

**PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS: PROFESSION AS A RESOURCE
OF SOCIAL MOBILITY**

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Abstract. Actual Russian market of preschool education in comparing to the Soviet period faced not only with workplaces reduction, but also with changes in the structure of the professional group. The post-Soviet period was marked by closure of a large number of kindergartens owned by large enterprises and agencies, to which they are now became a social burden and reduction of pre-school teaching personnel. State employment policy in Soviet Russia in general and preschool education in particular guaranteed stable social status for professional groups. Employment in pre-school education ensured not only stability of income, but also the opportunity to receive free basic social benefits (e.g. health care, education, housing). Soviet educational system practiced measures of graduates from rural areas' involvement in the "pedagogical" profession. Such measures as formal "rural quotas", reduction of passing score, the system of correspondence education were used to increase the chances of graduates from rural areas entering pedagogical vocational education. The changes in the socio-economic system stimulated modifications in professional preferences of citizens and the structure of employees in the pre-school education. Actual Russian pre-school education is represented in large proportion by professionals with "too long" work experience. They are close to or over the retirement age. In the coming years pre-school teachers who chose this profession and started the practice in the USSR, in the period when the level of welfare and social security were provided more by state rather than by the employees themselves, will retire and we would like to understand who will come to replace them?

Sociologists associate the possibility of social and professional growth of employee with the openness of society, the processes of social mobility, its intensity. Equality of opportunity is more often seen in the context of intergenerational changes in access to education and income, and less often to professions. Russian and foreign sociologists agree on the continuing inheritance of social benefits and the use of professional positions as one of the tools of closing, artificial restriction of access to outsiders, non-members of the profession, to certain social benefits.

The research is devoted to the analysis of indicators of the status of a group

of preschool teachers. Professional group is considered from the standpoint of intergenerational and geographical mobility of its representatives. The study was organized as part of the project of the analysis of social status and prospects of pre-school teachers in Russia in 3 regions (Moscow, Samara region, Nizhny Novgorod region). A quota sample was based on the criterion of pre-school teaching work experience. For analysis were selected questionnaires of 347 public kindergartens teachers and 93 teachers of nonpublic kindergartens.

In our opinion, social resources available for accumulation in the beginning of pre-school teacher career are stimulating their prospects of social and territorial mobility. Important trends are associated with “closing” the socio-professional community in the medium and small cities and the outflow of specialists from rural areas. “Closing” of professional communities and the rejection of territorial migration in small and medium-sized cities in Russia, in our opinion, is a reflection of certain elements of the estate social structure existence there. Outflow of pre-school teachers from rural areas begins from the period of vocational education and leads to growth of professional status of specialists.

Keywords: Sociology of professions, sociology of education, preschool teacher, preschool education, social mobility

Introduction

Sociologists associate the possibility of social and professional employee’s growth with the openness of society, the processes of social mobility, its intensity. Equality of opportunity is more often seen in the context of intergenerational changes in access to education and income, and less often to professions. Russian and foreign sociologists agree on the continuing inheritance of social benefits and the use of professional positions as one of the tools of closing, artificial restriction of access to outsiders, non-members of the profession, to certain social benefits.

In the analysis of the education system's professions - "teacher", "educator", etc. - the researchers paid more attention to school teachers as a more mass teaching profession, but these data, although indirectly, are also very indicative (For example: Floud, Scott 1961; Musgrave 1979). Internationally, necessary level of qualification for pre-school teachers depends on the state policy in education and pre-school teacher’s training (Scheiwe, Willekens (Eds.), 2009; Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care, 2011) and it’s really varies. In recent years, the expansion of the sector is particularly noticeable in those countries where the dominance of unregulated and low-paid private sector was wide spread (Evers, Lewis, Riedel, 2005; Zigler, Marsland, Lord, 2009). The

experience of these countries demonstrates that absence of state funding, regulatory activity of professional associations as well as determination of salary levels depending on personal agreements between parents and workers leads to the decrease in the salary levels for the workers (Folbre, 2006; Fuller, Strath, 2001) and loss of quality of the provided services due to reducing the number of personnel as well as the influx of migrants into the profession (Blau, 2001; Cleveland, Hyatt, 2002; Ehrenreich, Hochschild, 2002).

In Russia most extensively the institute of preschool education has been developing during the Soviet period, with its focus on public interest as well as predominance of the state in its economy, administration and ideology. One of the characteristic features of the Soviet educational system was the practice of special involvement of graduates from rural areas in the “pedagogical” profession. Such measures as formal “rural quotas”, reduction of passing score, the system of correspondence education were used to increase the chances of graduates from rural areas entering pedagogical vocational education.

Objectives / Purpose of the study

Actual Russian market of preschool education in comparing to the Soviet period faced not only with workplaces reduction, but also with changes in the structure of the professional group. The post-Soviet period was marked by closure of a large number of kindergartens owned by large enterprises and agencies, to which they are now became a social burden and reduction of pre-school teaching personnel. State employment policy in Soviet Russia in general and preschool education in particular guaranteed stable social status for professional groups. Employment in pre-school education ensured not only stability of income, but also the opportunity to receive free basic social benefits (e.g. health care, education, housing). The changes in the socio-economic system stimulated changes in professional preferences of citizens and the structure of employment in the public and social sector, which includes pre-school education. Actual Russian pre-school education is represented in large proportion by professionals with «too long» work experience. They are close to or over the retirement age. In the coming years pre-school teachers who chose this profession and started the practice in the USSR, in the period when the level of welfare and social security were provided more by state rather than by the employees themselves, will retire and we would like to understand who will come to replace them?

Methodology

The study was organized as part of the project of the analysis of social status and prospects of pre-school teachers in Russia in 3 regions (Moscow, Samara region, Nizhny Novgorod region). A quota sample was based on the

criterion of pre-school teaching work experience. For analysis were selected questionnaires of 347 teachers of public kindergartens and 93 teachers of nonpublic kindergartens. Professional group is considered from the standpoint of social mobility of its representatives. The questionnaire included questions about the socio-professional trajectories of respondents: the place of primary and secondary socialization of the respondent (the type of settlement where the Respondent graduated high school; the type of settlement where he received vocational education; the type of settlement where he lives and works now) and the profession of parents (father and mother). The position of respondents in the system of these indicators is considered as their social routes, their initial and current position. It is obvious that these characteristics do not describe the professional group in terms of social mobility in total, but allow us to consider some important aspects of the dynamics.

Results / Findings

Social resources available for accumulation in the beginning pre-school teacher career are stimulating prospects of social and territorial mobility.

Our respondents that work in public sector grow up in different type of settlement, they graduated high school in large towns (38%), small and medium-sized cities (33%) and rural areas (29%). Our respondents that work in nonpublic sector grow up in different type of settlement too, they graduated high school in large towns (43%), small and medium-sized cities (34%) and rural area (23%). The majority of respondents (public sector) received vocational education in large towns (67%), but 31% in small and medium-sized cities and 2% in rural areas. The majority of respondents (public sector) live and work now in large towns (55%), some in small and medium-sized cities (27%) and 18% in rural areas.

Parents of the majority of respondents (public sector) who graduated from high school in large towns were workers (68% of fathers and 52% of mothers) and only 27% of fathers and 48% of mothers performed professional, managerial, or administrative work. Fathers of the majority of respondents (public sector) who graduated from high school in small and medium-sized town were workers too (71% of fathers and 43% of mothers) and only 27% of fathers and 57% of mothers performed professional, managerial, or administrative work. The situation with human capital of parents in rural areas even more difficult. Parents of the majority of respondents (public sector) who graduated from high school in rural areas were workers (80% of fathers and 59% of mothers) and only 17% of fathers and 40% of mothers performed professional, managerial, or administrative work.

Majority of respondents that graduated high school in large towns and had mothers performed professional, managerial, or administrative work still live and work in large town – 88% (in small and medium-sized town – 12%, in rural area – 0%). The same situation we can see in small and medium-sized towns. Majority of respondents that graduated high school in small and medium-sized towns and had mothers performed professional, managerial, or administrative work still live and work in small and medium-sized towns – 63% (in large towns – 25%, in rural area – 12%). The situation in rural areas is different. Majority of respondents that graduated high school in rural areas and had mothers performed professional, managerial, or administrative work now live and work in large town – 50%, although big proportion live and work in rural area – 31% (in small and medium-sized town – 19%).

We can see some other changes in public sector. Respondents that graduated high school in rural areas and younger than 40 years old more often than their elder colleagues (older than 40 years old) live and work now in large town – 50%\26%, than in small and medium-sized town – 15%\24% and in rural area – 35%\50%. We cannot see such changes among respondents that graduated high school in large towns (live and work now in large towns – 94%\80%, live and work now in small and medium-sized cities – 6%\12%, live and work now in rural areas – 0%\8%) and respondents that graduated high school in small and medium-sized cities are still prefer to live and work now in small and medium-sized town – 52%\57% (in large town – 40%\26%, in rural area – 8%\17%).

Important trends are associated with “closing” the socio-professional community in the medium and small cities and the outflow of specialists from rural areas. Outflow of pre-school teachers from rural areas begins from the period of vocational education and leads to growth of professional status of specialists in comparison with their parents. Outflow from rural areas more common for "new generation" of preschool teachers (younger than 40 years old).

Discussion

Social capital, including the human capital of parents, is important for the status of professionals and professional groups, it gives the opportunity to accumulate resources in order to improve their situation in the labor market, protect their interests. On the one hand, the accessibility and mass character of the population's education, which are characteristic of the industrial and especially post-industrial world, contribute to the fact that professional groups become relatively heterogeneous in terms of the social capital of their representatives. On the other hand, remains a set of factors that contribute to greater representation in the profession of workers with a

particular social capital – the size, level of income, feminization of the group. Preschool teachers are a large professional group, with low wages, especially in the public sector, and a highly feminized. In Russia in 2013 in 45345 organizations of preschool education 505,8 thousand teachers worked, among them women were 99,8%, and the average monthly nominal accrued salary in preschool education was 18577 rubles.

The simultaneous combination in middle and small regional cities of such factors as the presence of own (compared to rural areas) labor market and vocational education system, insignificant (compared to large city) size of the social and professional group of “white-collar worker” and the ability to use the social resource of belonging to the local the professional community contributes to lower rates of migration to a large city than among respondents from rural areas. It is also worth noting that educators from medium and small cities practicing in a big city are more likely to work in the nonpublic sector than in the public sector. "Closing" of professional communities and the rejection of territorial migration in small and medium-sized cities in Russia, in our opinion, is closer to estate social structure than to modern or postmodern.

The heterogeneity of the preschool teacher's profession in terms of social capital indicates the attractiveness of complex work, even with the low level of income. The trend of increasing outflow of post-Soviet specialists from rural areas is a reflection of the pronounced regional inequality not only in income, but also in the availability of skilled jobs.

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