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## The Development of the Competitive Ability of a Service Industry Specialist during Getting the Professional Education at the University

*The specialist's competitive ability which may be represented as the process and the result of the developing personal transformation affording to achieve some specific individually-professional level of development is examined in the article regarding the acmeological approach. The longitudinal analysis results that help to understand the peculiarities of the specialist's competitive ability development during getting some professional education at the University are given.*

**Key words:** *the competitive ability; the specialist's competitive ability; competitive ability development; the individually-professional growth; the professional development; a qualification; a self-improvement.*

The need for the competitive specialists in the society is actually growing nowadays and especially in the field of service industry as it is definitely the most rapidly growing industry in the modern economy. The increased attention to the specialists' trainings and learning is based on the need to solve successfully the problems in the areas of education, manufacture, managerial labour, business and in all spheres of our everyday routine. The insufficient problem's treatment generates the contradiction and initializes the search for psychology-acmeological solutions dealing with the specialist's competitive ability development during getting some professional trainings at the Institutions of Higher Education that gives us the possibility to predict, to model and to run this process, providing the person individually-professional growth as well.

According to the accepted knowledge a competitive ability is the ability to meet the competition in comparison with the similar subjects on the market, the ability to rival, to fight, to contest [1, 2, 3]. Regarding the competitive ability as the constant changes (M. Porter) [4], as the process (R.A. Fathutdinov, T.G. Filosofova) [5, 6], as the development (L.M. Mitina) [7], it is possible to prove another point of view and the acmeological approach to the examined matter: a competitive ability is a complex of person's acknowledged advantages that give the possibility for further person's individually-professional development. The qualification, the professionalism, the active position, the opportunity possibilities and the proper life attitudes can be treated as the basic parts of the competitive ability.

From the acmeological point of view the specialist's competitive ability development during getting some professional training and learning at the Institutions of Higher Education can be represented as the process and the result of the developing personal transformation affording to achieve some specific individually-professional level of development which is able to grow with the increasing of the professionalism and skills.



Age-related changes taking place in a man in the period of the adolescence, the early adulthood; external conditions (the educational processes, interpersonal relationships, the society, the accidental circumstances, the meaningful events and etc.); the internal conditions (the activeness, a subjective experience, the need for a self-improvement, the need and the purpose to become a competitive one and etc.); the leading learning-perceptual and learning-professional activity are referred to the acmeological conditions of the professional development optimization that determine the competitive ability development during getting some professional training and learning at the Institutions of Higher Education.

In the process of becoming a real specialist during learning at the University the inner part, the subject, in particular, becomes the main factor of its development, change and transformation, in other words a man himself is engaged in his self-development, self-improvement, his competitive ability formation, but in this case the process is also motivated by the social environment. The solutions for internal and external contradictions provide meeting the requirements of a future specialist dealing with proper purposes, demands and social environment conditions.

On the basis of the result obtained with the help of the employer questionnaire surveys and some theoretical analysis the model of the competitive ability personality of a specialist in the field of social-cultural service and tourism was developed. The model contains the following integrated characteristics: the orientation (including the motives and interests), the professional competency, professionally important qualities (the peculiarities of a memory, thinking, attentiveness), professionally important psychical abilities (psychical abilities and person's peculiarities in the spheres of perception, cogitation, imaginativeness, attentiveness and etc.; the person's specific features in the field of the emotional and willpower sphere).

The empirical research on the study of the specific features of the competitive ability personality formation during learning at the University was carried out. For this purpose, according to the developed model, the structure components of the competitive personality of the students at "Social-cultural Service and Tourism" specialty in their second, third and fifth years and professionals working in the field of social-cultural service and tourism (successful and competitive, according to information provided by employers and consumers) were studied. The total number of persons under test is 122 people. Among them there are 50 professionals and 72 students, participating in the longitudinal research (second, third and fifth-year students).

While studying the person's orientations, the following psychodiagnostics methods were used: the person's motivation structure diagnostics (V.M. Milman), the person's success oriented motivation diagnostics (T. Ehlers), the person's failure avoiding motivation diagnostics (T. Ehlers), the diagnostics of risk readiness rate of Schubert, the assess of the level of aspiration (the motivation structure) (V.K. Gorbachevskiy), "Areas of interests map" method (E.A. Klimov). To study the



components of the professional competence the following methods were used: the diagnostics of the communicative orientation (V.V. Boyko), the diagnostics of a self-control evaluation in the communication (M. Snyder), "Can you listen to?" tests, "Others acceptance" diagnostics (by the scale of Fey), the diagnostics of hostility (by the scale of Cook-Medley), the diagnostics of goodwill (by the scale of Campbell), the express diagnostics of confidence (by the scale of Rosenberg), the diagnostics of manipulative relationship (by the scale of Bant), the diagnostics of interpersonal relationships (A.A. Rukavishnikov), the method of "The Strategic Approach to Coping Scale" (SACS) (S. Hobfoll), the determination of the level of conflict resistance, the empathic abilities level diagnostics (V.V. Boyko), the social empathy diagnostics, the diagnostics of "interference" in the emotional contact development (V.V. Boyko), the level of subjective control diagnostics (J. Rotter). The method of expert evaluation of professionally important features using the cards ranging (by M.A. Dmitriev) was applied in order to identify the professionally important psychological features. The methods of manner of thinking and creativity level identification (by V.A. Ganzen, K.B. Malyshev, L.V. Ogintsev), the method of "Operative Memory", the method of "Numbers Placement" intended to study the volume, arrangement and turning of the attentiveness were analyzed in the study of professionally important qualities.

The results of the comparison of the average analysis rates allow to conclude that all the integral characteristics included in the model of a competitive person of the successful professionals working in the field of service have a high level of intensity. During learning at the University students majoring in Socio-cultural Service and Tourism have the significant changes which deal with the motivational sphere: the inner motivation grows (motivation connected directly with the motive of activity which expresses some fascination with a task); the intensity of the cognitive motivation, the motivation of self-estimation (the tendency to set more and more complicated goals for oneself), the motivation of avoidance (the fear to show some poor results) also grow; the motivation for competitiveness decreases. The rate on the scales of "social practicability", "the general activeness", "the creative activeness" and "the working orientation" is considerably raised; the interest for journalism, the service industry, art and history is also significantly increased. The analysis of the professional competence components showed the decrease of the level of negative communicational orientation and communicative intolerance and the raising of the level of ability to listen to a partner; the level of the conflict resistance ability is high. The structure of the students' relationship includes the following aspects: the acceptance of others, kindness, the desire to take one's responsibility; there is the tendency to subordinate the others in the communication, the tendency to establish close and emotional relationships, but at the same time, the figures of manipulative treatment, cynicism, aggression and hostility on the scales are high. Students have an undervalued level of empathy; however in the process of professional development in the period of training and learning at



the university it is insignificantly growing. The “barriers” in the emotional contact setting are reducing. The level of communication self-control is insignificantly reduced but the level of the subjective control increases. The correlation between the proper lists of professionally significant qualities in the samples of specialists in the sphere of social and cultural services and fifth-year students is statistically significant and rather positive.

According to the received data, the main differences can be traced in such qualities as: the professional competence; far-sightedness, sagacity; entrepreneurial spirit; activeness; innovation basis; perseverance; self-confidence; the tolerance for the views and opinions of others; self-control. The ranks of other professionally significant qualities are close enough. In assessing of the professionally significant qualities it was revealed that in the period of professional education the students have insignificant but increasing level of the operating memory, turning and proportioning of the attentiveness and creativity ability.

Friedman's criterion  $X^2_{F}$  confirmed the significant valid changes (shifts) in the individual rates of the students in their second, third and fifth years. It can be seen, in particular, regarding the development of the working orientation  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 11.583$ , the creativity ability  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 10.333$ , the social practicability  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 9.083$ , the inner motivation  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 10.895$ , the listening ability  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 12.250$ , the acceptance of others  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 11.583$ , the conflict resistance ability  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 15.895$ , the aggression reducing  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 14.645$ , the level of subjective control, especially on the following scales: “the general internality”  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 17.270$ , “the internality in the field of achievements”  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 17.062$ , “the internality in interpersonal relationships”  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 14.083$ , the level of the social empathy  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 10.020$ , the “barriers” in the emotional contact settings  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 10.333$ , the significant changes in overcoming behavior patterns can be revealed, f.e. in such patterns as “the confident, independent actions”  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 15.020$ , “the entry into some social contact”  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 12.062$ , “antisocial acts”  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 13.145$ , “aggressive actions”  $X^2_{F_{5MI}} = 20.020$ .

With the help of a cluster analysis two groups of students were identified on the basis of their similarity. The criteria for grouping were personal figures. The first group amounts to 42 % from the number of the students surveyed, the second one – to 56 %.

The evaluation of differences between students' samples and specialists in the sphere of service samples in terms of personal qualities development using U – Mann-Whitney test showed insignificant differences in the first group of students (we call them students with competitive abilities) and significant differences in the second group of students (we call them students without any competitive ability).

While comparing the personal figures of the students with competitive abilities and the students without any competitive ability we can see that the competitive ones have higher rates on the scale of social practicability, the general activeness, the creative activeness and work orientation scale. This group of students possess-



es the higher internal motivation, the cognitive motivation, the motivation of self-estimation which gives the feeling of personal value, self-confidence and so it helps to overcome their weaknesses and disadvantages. They are not afraid of setting the challenging tasks and being initiative. The students without any competitive ability have higher scores on the scales of "comfort", "social status"; they do not tend to be socially useful. They took higher scores on the scales of avoidance motivation, the competitive motivation, the motivation of the activity change. They also consider the tasks given to them to be very complicated; they do not tend to take any initiative. The students without any competitive ability are characterized by insignificant interest in art and history. The industry of services is just a good way of earning for them.

The differences were also revealed in the components of communicative competence, conflictological competence and autopsychological competence. The students with competitive abilities show a rather high level of communicative tolerance, in comparison with the students without any competitive ability; the negative communicative setting is not expressed. The students with competitive abilities have a proper listening ability, a very important quality for service industry jobs, the quality of listening to the partner.

The students without any competitive ability have high rates on the scales of manipulative attitude, cynicism, aggression, hostility and low in the tendency to establish close relationships with others, the tendency to obey the others in a dialogue. The highest scores were taken on the scale of antisocial, aggressive actions in stressful situations. It means that they are not resistant to conflicts. The students with competitive abilities unlike the students without any competitive ability possess higher levels of internality, responsibility, particularly in the area of failure and interpersonal relations. The competitive students show more symbolic oriented way of thinking, while the non-competitive students prefer figural way of thinking. The students with developed competitive abilities exceed their fellow students in the aspects of attentiveness and operative memory.

In order to see the dynamics of personality figures we estimated the differences between the sample of the specialists (professionals) in the service industry and students with or without any competitive ability during their second year of university education.

In the group of both competitive and noncompetitive students differences in many components were revealed. However, if we compare the students without any competitive ability and the second-year students with competitive abilities we can observe that the competitive ones have higher rate of cognitive, internal motivation and initiative rate, in comparison with their noncompetitive fellow students. They are not afraid of challenging tasks. The motivation of self-estimation helps to achieve greater independence, self-confidence, and it helps to overcome the shortcomings for ones and serves as the source for desire to compete for the others, so it is helpful for both groups of students. There are no differences between



the competitive specialists and professionals of the service industry in the development of professionally important qualities and some interests in various kinds of activity regarding the creativity. On the contrary, the second-year students without any competitive ability, showed some differences in components such as: symbolic thinking ( $p = 0,044$ ), creative thinking ( $p = 0,034$ ), operative memory ( $p = 0,000$ ), turning and proportioning of the attentiveness ( $p = 0,000$ ), creativity ( $p = 0,006$ ). The second-year students without any competitive ability represented differences in rates of interest (journalism ( $p = 0,002$ ), service sector ( $p = 0,002$ ), art ( $p = 0,003$ ), history ( $p = 0,001$ )).

Thus, during the training and learning process most of the students have some significant changes in individual indicators, it creates the positive dynamics for the person competitive qualities development; however, the competitive personality which can be correlated with the qualities of the successful professionals is not properly formed. All the integral characteristics included in the model of a competitive person of the professionals working in the service industry have a high level of intensity. Therefore, a high level of a competitive ability can be reached in the course of self-improvement and self-actualization in the professional field.

The subjective factor encouraging the competitive ability formation during learning at the University is the person's orientation, including the initiative ability, general and creative activity determined by the inner motivation, self-actualization motivation, self-estimation motivation which brings the feeling of personal meritoriousness, assertion that helps to overcome the personal unsatisfactory features, raising the tendency for anyone to deal with complex tasks, advantaging in the uprising of the need for the development, change, transformation, from the one hand, and self-improvement as far as the professional development represents an open system which is actualized in the real social environment with its social practicability, the tendency to give some benefits to people and society, from the other hand.

We can regard the self consciousness and student's meeting the requirements to his professionally important qualities which are preferred for the chosen profession, the availability of the interest for the professional activity as one more factor of one of the conditions of the competitive ability development in the period of learning at the University.

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