first competence is defined as follows: orientation to the requirements of the society is a psychological readiness acts disinterestedly for the use of others and to make a choice for the socially significant decision in case of the conflict of the personal and public interests (that is defined by society as "to work not for itself, and for people").

Additions to the offered set of the competences are caused by the following circumstances: productivity, increase in activity efficiency is connected, in our opinion, with cognitive and strong-willed characteristics of the personality. If the strong-willed component is presented rather expressive in the definitions, the cognitive component can be developed in several competences. So, productivity and efficiency of the work depend also on the professional knowledge. The person should have the corresponding motivation for getting and expanding it. Besides, the activity of the modern municipal employee is carried out under the conditions of the innovations as a

new model of the public management is being implemented. In particular, organizational and process innovations are spoken about since they have a direct relation to the activities for providing municipal services: changes in the working procedures and the processes with the orientation to the service quality improvement are provided.

As a result it is expedient to include understanding of the features of the modern municipal management into the number of the necessary competences (understanding of the actual problems of the municipal management connected with the improvement of the quality of the municipal services, knowledge of the modern technologies as organizations of their presentation and direct rendering) and readiness for the development.

Thus, the main set of 6 competences (orientation to the requirements of the society, orientation to the achievement of a result, responsibility, empathy, understanding of the features of the modern municipal management and readiness for the development) in a context of the "service" public management can be considered as the basic model of the competences of the municipal employee. The variants of the model are related to the positions of a different level and a different profile of the activity. For example, for the heads, except the listed competences, managerial abilities and skills of the strategic thinking are important. In the process of the vocational training it is expedient to take into account options of the model for ensuring more individualized training. As a whole, the set of competences causes the list of educational disciplines and technologies.

Thus, it is advisable to conduct training of municipal employees noting the specified competences which are necessary in modern conditions of the professional activity and answer population expectations. Part of these competences is cognitive or active and can be developed in the course of the assimilation of knowledge and skills. But the major part has valuable, strong-willed, i.e. personal character and it is problematic to create such competences. Taking into consideration this circumstance in 2010-2012 for the selection of the applicants in a reserve of the administrative staff for the municipal positions it was recommended to pay more attention to the personal qualities. Therefore, those who possess such competences were selected. Their further training was generally directed to the development of the cognitive and activity competences.

The 4-score scale was used for a degree assessment of the competence intensity during the selection:

- 0 score - competence is absent;
- 1 score - it is expressed in a weak degree;
- 2 scores - it is expressed sufficiently;
- 3 scores – it is expressed in a superlative degree.

For example, the degree of the competence intensity "readiness for the development" can be estimated as follows:

- 0 score – the candidate doesn't show nor in the speech (declaratively and unconsciously (in the latter case - at the expense of keywords)), neither in the behavior of readiness to improve knowledge, skills, the active application of new technologies and tools in the activity; the person isn't capable to offer or perceive modern ways of a solution when performing estimated tasks;

- 1 score - the candidate shows in the speech readiness to improve knowledge, skills, an active application of new technologies and tools, but gives single examples of self-development of previous experience; the person isn't capable to realize estimated tasks for the solution even if it offers modern technologies;

- 2 scores - the candidate shows in the speech readiness for a continuous improvement of knowledge, skills, an active application of new technologies and tools; he can confirm such readiness with several examples from previous experience; he isn't capable to offer or perceive new ways of solving a problem when performing estimated tasks;

- 3 scores - the candidate often shows in the speech readiness for continuous improvement of knowledge, skills, an active application of new technologies and tools; he can easily confirm the use of various opportunities for increasing qualification level and regular tracking of the changes happening in the professional sphere with numerous examples from the previous experience; he is capable to prove reasonably an actual character of the estimated tasks and to perform them for the solution of the task fully when performing and offering modern technologies.

The opinions of the experts concerning competitors were generalized for each competence by a method of the definition of an arithmetic average of the value. Then the total integrated mark of the competitor multiplied by 100% was put down taking into account coefficients of ponderability. Based on the sufficient level of this or that competence which is equal to 2 points, the applicants who have gained 200 and more points were enlisted in a reserve.

The determination of the weighting coefficients was done by experts, but besides on the basis of the dominants

in the public expectations. So, as a rule, foremost and with a huge percent of answers the estimates and the expectations were connected with a persistence of the heads, desire to work, existence of exact affairs appeared in the settlements, i.e., using the definition of the competences, with the orientation to the achievement of the result. The answers "disinterested, does everything for people, tries for people" were taken the leading places from the point of view of the positive estimates, and work "on itself", absence of the help to people were negatively estimated, on the contrary. These characteristics are reflected in the competence "orientation to the requirements of the society". The leading characteristics, as a rule, were among estimates "attentive to people, sympathetic, human, kind, careful" that found the reflection in the competence "empathy". Owing to such priorities in social expectations in the model of the competences these qualities received the biggest weighting coefficients. Besides, the purpose of the selection of the applicants in a staff reserve supported, as it was already mentioned, the great importance of the personal competences. As for training, the weight of competence caused number of the subject courses and the credits allocated on the formation of this or that competence.

Concerning methods of diagnostics of the competences it is possible to say the following: the priority was given to the activity methods (to performances, role-plays and business games, interview), capable to show behavior models.

The analysis of the documents (questionnaires) and the psychological testing had auxiliary character.

Each competence was diagnosed not less than with two methods. The experts estimated the competences of the applicants. Successful heads of the municipalities were among the experts, whose productivity allows them to act as competent appraisers. The high positive estimates of these heads received during sociological researches, allowed to assume, besides, that if there were a psychological projection; socially desirable installations would be projected.

It should be noted the openness of all process of the formation of a reserve: the publications in mass media and on the official sites of the municipalities about the announcements of the applicants; a possibility of the participation on the basis of a self-promotion, and not only by the recommendation of the municipal commission.

The selection of the applicants in a reserve for leading municipal positions on the basis of the specified technology, passed by the leadership of S.E. Martynova, became rather strong "filter". So, for example, only 12 people got standard number of points out of 50 applicants in a reserve at the positions of the heads of the settlements. The adequacy of the offered technology to public moods is confirmed by the results of the municipal elections. As a whole, those persons included in a reserve who have stood for elective offices, were chosen (heads of municipalities or deputies). At the same time, the applicants who haven't passed selection tests didn't receive also electoral preferences among the population.

And still other people have also vocational training: students, employees who already work in the bodies of the municipal management. In this case the problem of the formation of the personal competences remains actual. For the solution of this task it is possible to suggest the use of personal and activity methods as a training technology. We mean the involvement of the trainee into any kind of activity demanding the existence of the personal competences. For example, for empathy formation – the involvement into the projects aimed to help children's homes, the senior generation. For the formation of the contact establishment skill – the work as an interviewer when carrying out inquiries and so forth. The inclusion of such activity technologies changes significantly habitual ideas about the training and sets new tasks for a teacher. As a whole, in our opinion, the problem of the formation of the personal competences needs further detailed development.

3. Conclusions

We summed up the results of the said above as follows:

1. A new model of the "service" public management logically predetermines a number of competences of the municipal employee.
2. As a principle it is expedient to take those qualities of representatives of the bodies of the municipal management for the "service" model of the competences which are important for the population. The relations with public are especially actual for the municipal management which is "on a first line". It is possible to name such model of the competences "socially caused".
3. A set of 6 competences is possible to be considered as a basic model of the competences of the municipal employee in a context of the "service" public management: orientation to the requirements of the society, orientation to the achievement of the result, responsibility, empathy, understanding of the features of the modern municipal management and readiness for the development.

4. The model of the competences plays a key role for the organization of the process of the vocational training of the municipal employees. In particular:

- a set of the competences predetermines the list of training courses which will allow to create or develop necessary qualities;
- a specific character of the competences which can have both professional, and personal character, cause the training technologies;
- a weighting coefficient of the competence predetermines "specific weight" of the academic subjects and the credits by the principle "the more competence weight, the more labour-intensiveness of its formation";
- a determination of the competences (their contents) cause the maintenance of the training courses and technology of training;
- the options of the model predetermine contents of the programs of the individualized training.

5. The most problem issue of the reflection of the competence model of the vocational training program is the possibility of the development of the personal competences.

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