

FORMATION OF THE CONCEPT OF SELF-EDUCATION IN THE HISTORY OF RUSSIAN AND FOREIGN PEDAGOGY

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The problems of the self-education of the person, the organization of his/her self-directed activity have deep historical roots and considered to be one of those pedagogical problems that have remained relevant regardless of certain historical conditions, being the focus of researchers for almost a century and a half. The authors have analyzed the concept of self-directed learning in Russian and foreign pedagogy, introduced the formation of self-education in domestic and foreign pedagogical science and identified the essential characteristics of self-education in different historical periods.

Methodology: Our study is based on the theoretical research method – the analysis of foreign and national philosophical, historical, pedagogical literature on a problem; analysis and generalization of modern pedagogical experience; the method of the unity of historical and logical consideration of pedagogical phenomena.

Results: The historical retrospective of processes of formation of self-education presented in the context of social development shows that essential characteristics of self-education are caused by a set of historical, economic, political and social factors including the entire logic of development of education in general. The author defines the essence of self-education in the context of a new paradigm of development of education – Life-Long Learning.

Applications of this study: This research can be used for the universities, teachers, and students.

Novelty/Originality of this study: In this research, the model of the Formation of the Concept of Self-Education in the History of Russian and Foreign Pedagogy is presented in a comprehensive and complete manner.

Keywords: *self-education, self-directed learning, lifelong learning, historical aspects.*

INTRODUCTION

Today one of the goals of modern education is the diversified development of children and youth, their creative abilities, the formation of skills of self-education, personal fulfillment. As the analysis of the literature and the results of the study of the problem show, a significant number of university students experience difficulties in organizing and implementing self-educational activities, which is largely determined by the lack of a systematic, scientific and theoretical justification for both the phenomenon of self-educational activity and the specifics of the process of its formation (Muhametzyanova, 2008; Fakhrutdinova & Kondrateva, 2016; Zare, 2015). The need for self-education is caused, first of all, the needs of the individual. According to the American scientist F.S. Schlechti, those young people who successfully master the basic course of the educational program, learn to apply their knowledge in a familiar situation, will receive diplomas, but they will not be able to work independently with information and acquire new knowledge, they will not be able to function successfully in the post-industrial society of the 21st century (Schlechty, 1990).

The problems of individual self-education, the organization of his/her self-educational activity have deep historical roots and are one of those pedagogical problems that have remained relevant regardless of the specific historical conditions, being the center of attention of researchers almost half a century.

The analysis of psychological and pedagogical literature on the history of self-education, dissertation researches devoted to the problems of theory and practice of self-education made it possible to distinguish two stages in the study of this problem: 1) study of the problem of self-education in the context of general problems of education and upbringing (until the 19th century); 2) distinguishing of self-educational activity into an independent form of human activity and into a special object of research (since the 19th century).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The historical aspects of the problem of self-education are reflected in the works of domestic scientists as Kapterev (1982), N.I. Kareev (1909), N.K. Krupskaya (1978), V.M. Lomonosov (1952), A.I. Piskunov (2007), N.A. Rubakin (1914), G.N. Serikov (1991), V.P. Vakhterov (1987) and others.

The phenomenon of lifelong learning has become the subject of study of many Russian researchers as G.V. Mukhametzyanova (2008), O.N. Oleynikova (2009), T.M. Tregubova (2009) and foreign researchers as J. Dewey (1916), Ph.C. Schlechty, (1990) and others.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Objectives of the Research

The main objectives of the represented work are: 1) to analyze the concept of self-directed education in Russian and foreign pedagogy; 2) to identify the genesis of self-education in domestic and foreign pedagogical science and practice.

Theoretical and Methodological Basis of the Research

Our study is based on the theoretical research method – the analysis of foreign and national philosophical, historical, pedagogical literature on a problem; analysis and generalization of modern pedagogical experience; the method of the unity of historical and logical consideration of pedagogical phenomena.

RESULTS

The historiography of the development of the problem of self-education makes it possible to note that the ideas that were progressive and in many ways consonant with modern ideas about self-education of the individual were presented in the foreign and national pedagogical science throughout the entire period of its development. The analysis of historical and pedagogical literature on the problem of research allowed us to present the genesis of the essential characteristics of self-education in different historical periods.

The essence of self-education during the Antiquity era (the 8th century BC - the 5th century AD) consisted of the cognition of oneself, moral self-improvement, the search for truth and new knowledge. The study and analysis of philosophical and historical-pedagogical literature on the research problem ([Ajzenberg, 1986](#); [Serikov, 1991](#)) showed that one of the first interpretations of the concept of "self-education" and "self-educational activity" was proposed by Socrates (469-399 BC). Socrates connected a concept self-education of the personality with process of self-knowledge of, self-creation of the moral shape. The method of "heuristic conversation," actively used by Socrates, was the means of promoting self-knowledge, a means of developing critical thinking and cognitive activity of the individual, which is especially important in the context of self-education research ([Sagitova, 2011](#); [Ajallooeian et al, 2015](#)).

In the Middle Ages (the 5th - 14th centuries), the religious type of self-education was mainly dominated and aimed at interpreting the divine truth to the people which consisted of the mechanical memorization of religious texts. In this period there were book sources that promoted origin of the self-training activity.

The Renaissance (the 14th - 16th centuries) was the beginning of the realization of the idea of general education, high status of education was formed in the society, which could not but affect the development of self-educational activity. The ideas of humanism and human creative independence have become a priority in the Renaissance. The humanists of this period paid great attention to the students stimulating a vivid interest in knowledge, their conscious mastery of knowledge, the development of creative activity, independence, self-education ([Kapterev, 1982](#); [Piskunov, 2007](#)). The idea of development of self-identity is reflected in the views of the English philosopher T. More (1478 – 1535). He proclaimed the principle of general education, demanded equal education for men and women, put forward the idea of a wide organization of self-education, versatile development of the personality and adult education ([Sagitova, 2011](#)). Such rapid development of theoretical knowledge promoted increase in the status of self-education.

Analysis of historical and pedagogical literature showed that the period of the 16th -18th centuries is characterized by an intensive development of epistemology, which was the basis for the further development and distribution of self-educational activity. The need for activation of the educational activities of students, strengthening their independent work, self-directed education of this period was pointed out by I.F. Herbard (1528-1575), J.J. Rousseau (1712-1778), I.G. Pestalozzi (1746-1827), Friedrich Frobel (1782-1852), A. Diesterweg (1790-1866), John Dewey (1859-1952) and others ([Sagitova, 2011](#)). Serious studies of human activities in general, cognitive and self-educational activities, in particular, carried out in German classical philosophy. The first complete pedagogical concept is created by the great Czech thinker and educator Ya.A. Komenský (1592-1670), where the principles of consciousness and activity formulated by him are regarded as universal. In his works he focuses on the self-educational activity of a person, emphasizing that it is necessary that every student should study everything himself/herself, thinking independently and apply knowledge in practice ([Sagitova, 2011](#)).

Educational reforms in Russia in the 18th century were a powerful incitement in awareness of the value of self-education in society. The state policy of this period was characterized by spiritual and educational orientation and served as a self-education development factor ([Ushinsky, 1974](#); [Vakhterov, 1987](#)). One of bright representative of this period had a significant effect on development of education and the idea of self-education was V.M. Lomonosov (1711-1765). The founder of the first Russian university had been in many respects obliged by the education, and outlook of knowledge and scientific erudition to self-education (Lomonosov, 1952). European pedagogy of the 18th century was characterized by the use of active teaching methods based on personal experience of the learners, taking into account age-specific characteristics and the connection of upbringing with life.

A review of literature on the problem of the study showed that in European pedagogics of the 19th century a vital role in the development of the theory of self-education was played by F.V. Disterweg (1790-1866). As well as I.G. Pestalozzi

(1746-1827), he supported the idea of self-education, which was developed in modern humanistic pedagogy ([Disterweg, 1956](#)).

The analysis of the historical and pedagogical literature on the research problem showed that in Russia in the 19th century the need for mass self-education among broad sections of the population was dictated by objective laws of economic development of Russia – rapid growth of the capitalist production demanding elementary competent workers and qualified personnel. This period was characterized by the allocation of self-education in an independent kind of human activity and into a special object of study (the second half of the 19th century – the beginning of the 20th century). The phenomenon of self-education in the domestic pedagogy of that period was considered in the context of self-development and self-improvement of the individual and consisted not only in mastering a certain amount of knowledge, but also in the ability to apply them, putting knowledge at the service of the interests of society, the family ([Kapterev, 1982](#); [Kareev, 1909](#)). N.A. Rubakin (1862-1946) – the national educator, scientist-bibliographer, popular writer of scientific knowledge, methodologist on self-education developed the basic theories of self-education. He defined the essence, goals, and tasks of self-education, gave valuable methodological advice how to choose and read books, to systematize what was read. In his works the idea of continuous education to which N.A. Rubakin called readers on pages of the books is traced: "Never stop your self-education work and do not forget that, no matter how much you've learned, no matter how much you've known, knowledge and education have no boundaries, no limits" ([Rubakin, 1914](#), p. 173). It should be noted that in this period a small number of libraries of the educational and self-educational character appeared, some popular scientific publications produced in the mass edition, programs of systematic reading. Such literature had a significant impact on the further development of self-education in the country.

The historical and pedagogical analysis of literature on a problem of research showed that at the beginning of the 20th century humanistic ideals of self-education under the influence of vital realities gradually gave way to pragmatic purposes, more relevant for Russia of that period. The idea of self-education of that period in Russia was developed by famous Russian educators and activists as N.K. Krupskaya (1869-1939), A.V. Lunacharsky (1875-1933), P.P. Blonsky (1884-1941) and others. The self-educational activity of students in the first years of the revolution developed not in school, but in youth clubs. In clubs political, natural-science, aesthetic circles were created. Consequently, the self-education of the students was mostly independent; it was not connected with school education ([Krupskaya, 1978](#)).

In the mid-thirties in connection with considerable development of comprehensive schools, technical schools, and higher education institutions self-education became the main way of independent deepening and expansion of knowledge gained in educational institutions. In the conditions of a scientific and technological revolution (from 50th of the 20th century) adult education systems and advanced training were widely developed.

The presented genesis of self-education allows us to note that progressive and, in many respects, conformable to modern concepts the ideas of self-education of the personality were presented in foreign and domestic pedagogics throughout the development of pedagogical thought and educational practice in different historical periods. The accumulated experience represents for us not only cognitive but also practical interest which is strengthened in connection with actualization of self-education in the conditions of realization of basic provisions of the Bologna declaration.

Self-education in modern conditions is considered in the context of the "Life Long Learning" paradigm which is one of the main ideas of the Bologna declaration where it is emphasized that the main subject of planning, organizing, regulating and implementing of education can be only the person himself/herself, and the process of education develops into self-education process (Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, 2005). An American philosopher and psychologist John Dewey emphasized that the most important attitude that can be formed in a man is that of the desire to continue learning ([Dewey, 1916](#)). Many Russian researchers involved in the study of this educational paradigm permanently emphasize that self-education is the most important conditions of lifelong learning and has become a real need of each person ([Mukhametzyanova, 2008](#); [Oleynikova, 2009](#); [Tregubova, 2009](#); [Taubaye et al, 2018](#); [Widiastuti et al, 2018](#)). In the context of a new educational paradigm we regard self-education as a purposeful, independent, cognitive, practice-oriented activity to enhance available knowledge and competences, the acquisition of new knowledge and the formation of modern competencies in one or more areas of human activity, self-improvement of the personality throughout life ([Sagitova, 2011](#); [Lobão & Pereira, 2016](#); [Gamarra et al, 2018](#)).

CONCLUSION

The presented genesis of self-education in domestic and foreign pedagogical science made it possible to reveal the essential characteristics of self-education in a concrete historical epoch (from the ancient era to the beginning of the 21st century). The essence of self-education in the era of Antiquity (the 8th century BC-5th century AD) consisted of self-knowledge, moral self-improvement, the search for truth and new knowledge. In the Middle ages (the 5th -14th centuries) largely dominated the religious type of self-education aimed at clarifying and interpreting the divine truth to the people and consisting of the mechanical learning of religious texts. In the Renaissance (the 14th -16th centuries) self-education became more and more heterogeneous and differentiated depending on status characteristics of the person, the nature of his/her work and a type of his/her economic activity. Self-education was characterized by the development of creative independence of a person, his/her conscious assimilation of knowledge, the development of activity and self-activity. It was found out that the self-educational activity in Europe of the 16th - 17th centuries consisted in the independent

acquisition and application of knowledge in practice, in the development of self-directed learning, in observation, speech, and practice. The European pedagogics of the 18th century was characterized by application of active teaching methods based on personal experience of learners, consideration of age features and communication with life. The phenomenon of self-education in the Russian pedagogy of the 19th century was considered in the context of self-development and self-improvement of the learners and consisted not only in mastering a certain amount of knowledge, but also in the ability to apply them, and put knowledge at the service of the interests of society and the family. It was revealed that independent deepening and expansion of knowledge, stimulation of cognitive activity of learners were characteristic features of self-education in domestic and foreign pedagogy of the 20th century. Self-education of that period played a bridging role, uniting different forms of professional development.

From the second half of the 20th century until the beginning of the 21st century the problem of self-education of the individual is investigated in the context of a new paradigm of development of education – Life-Long Learning.

Thus, the works of foreign and domestic philosophers, educators and scientists played a significant role in the formation of the theoretical foundations of self-education.

The presented genesis of essential characteristics of self-education of a person in various historical periods promotes the enrichment of the modern theory of self-education of students in the conditions of globalization and internationalization of education and pedagogy of the higher school as a whole.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The materials in this research work can be used by scientists, teachers and a wide range of readers interested in the problems of self-educational activity. Also, the material can be used in the development of special courses of lectures and seminars on the organization of self-education of university students.

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