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Methodological Preconditions of Institutionalization in Educational System of Russia

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Abstract

The article covers basic concepts which describe methodological premises of institutionalization of modern education, namely: "innovative quality", "technologies of training/education" and "ideology of culture". The authors dwell on the development of institutionalization meta-theory. As for the key principle of the meta-theory, the authors mention its poly-structural nature. The article also provides proofs to support relevance of the use of institutional analysis procedure. The article also describes the algorithm of institutional analysis for functioning and transformation/modernization of institutes that constitute modern educational system of Russia.

Keywords: The concept of "institutionalization" in modern education; meta-theory of institutionalization; projecting cluster, experimental approbation and duplication of new educational technologies; institutional analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Institutionalization of modern education is considered to be the quality which refers to condition of institutions that arrange social and cultural interaction in society. These institutions provide social order and enable to eliminate ambiguity in organizational, social and economic relations. In this respect, the concept "quality", interpreted in the context of functioning and development of institutions of the society of knowledge being in progress now, [1] can be defined as the key notion.

Modern objective reality is characterized by transformation of institutions. Institutional models of objective reality determine the main participants and relations between them concerning various objects. These models structure the relations by means of rules, norms and standards. Institutional models also characterize methods of interaction in various spheres of society, culture, economy, education, each of which having its own functional content [2].

Changes of objective reality stipulate changes in qualitative condition of institutions. However, time factor of these changes can vary. Deep-rooted norms, rules and functions of institutions may collide with the introduced innovations. Any conflict means development, and it takes time to resolve it. Institutionalization in this context becomes the factor of innovations [3].

SECTION 1. METHODOLOGICAL PREMISES OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION IN MODERN EDUCATION

Differentiation of innovations which conditions dynamics of institutionalization is determined by a certain feature of human perception, referred to as intentionality.

Intentionality stands for human ability to relate objects of the real world to concrete functional content. Formation of new institutional facts can be correlated to collective intentionality. Collective intentionality grants a status function to an object. The object gets institutionalized, i.e. there occurs the fact of educational, economic, cultural, etc. reality, existing as a certain institution.

A status function includes a certain function/range of functions which cannot be exercised on the basis of the functions already inherent in the phenomenon. Collective intentionality provides rather long acceptance of functions/range of functions. As a result of this acceptance, a new institutional fact appears [4].

However, objects of social and economic reality have quite complicated logical structure, whereas objects of objective reality can get status-functions, typical for more than one institution. The system of such kind is formed on the basis of main functional features, a certain set of rules that cause possibility of institution existence. Discrepancy of objective reality causes the need for transformation, that is, changes of qualitative characteristic features.

Any innovation promotes and determines formation of new institutional facts which may be created on the basis of agreements and achieve potential of collective intentionality as a result [5]. Dynamics of any system development, in particular, of educational system as a multiple-factor phenomenon, can be traced at the level of institutionalization. In this context, institutionalization enables to integrate two vectors of changes in educational reality, namely: the vector of innovative development of institutions, that is, breaking the system stability; and the vector of qualitative determination of the functional content of institutions, constraining innovations and initiating the process of collective intentionality. In this connection, in terms of institutionalization, the concept “quality” includes some features of the notion “innovation”. They both become conceptual vectors of modernization.

The concept “innovative quality” becomes one of methodological premises of modern education institutionalization. It is aimed at exercising the function of collective intentionality and leads to concentration of new knowledge up to certain degree that promotes transformation of institutions and grants them new quality [6]. As for methodology of education institutionalization, let us mention evolution theory. This approach makes it possible to consider educational system as the one that undergoes continuous and preconditioned changes, when the present can be treated as the result of the past and, at the same time, condition for the future, and the mechanism of changes is based on variability, inheritance and selection [7].

The main assumptions of evolution theory can be applied to educational system, namely: 1) system developmental path is shaped by previous evolution, causing continuity (stability) of features and natural selection of ideas, approaches, technologies in relation to the elements of educational system functioning in ever changing conditions of the objective reality; 2) possibility of casual or accidental developmental paths that arise under the influence of external factors. Thus, while considering institutionalization of modern educational system, one should outline the factors of evolutionary heritability and factors of variability, or innovation factors. In due course, as collective intentionality functions are exercised, these factors gain the status of the inherited ones [8].

Evolutionary approach allows keeping integrity and basic quality features of the object during gradual updating of its components (technologies, organizational forms, behavior stereotypes, etc.). Meanwhile, the innovations integrated into basic system construct, cause a conflict. Thereby, evolutionary transformation/ modernization of institutions take place.

Institutional structure is inert. Inertness of institutions, i.e. nonresistance to changes, arises from the nature of institutions as those.

According to J. Hodgson, institutions are steady systems of the existing and deep rooted public rules and customs that structure social interactions. Language, money, law, systems of measures and weights, table etiquette, businesses and other organizations – all these are institutions. Partial stability of institutions is determined by their ability to successfully create stable expectations, concerning people's behavior [9]. Let us note that inertness causes possibility of blocking rather effective institutions that can be characterized as innovative (B. Arhtur, P. David) [10; 11; 12; 13].

Institutions refer to steady systems which influence organizations/establishments and individuals by means of descending causal relationship, or, according to J. Hodgson, "transforming descending causal relationship" [14]. The heart matter of the influence consists in changing the preference function of actors, included in the sphere of their influence. That is, institutions, influencing the deep-rooted habits of certain mentality and behavior, form preferences. Social interactions, in their turn, also influence institutions by means of, for example, demand for prestigious professions, causing the changes in market prices for educational services.

The leading part in mechanisms of descending causal relationship belongs to teaching and learning that can be defined as transformation of individual qualities and preferences [15]. In this respect, learning does not only characterize cognitive abilities of a person, but also sets the vector for qualitative changes of institutions in terms of reverse, this time, ascending causal relationship. [16]. Therefore, teaching technologies are defined as the main factor of educational system institutionalization.

"Highly" innovative teaching technologies condition innovative quality of institutions, being the important factor of institutional modernization in education. In this connection, the concept "teaching/nurturing technologies" becomes methodological precondition of institutionalization of educational systems in terms of modernization.

New pedagogical technologies stipulate qualitative change of institutions. Institutional inertia in the system of such kind will lead to the fact that both positive and negative changes can gain cumulative effect, due to a relatively strong position of rather inefficient institutions which

determine preference functions of actors and do not allow taking steps that will further introduce changes into the developed form of interactions of the latter [17].

Institutional inertia is a kind of protective response of the system to the destroying it technological and institutional innovations [18], especially when the introduced institutions and technologies conflict with each other. Institutional inertia is the negative factor which slows down modernization of education. Institutional inertia becomes apparent, for example, in recurrent return to obsolete institutional schemes that mismatch developed economic conditions. Inertia creates institutional traps [19; 20; 21; 22; 23; 24].

There are two basic approaches to defining the terms "institutional traps": a) V. Polterovich treats them as inefficient, but steady norms that have self-supporting nature [25]; b) as effect of blocking – according to D. Nortu, the taken once decision cannot be cancelled. Institutional conflict is formed - between the rooted and introduced norms, and, as a result, either nonviable institutions, or steady, though inefficient formations occur [26].

Stability of institutional traps means that, at insignificant temporary external influence on the system, it remains trapped, only slightly changing parameters of its condition. After disturbance is eliminated, the system gets back to its former condition of inefficient balance. [27].

It is necessary to note that during evolution of the system, mechanisms that enable to find the way out of the trap can be spontaneously formed. But the following scenario is also possible: inefficient norm can be replaced, broken as a result of reforming influences.

The following institutional trap can be observed in modern Russian education: great demand for education leads to constant increase of the expectations concerning level of education. Meanwhile, the state, communities and businesses prefer not to invest funds necessary for maintaining good quality of education. The situation of permanent underfinancing of educational programs is peculiar to Russia. It leads to a lot of negative consequences which reduce the quality of education as a whole.

So, institutions define laws for society development, providing its integrity and being regulators of public phenomena in economic, political and cultural spheres of society. In terms of institutionalization, culture is considered to be the system that provides support of significant institutional samples [28]. In the given context, culture can be defined as ideological background of institutionalization that provides system integration of public groups, according to the main function of ideology, i.e. to preserve both political and economic structures and to form the corresponding systems of values, shared by the majority of population.

As for one of the premises of institutionalization in educational system, the concept "ideology of culture" can be mentioned. It refers to support of significant, traditional institutional images and creation of new ones in accord with the existing objective reality [29].

Therefore, the concepts "innovative quality", "teaching/nurturing technologies", "ideology of culture", treated in the given research as methodological premises, form integrative semantic field of the new integrated concept, referred to as "institutionalization of modern educational system".

SECTION 2. DEVELOPING META-THEORY OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Any concept means a kind of universal code, decoding of which is the process of disclosing and developing the individual, the personal on the basis and in the context of the special and the general. The concept integrates multivariate number of notions, providing complementary aspect of theoretical constructs and forming meta-theory of institutionalization.

The processes of globalization, expansion of informational space, intense communicative interactions between representatives of different cultures have become socio-cultural preconditions of institutionalization meta-theory.

Procedural nature of the meta-theory permits to present education as an institutional matrix of system development. This system shapes vectors of modernization on the basis of possible integrative interaction between various poly-structural institutional complexes, which adjust life of modern states.

The main principle of meta-theory is its poly-structural nature which describes the main features of organization, functioning and development of education. Poly-structural organization of educational establishments and the structures supporting them (firms, banks, associations, etc.) represent the system association of people who jointly realize certain programs and reach some purposes and whose behavior is guided by certain rules and procedures. Meanwhile, each establishment has its own resources, purposes, traditions, etc. Poly-structural systems form real or virtual clusters, stipulating opportunity for decentralized management and use of virtual methods of running the system.

A cluster refers to the system of distributing new knowledge and educational technologies. The program “Innovative Russia – 2020” stipulates creation of the network of regional and industrial clusters which are supposed to fulfill competitive potential of the region. Innovative educational and hi-tech clusters are to be created in the European and Asian parts of Russia. The problem of creating educational clusters as well as clusters for development and distribution of innovative educational technologies is one of modern priorities. Cluster educational technology in the given context is considered to be the institution of modern education that provides replication of technologies [30].

Occurring institutional changes are interconnected: transformation of one of them causes changes of the others connected with it. Dynamics of institutionalization in modern education will require application of institutional analysis.

Institutional analysis stands for the method of studying condition, features of functioning and transformation/modernization of the institutions that form modern educational system. Institutional analysis is aimed at subjects or education participants, namely, teachers and students. Estimation of institution efficiency correlates with the quality of its “product”. A person/graduate/worker/expert can be named the product of education. Results of participants’ activity (“products” of education) cause necessity of transformation/modernization of institutions.

Institutional analysis on the basis of the subject approach is conditioned by multidimensionality of institutional environment, as well as by the fact that a person is the core of institutionalization, of transformation/modernization of other processes which shape development of culture, society and the state.

Considering the above-stated, the following algorithm of institutional analysis can be offered: organization of cluster as an institution of innovation. Methodology, technology, scientific and methodical toolkit of an innovation is further worked out in the scope of the cluster. Further experimental approbation takes place, efficiency estimation based on monitoring of experimental activity, examination for stating repeatability of the received results. The last stage (in case the previous ones are passed successfully) - registration of the innovation as an institution [31].

Thus, we offer the procedure of innovations institutionalization that provides theoretical and methodological grounds and technological, instrumental, scientific and methodical support. Cluster as an institution becomes the necessary structure which promotes modernization of modern education in the institutionalized format.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Institutionalization has become the key feature which characterizes development of modern education in the newly developing society of knowledge.
2. Methodological premises of institutionalization in educational system are defined by the concepts “innovative quality”, “technologies of teaching/education”, “ideology of culture”.
3. The meta-theory of institutionalization is grounded by socio-cultural preconditions, such as globalization processes, expansion of information space, intense communicative interaction between representatives of different cultures.

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