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# Moral and Ecological Function of Students' Upbringing

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### Abstract

The paper considers some social problems and consequences of the consumer attitude of man and modern society to nature. The necessity of changing the stereotypes of man and nature interaction and forming man's reasonable needs is stressed. It is argued that human mentality and value reference points need changing by means of upbringing. The authors develop questions related to the upgrade of higher school in Russia and to the use of functionalist ideas in the upbringing process of higher education institutions. The pedagogical model of implementing the moral and ecological function of students' upbringing at a higher education institution is developed and represented. It includes interrelated structural components: motivational and goal-related, axiological, content-related, technological and final one. The paper reveals the essence of such notions as "new social and ecological ideal", "moral and ecological function of upbringing", "ecological and humanist values". An analysis of upbringing process at a higher education institution is presented from the standpoint of competency-based approach. The researchers underline the significance of art in forming the personality's ecological and humanist values.

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*Keywords:* ecological values; humanist values; ecological function of upbringing; learner-centered approach; ecological personality; moral upbringing

### 1. Introduction

Global environmental crisis that has engulfed our planet clearly demonstrates to the humanity the danger of the chosen path. It is clear now, that the nature is unable to recover without any help from mankind and many processes have gained permanent character. All this made the modern society realize that the consumption increase way is destructive and leads to imminent destruction of the human environment. The origins of today crisis which is purely anthropological lie within the culture, philosophy and psychology of industrial civilization. In technocratic

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paradigm of development with its specific ways of thinking, natural resources development methods, its ideals, values and priorities, the crisis cannot be overcome so we have to look for the new conceptual approaches and new models of development.

A vital task of modern society is implementing the targets of sustainable society development, which implies forming of ecological and humanist values in youth as a basic component of education. The fundamental state documents such as Constitution of the Russian Federation, Russian Federation Laws "On Education" (2012), "On Protecting the Environment", Federal target program "Environmental education of the Russian population" etc. focus the attention on moral and ecological upbringing of youth as a basis for forming a new way of life for our society, new social ideal of a personality which is in harmony with social and natural environment.

In this context, we face the problem of developing and implementing moral and ecological function of upbringing of students of various profile higher education institutions.

#### 2. Objectives, methodology and research design

At present the educational policy in Russia is determined by the competency-based approach; its general statements predetermine change in all spheres of the educational system of the Russian Federation (which is set forth in "Concept of modernization of Russian education for the period up to 2025" and in the "National doctrine of education in the Russian Federation"). The essential feature of the competency-based approach as an alternative to knowledge-based education is orientation of education to forming the qualities of a personality capable of successful vocational self-implementation When characterizing the professional competency, the learner-centered approach brings researchers to the conclusion that the upbringing component should be enhanced in the integral educational process of higher education institutions (Lykova, 2013).

Within working out of new generation standards, the composition of key competencies for any modern professional is When singling out the key competencies, most researchers agree that they are related to the general (meta-subject) content of education while the tasks of upbringing the vocationally relevant personal qualities usually go beyond the specific discipline training and out into the sphere of inter-subject communications. Meanwhile, there arises a situation of mutual intersection and combination of tasks of different ways of upbringing that promote formation of key competencies of the future professionals.

Following this logic and proceeding from the interdisciplinary and multifunctional character of competencies, we deem necessary the development of the "function of upbringing" concept to supplement the term "kinds of upbringing". Functions of upbringing in the integral educational process of a higher education institution serve as clearly outlined vectors of various discipline teachers' activity in developing the students' professional and personal qualities in accordance with key competencies.

The core idea of functionalism as a trend in educational psychology (Bine, 1998; Blonskij, 1961) consists in development of every psychical function (such as thinking, attention, memory and perception) being a process with its own laws and phases and that needs constant improvement by means of a particular environment design. The use of functionalism ideas in the process of upbringing of vocationally relevant qualities in higher education institution students allows us to reveal and to prove a dependency between particular competencies and qualities of the upbringing process promoting them. In particular, we can 1) define and word personal qualities that have to be developed in students in line with the vocationally relevant competencies; 2) determine behavior patterns or their elements that should maintain these personal qualities; 3) determine the organizational and pedagogical conditions that will allow forming the specific competencies as personal qualities in students.

The goal of our research is to provide theoretical grounds and to develop the model of bringing moral and ecological function of students' upbringing into life.

In line with the goal, the following objectives of the research have been determined:

1. To describe and provide ground for the content of moral and ecological function of upbringing;

2. To reveal the set of pedagogical conditions ensuring implementation of the model in the process of higher education institution students' upbringing;

3. To design the necessary structural elements of the implementation model of the moral and ecological function of higher education institution students' upbringing.

This research was carried out in three phases. The first one was theoretical (2012-2013). It included the analysis of the philosophical, sociological, psychological and pedagogical, and methodical literature. Current state of the problem in the theory and practice of higher vocational education was studied, as well as all current scientific and theoretical approaches to its solving. The subject matter of the research, its goal, object, subject, hypothesis and

main research objectives were determined alongside with the study methods. At this phase, the main research method was one of theoretical analysis of the scientific literature (Maslennikova, 2012).

The second phase, search one (2014-2015) saw adjustment of the study concept, and the empiric data was systematized and analyzed. Proceeding from analysis and systematization of the data obtained, the conditions were updated and the implementation model of moral and ecological function of higher education institution students' upbringing was developed. At this point, the following methods were used: the analysis of pedagogical, scientific and methodological literature, generalization of pedagogical experience and large-scale pedagogical practice, analysis of State Educational Standards and qualification criteria for higher education institutions graduates.

#### 3. Discussion of the research outcomes

Dominance of the environmental idea in the axiological system of the modern society has led to the necessity of forming a new personality having ecological and humanist values as one that meets the needs of a current stage of civilization development most of all.

Modern scholars agrue the inevitable civilization restructuring that the mankind faces. According to Moiseev, the human mentality, value reference points and many parameters of human psychic constitution do not correspond to new living conditions any more and thus should be altered, or rather, "are to be overcome with the help of new ways of upbringing, establishing of new taboos and introduction of new morality" (Moiseev, p. 113).

The necessity of value reorientation in modern human lifestyle which will encourage new ways of society and nature development is argued in works of Ursul (1998). He studies the entire complex of biological, social and intellectual qualities of a person that should be transformed starting with change of nutrition, transition to a healthy lifestyle and finishing with spiritual, value, moral, social, psychological and intellectual attitudes. The main goal of such restructuring of man is "the oncoming condition of society when it comes to intensive co-evolutionary way of interaction with nature where humanized collective intelligence will be able to ensure survival of mankind, a steady and safe in all respects civilization development on the earth and cosmic scale, and to fulfill the human seeking of happiness to the fullest extent" (Ursul, p. 22). The upbringing of the younger generation in line with the ideal of an ecological personality is associated with developing the sense of responsibility: "Moral and value attitude to nature and to people, the ability for self-restraint, the sense of personal responsibility for environment, special view of the world as the object of constant care is inherent in "Homo ecological" (Glazachev, 2005, p. 3).

Within the new social and environmental ideal, any activity is interpreted as generating the "culture of peace". According to Glazachev (2005), culture of peace denies destruction, that is "culture of war", it implies choosing another vector of development, of change in the system of moral values, namely "harmony, integrity, order interpreted very broadly: from the opportunity to be understood in the circle of family and friends up to that to establish peace on the global scale, in the noosphere" (Glazachev, 2005, p. 5). Culture of peace is impossible without consolidating the human responsibility (for themselves, for their close ones, for society, for the world around them up to its cosmic scale) and connections (between an individual and nature, in human communities, in the economy and politics, culture and education, in life itself) (Glazachev, 2005).

Thus, ecological and humanist values have universal characteristics connected to all spheres of human existence and determining man's relationship with nature and the society as an integral ecosystem in which nature preservation is a means of maintaining civilization and human species. Ecological and humanist values imply new adjusters of human activity in the environment in general: both in natural world, in social and cultural space, in relation to oneself, one's moral and physical health (Kuprina, 2006).

Understanding of ecological and humanist values from the standpoint of expanded sphere of application of the universal human values unites features of personality types most needed by modern society: "personality of a humanist orientation", "tolerant personality", "environmentally oriented personality". This gives us the right to use the concept of "moral and ecological function of upbringing" the essence of which consists in priority meaning of forming the ecological and humanist values in the integral educational and upbringing process as a vocationally significant quality of a professional of any profile.

The process of developing of ecological and humanist values in students is analyzed in educational research as a multi-dimensional one, not fitting into the usual scale of subject approach, requiring consolidated humanitarian component associated with the spiritual and practical ways of understanding of reality. One can be taught some knowledge, but the meaning of life or morality cannot be taught – only nurtured in each individual. For the pedagogic theory, it is the development of approaches to integrating natural and humanitarian spheres in training of technical professionals, the use of spiritual and practical ways of acquisition of essential for modern society value

reference points in the educational process that is the most relevant in this way.

The researchers emphasize the significance of art in the rise of personality, its acceptance of ecological and humanist value system as personally significant, acquisition of environmentally sensible strategy of behavior in the world and technologies of interaction with nature (Veresov, 2010; Mankovskaya, 1998). In new generation standards, the educational potential of art is stressed for liberal arts, and there is a clear trend to integrate them with natural sciences for developing students' integral view of the world, for analysis of global problems of our time and contradictions arising in moral and ethical aspects of the individual's interaction with the world. Enhanced role of liberal arts in the educational process of higher education institutions based on analyzing and experiencing the values of modern society through the content of the former, through the spiritual world of contemporaries will allow developing in today's students personally significant value attitude toward the world, including the attitude towards nature, as well as maintaining the internal guidelines and adjusters in the future professional activity.

Proceeding from the theoretical provisions mentioned, we have developed the implementation model of moral and ecological function of students' upbringing at a higher education institution that includes the following interconnected and interdependent structural components (units): motivational and goal-related, axiological, content-related, technological and final one (Figure 1).

In the motivational and goal-related unit, we determine social mandate for forming the ecological and humanist values in the young people as a strategic vector of the articulated goals and objectives of vocational training, the values being a basic component of good upbringing in conditions of the society moving towards sustainable development. The vector of the articulated goal includes developing the personality of a future professional of any profile with ecological and humanist value reference points that will serve as behavior adjusters in his personal and professional development.

Axiological unit is focused on the system of ecologic and humanist values in modern society that suppose moral and value attitude towards nature and social world, sense of personal responsibility for the environment, a special view of the world as the object of constant care, ability to restrain one's needs in accordance with the needs of nature and society.

Content-related unit represents knowledge and activities related to spiritual and practical ways of mastering the moral problems and their ecological and humanitarian grounds, based on refinement of the program content of liberal arts and their integration with natural sciences learned by students during their study at higher education institutions. In particular, we suggest introducing the cross-cutting topics revealing the content of ecological and humanist values from different standpoints for artistic and esthetic subjects that are mandatory for higher education institutions of any profile, such as "Culturology", "World Art", "Culture of Ural region" (the local component).

For example, the topic "Man and nature in folklore images" can be such a cross-cutting topic. A particularity of folklore thinking is that it is nature-oriented: natural forces are poetized and animated, there is a sense of unity of man with the world, and it is the universal laws that guide both life of nature and human beings. It is important that the bright imagery of nature in folklore serves as subjects included into the system of human relations. In oral folk arts (tales, songs, proverbs, riddles and jokes), a human being not only interacts with the "living" nature, but also identifies himself with it, looks at the world through its eyes.

The images of plants, birds and animals captured in the folk patterns surround a person in household items, in clothing, jewelry, they protect his house. In the traditional culture, the response respect for nature and all things around man being a nature's living part was brought up in a personality from childhood. Thus, environmental laws formulated by contemporary researchers for value orientation of the young generation (e.g. Kommoner talking about "environmental carefulness", "environmental moderation", "environmental awareness", "environmental activity" (Kommoner, 1977), have acted in traditional cultures since the dawn of time and have always been conveyed via folk art. Ecological and humanist ideas find their vivid expression in contemporary artistic practice. Usually students are happy to be involved in research projects related to analyzing the phenomena of modern artistic practice of such genres as art photography, design, collage, installation, documentary, animation, etc. Technological unit of the model includes principles, methods, means and forms of process organization and pedagogical conditions of their implementation.

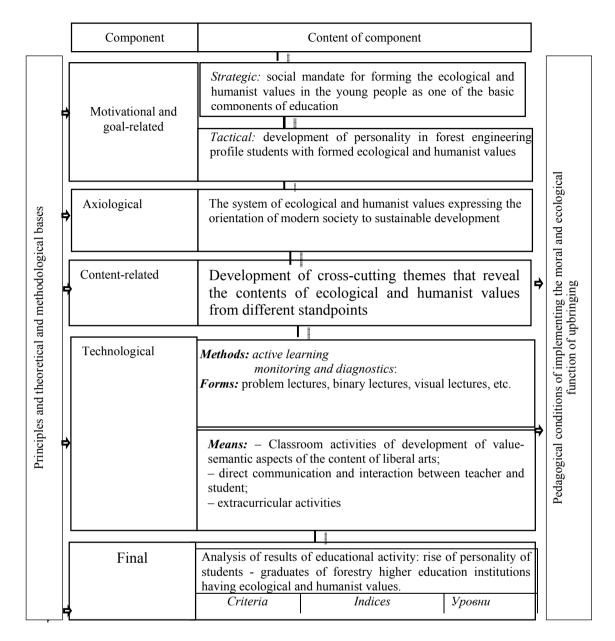


Fig. 1. Model of implementing the moral and ecological function of upbringing for higher education institution students

Technological unit presents methods, forms and means of upbringing and reveals the following set of pedagogical conditions promoting the efficient formation of ecological and humanist values in students:

1. Consideration of interdisciplinary connections between natural sciences and liberal arts.

This pedagogical condition allows the teacher to reveal the content of ecological and humanist values included in works of art from various standpoints. This is promoted by the following cross-cutting themes developed by us: "The beauty of nature as reflected in art images", "Man and nature in images of folk art", "Ecological and humanist values in modern art".

Lectures on the topics include the analysis of research in natural sciences, cultural and art studies. The main landmarks of understanding of the role of culture and art in harmonization of relationships between man, society and nature are as follows: developments in the field of ecology of culture (Veresov, 2010; Gachev, 1992); ecological philosophy within which works of nature are compared to the masterpieces of art ("the art of nature") and the need to update the "social esthetic sense" in cooperation with nature is formulated ; environmental esthetics which treats the perception of beauty in nature as a socially important function and considers the nature as a self-valuable esthetic object ("environmental beauty"). The esthetic values of the natural and social environment in the framework of these scientific trends are determined as synthetic ones: they are inseparable from the moral, economic, political, scientific and social values. The analysis of art works of such genres as art photography, design, collage, installation, documentary, animation, etc. has allowed revealing the environmental problems scope as one of the major themes of modern art.

2. Increased attention to formation of ideas about art as a method of value assimilation of the world.

When studying a cross-cutting theme, e.g. "The beauty of nature revealed in the images of art", the idea was highlighted for the students that at each stage of art development in any style one can find artistic presentation of beauty images and expressiveness of nature. The content of lectures on the above subject includes materials of research in the field of art history, philosophy, psychology exposing the phenomenon of human needs in esthetic communication with nature, reverence for its beauty as an essential spiritual need of mankind, as the basis of harmonization of human relationships with the world.

3. The use of active methods of upbringing that involve students into situations of emotional and cathartic feeling of the art images – carriers of ecological and humanist values.

The content of liberal arts taught at forestry engineering higher education institution opens up wide opportunities for more detailed revealing of ecological and humanist values contained in them and for emotional feeling of artistic embodiments of beauty of nature on the material of various artistic styles and worldview concepts. We have used a range of active and interactive methods and forms of teaching: problem lectures that encourage reflection and most contradictory statements from students on the stated theme; binary lectures conducted as a dialogue between teachers that reveal various aspects of the lecture content from the standpoint of different disciplines; visual lectures associated with demonstration and analysis of video clips, slides, illustrations; role-play games involving students into interaction with each other; creative tasks in the form of group projects (e.g. "Walks around Ekaterinburg", "Unique natural parks of the Urals").

4. Organization of extracurricular activities of students such as excursions, exhibitions, festivals.

Alongside with the main form of training – classroom teaching – arts were used. Students participated in the round-table conference "Development trends of various forms of extracurricular activities of students: seminars and conferences on issues of spiritual and moral development of modern Russia, meetings with cultural figures of the Urals"; amateur student groups performed within upbringing events on holidays (Shrovetide festival, Matriculation ceremony); meetings, events, lectures, shared watching and discussion of movies and performances were held, publication of newspapers and leaflets related to topical moral issues of society was organized, etc.

Over the past five years, once a year on a regular basis, exhibition and trade fair forum "Pyramid" is held. It involves designing topical stands "Art will save the world", "Art in my life", "Arts and me" where students present hand-made objects of arts and crafts: hand-knitted, lace, embroidery items, as well as woodware, clayware, batik etc. The higher education institution organizes permanent stands (photo exhibition "I love you, Ekaterinburg", photo album "Decorative and applied arts and folk crafts of the Urals").

These forms of educational activities not only contributed to active involvement of students into mastery of moral issues, but also created the necessary environment in which ecological and humanist values of students were formed, as well as upbringing of patriotic feelings and responsibility for preservation of cultural heritage and folk traditions.

Let us outline the most efficient approaches and methods for fulfilling the moral and ecological function of upbringing on the material of liberal arts:

1) reliance on conceptual ideas about art (style, trends, types, languages of arts) in the development of its value and semantic content (the method of dialogue of life meanings in communicating with art of various cultural and historical periods, national cultures, a method of involving of one's "I" into dialogical sound of voices of culture);

2) creation of situations of emotional and cathartic experience of artistic imagery – carriers of ecological and humanist values (emotional immersion techniques, emotional experiencing of problem situations, emotional

playwriting of classes etc.);

3) involving students in active artistic and esthetic activities, engaging the stored in their life baggage experience of artistic perception, value generalization of artistic phenomena, empathy and self-analysis in the process of communicating with them (methods of moral and esthetic judgment, imaginative modeling of environmentally responsible behavior, and self-expression in creative tasks);

4) active learning methods: the creation of problem situations that encourage reflection and the most contradictory statements from the students on the stated theme; dialogue lectures, conducted by two or three teachers revealing various aspects of ecological and humanist scope of problems from the standpoint of different disciplines; visual lectures associated with the demonstration and analysis of movies, slides, presentations on this problem; creative tasks in the form of group projects, etc.

An important role in fulfilling the moral and ecological function is played by extracurricular educational activity of students organized in various forms: seminars and conferences on environmental issues, festivals, performances by amateur groups of students, volunteer events, and meetings with figures of culture and art etc. Various forms of educational extracurricular activities contribute not only to active involvement of students in studying the ecological and humanist issues but they also create the necessary environment where ecological and humanist values of students are formed alongside with upbringing of patriotic feeling, developing of responsibility for preservation of cultural heritage and folk traditions.

The final unit includes the result expressed in the rise of a professional's personality having ecological and humanist values that are expressed as the unity of the two sides: 1) subjective and projective one as understanding and choice of an individual direction of cultural development based on the responsible attitude to the world and one's moral and physical health; 2) objective and normative one related to social demand of ecological and humanist moral standards during execution of professional activities.

The experimental and research work was carried out in Ekaterinburg in higher education institutions of various profiles (Federal state budget-funded educational establishment of higher professional education "Ural State Pedagogical University", FSBEE HPE "Ural State Forest EngineeringUniversity") in condition of a natural pedagogical process and it has proved the efficiency of the developed model of implementing the moral and ecological function of students' upbringing.

#### 4. Conclusion

Summing up the above, let us word the main conclusions of our study.

1. Based on the analysis of value dominants in modern public consciousness, associated with the ideas of sustainable development of society, the characteristics of environmentally oriented personality which is the most efficient in the modern society have been outlined. They are determined by moral and value attitude towards the nature and social world around us, a sense of personal responsibility for the environment, a special view of the world as the object of constant care, an ability to restrain one's needs in accordance with the needs of nature and society.

2. Grounds have been provided for the content of the moral and ecological function of upbringing which consists in the priority role of forming the ecological and humanist values in the integral educational and upbringing process as a professionally important quality of a future professional of any profile.

3. During studying the problem of fulfillment of moral and ecological function of upbringing, it has been revealed that the content of liberal arts in higher education institutions has a great pedagogical potential in this area. This is connected with the fact that general humanities and cultural and artistic disciplines are oriented to the rise of a personality in the process of adopting the values of modern society, which can be enhanced with a focused, organized and supervised pedagogical activity.

4. Grounds have been provided for the efficiency of model of the implementation of moral and ecological function of higher education institution students' upbringing. The model developed includes the following components: motivational and goal-related one with definition of goals and objectives of students' vocational training in line with social mandate for forming of ecological and humanist values in youth as a basic component of good upbringing in conditions of sustainable society development; axiological component that reveals characteristics of ecological and humanist values of the modern society; the content-related one including knowledge and activity types in the selected field of study based on enriching the program content of academic disciplines; technological component that includes forms and methods of classroom and extracurricular activity of students in the selected direction; and the final one describing the progress made in the process of upbringing of the

personality of a future professional with ecological and humanist value reference points.

5. Pedagogical conditions that ensure the implementation of the developed model into higher education institution students' training have been revealed:

- the learner-centered, axiological, culturological, competency-based approaches that allow a personality to learn the meanings, values of culture, experience of their use in spiritual and practical activity, to get a consistent idea of ecological and humanist values of the modern world, and to determine the individual direction of cultural development and professional self-fulfillment;

- higher efficiency of the upbringing process based on enrichment of the liberal arts content by introducting cross-cutting topics that reveal the essence of ecological and humanist values from various standpoints, the development of inter-subject relations on the basis of more specific requirements of Federal State Educational Standards of practical training of various profile professionals;

- the use of active teaching methods that promote students' dialogical comprehension of culture meanings, correlation of their personalities with ecological and humanist values of society, involvement of personality into adoption of the spiritual experience of generations via emotionally cathartic living of situations based on the moral conflicts;

- organization of extracurricular activities for students – excursions, exhibitions, festivals - aimed at bringing into life of the ecological and humanist values adopted.

The personal contribution of the authors consists in creation and scientific justification of the implementation model of moral and ecological function of higher education institution students' upbringing, in revealing the complex of pedagogical conditions promoting the successful formation of ecological and humanist values in students, in justification of criteria, indices and levels of their formation in students.

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