

# Economic nature of the competence: general methodological approaches to the problem

Carácter económico de la competencia: enfoques metodológicos generales del problema

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## ABSTRACT

In the period of structural and qualitative changes in the Russian economy, the development of the labor market and the educational services market, the effectiveness of economic education is largely determined by the level of formation of economic competencies of students. The development of the diversification process required bringing the education system in line with the requirements of market relations, the principles of alternatives and variability, ensuring the quality of education, which is the most important condition for the specialist's demand in the labor market. The target component of the model of formation of students' economic competencies by definition includes the goals and objectives of economic training. The increased demand for economic knowledge has led to new forms of economic education. The *activity component* in the model of formation of economic competencies focuses on the fact that in the domestic system of education in relation to the vocational school there was a long-term practice of compiling the qualification characteristics of a specialist, which fixed the requirements for knowledge, skills and abilities of graduates of various specialties, where in addition to the knowledge paradigm there were the terms "readiness", "ability", "responsibility", "understanding" and "worldview", expanding the close framework of such a paradigm. The main idea of the activity approach in education is not connected with the activity itself, but with the activity as a means of formation and development of the student's personality. The content component of the model involves the formation of students' economic competencies in the form of key, professional and additional economic competencies at different levels of professional education, taking into account training in economic and non-economic specialties.

**Keywords:** Economic training; key, professional, additional economic competencies; competence approach, diversification of education.

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## RESUMEN

En el período de cambios estructurales y cualitativos en la economía rusa, el desarrollo del mercado laboral y el mercado de servicios educativos, la efectividad de la educación económica está determinada en gran medida por el nivel de formación de competencias económicas de los estudiantes. El desarrollo del proceso de diversificación requirió alinear el sistema educativo con los requisitos de las relaciones de mercado, los principios de alternativas y variabilidad, asegurando la calidad de la educación, que es la condición más importante para la demanda del especialista en el mercado laboral. El componente objetivo del modelo de formación de las competencias económicas de los estudiantes, por definición, incluye las metas y objetivos de la formación económica. La mayor demanda de conocimiento económico ha llevado a nuevas formas de educación económica. El componente de actividad en el modelo de formación de competencias económicas se centra en el hecho de que en el sistema educativo interno en relación con la escuela vocacional había una práctica a largo plazo de recopilar las características de calificación de un especialista, que fijaba los requisitos de conocimiento, habilidades y destrezas de graduados de diversas especialidades, donde además del paradigma del conocimiento existían los términos “preparación”, “habilidad”, “responsabilidad”, “comprensión” y “visión del mundo”, ampliando el marco cercano de tal paradigma. La idea principal del enfoque de la actividad en la educación no está relacionada con la actividad en sí, sino con la actividad como un medio de formación y desarrollo de la personalidad del alumno. El componente de contenido del modelo implica la formación de competencias económicas de los estudiantes en forma de competencias económicas clave, profesionales y adicionales en diferentes niveles de educación profesional, teniendo en cuenta la capacitación en especialidades económicas y no económicas.

**Palabras clave:** formación económica; competencias económicas clave, profesionales, enfoque de competencia, diversificación de la educación

## Introduction

In the period of structural and qualitative changes in the Russian economy, the development of the labor market and the educational services market, the effectiveness of economic education is largely determined by the level of formation of students' economic competencies, as well as the development of adaptive abilities of the individual to new types of professional and market activities (Abdulatipova & Tsakhaeva, 2017; Abuzjarova, 2018; Ashmarov, 2018; Aminova & Tsakhaeva, 2018; Badakhova, 2017; Bolotin et al, 2017; Borisov, 2018; Borisova & Novoseltseva, 2016; Borisova et al, 2018).

The basis of the system of formation of students' economic competencies are ideas of development of vocational education (humanization, democratization, advanced nature of education and its continuity) that were formulated by A.M. Novikov, as well as diversification as general pedagogical principle of vocational education development, justified by T.Yu. Lomakina, and the following principles: multilevel and gradation, differentiation and flexibility, practical activity and continuity, territorial integrity and universality.

Multilevel and gradation contribute to the continuity of the formation of economic competencies of the graduate and allow developing economic educational programs taking into account the individual characteristics and capabilities of students.

Differentiation and flexibility suggest the development and testing of various areas of formation of economic competencies of the graduate in combination with a variety of forms, methods, technologies of training and education (Borovikova, 2017; Gadzaov & Dzerzhinskaya, 2018; Gadzhieva, 2018; Gasanova et al, 2017; Gnatyuk & Pekert, 2018; Ilkevich & Medvedkova, 2017; Kryuchkova, 2018; Kuznetsov et al, 2018; Morozov et al, 2018; Narkevich & Narkevich, 2018).

Practical activities and continuity provide a sequence of formation of economic competencies of the graduate in accordance with the requirements of the market economy, the demands of the labor market.

Territorial integrity and universality imply the obligation of economic education and training, taking into account the world economic crisis.

The basis of the classification: the subjects to which the goals and objectives of vocational education are directed - personality (humanization, universality, diversification) and society (democratization, territorial integrity); levels of vocational education (multilevel and gradation, practical activities and continuity) and types of professional activities (differentiation and flexibility, practical activities and continuity).

In the conditions of *diversification of education* (expansion of academic freedoms, independence, variability and alternatives), the strategy of personnel training is changing: it is important to train specialists in accordance with the needs of economic activity of the region, the needs of employers, the needs of market participants. The Concept of modernization of Russian education specifies the necessary conditions for achieving a new quality of vocational education: forecasting the needs of the labor market, improving the efficiency of the market of vocational education, eliminating imbalances and unnecessary duplication in personnel training (Osipova, 2018; Popov, 2018; Schwarzkopf,

2018; Sergeeva & Trubakova, 2017; Tsahaeva et al, 2017; Tsahaeva et al, 2016; Zulaeva et al, 2018).

**Research methodology.** The development of the diversification process required bringing the education system in line with the requirements of market relations, the principles of alternatives and variability, ensuring the quality of education, which is the most important condition for the specialist's demand in the labor market.

The main directions of development of diversification processes in education at the present stage are the following ones:

- marketing of the pedagogical labor market, development of methods of rapid and strategic response to its changes;
- modernization of the content, technologies of personnel training, quality management system of education;
- development of mechanisms for the integration of professional educational institutions into the socio-economic and socio-pedagogical environment;
- improvement of mechanisms to strengthen the practical orientation of training in accordance with the needs of the region;
- development of mechanisms to ensure the unity of the federal and regional components in the content of education, strengthening its educational component;
- development of monitoring system of pedagogical process;
- timely updating of models of social and professional image of the specialist in accordance with the social order;
- creation of conditions for formation (taking into account regional conditions, opportunities of professional educational institutions) of the specialist's personality possessing professional and social mobility, competitiveness;
- organization of the system of employment of graduates, providing them with secondary employment.

There is a real competition in the labor market, the success of which depends on the quality of specialist' education and training, the presence of their personal qualities that allow them to take his place in the social structure of society, to satisfy their claims, needs for self-realization.

The model of formation and development of students' economic competencies, developed by us, includes the following interrelated components: target, activity, content, design and technology, evaluation and reflexive.

**Research results.** The *target component* of the model of formation of students' economic competences by definition includes the goals and objectives of economic training.

The *purpose* of economic education in **secondary school** is to instill a responsible attitude of students to the basics of economic knowledge. This goal implies the following *tasks*: in the field of education - the development of students' knowledge of the basics of modern economy, the principles and laws of its functioning and development, the formation of initial ideas about the essence of the economic system, its basic categorical structures and the nature of production activities; in the field of self-consciousness - understanding of their individual economic potential, the formation of conscious civil economic behavior; in the field of motivation - the development of interest in the problems of the economy, the constant need for economic knowledge, the desire for civilized entrepreneurship, which should be a means of social protection, to facilitate the solution of the problem of employment of graduates, their adaptation to the modern economy.

Substantiating the process of implementation of continuity in economic education of students at all levels of secondary school, it should be noted that since 1992 various experimental courses began to introduce in general education institutions of Russia, there were new approaches to the organization of economic education. However, there are problems with the content of economic education. To date, affluent foreign experience in economic education has been accumulated, but it should be borne in mind that it should be used with great caution: direct copying can lead to a shift in the value orientations of students. The fact is that the classical market, which forms the basis of the content of most Western textbooks on Economics, is extremely far from the current state of our economy and can be considered only as a distant prospect, as an abstraction. It is no secret that many decisions in the economic sphere in modern Russia are often more political than market-oriented and are determined by the dynamics of transition processes. Another problem with the content of economic education is that we still have a knowledge-based approach to learning. The first place is given to the task of students learning a large number of economic terms at the expense of the formation of their functional literacy and moral basis of choice. However, many economic concepts are quite difficult to understand for students, and therefore there is a problem of adaptation of the existing economic terminology for all age levels of education in secondary school.

In accordance with the decree of the Government of the Russian Federation “On the concept of modernization of Russian education for the period up to 2010” in the last two forms of secondary school from 2006/2007 academic year specialized training of high school students is provided. The system of specialized training (profile training) should be focused on the individualization of training and socialization of students, including taking into account the real needs of the labor market. The transition to profile education is aimed at providing deep and specialized general education training for students in selected areas of knowledge, establishing equal access to full-fledged education for different categories of students in accordance with their individual abilities and needs, ensuring continuity between general and vocational education. In high school the teaching of Economics focuses on the deepening of knowledge on the basics of economic theory and its applied aspects, the study of types and forms of business, professional orientation and mastery of basic professional skills. Subject areas “Technology” and “Social Studies” provide an additional opportunity to acquire economic knowledge for students in 10-11 grades, allowing disclosing fully the relationship of Economics with history, law, politics, consolidating theoretical knowledge in practice. At the same time, the content of economic education in the school should be made as an integral system, providing continuous improvement, flexibility of education forms, creative approach, focused on the development of socio-economic methods of transformation of reality. Currently developed author’s programs on economic education of schoolchildren are largely integrated with such subjects as ecology, history, geography, etc., covering their economic component. The increased demand for economic knowledge has led to new forms of economic education. Such forms, first of all, include teaching the basics of economic theory and applied Economics in institutions of additional education, in full-time and part-time economic and mathematical schools, schools of “Young Entrepreneur”, “Young Manager”, etc., the use of distance learning, the organization of training courses in economic universities. However, the analysis of school economic education conducted in the study allows us to conclude that a special course is needed that identifies the main parameters of a certain norm of economic education, taking into account the real possibilities of students, the state of the socio-cultural environment, a course that gives a holistic view of the economic system, production, exchange, distribution and consumption of goods and services.

The main *purpose* of economic training in **basic vocational school** is to provide students with the necessary amount of economic knowledge, skills and abilities for future professional activity in a market economy; awareness of the social values of the economic sphere and understanding of the meaning of the current economic laws, their social and personal importance. These goals define the following *tasks* of economic training: the formation of a basic level of economic knowledge necessary for the orientation and social adaptation of students in the context of changes in Russian society, as well as for the professional and economic orientation of graduates.

The **secondary vocational school** aims to develop the capacities, knowledge, abilities and skills of competent economic decision-making mid-level specialist in the management of production and team. These goals define the *tasks* of economic training: development of practical skills of responsible economic decision-making; formation of the ability to self-development, self-education, education of students’ initiative and activity, independence in decision-making; formation of the subject system of knowledge, mastering the basic economic theories, categories, concepts, laws, conceptions, mastering the basic methods and techniques of rational and effective economic activity; the formation of a comprehensive generalized system of knowledge based on interdisciplinary connections of economic disciplines; the formation of economic thinking, which manifests itself in a logically complete representation of the economy, its basic processes, laws, as well as in the mental ability of a person to economic transformation of various spheres of management.

In **higher education**, the main *objectives* of economic training are the expansion and deepening of previously acquired economic knowledge, abilities and skills in the process of economic training; development of economically significant qualities of the individual, needs, interests, motives, value orientations; manifestation of economic competence in behavior and activity. The main *tasks* of economic training is the formation of students’ economic competence associated with the development of a culture of economic thinking (development of adequate ideas about the essence of economic phenomena and their relationship, providing the ability to make reasoned judgments on economic issues, gaining experience in the analysis of specific economic situations).

**Discussion.** The *activity component* in the model of formation of economic competencies focuses on the fact that in the domestic system of education in relation to the vocational school there was a long-term practice of compiling the qualification characteristics of a specialist, which fixed the requirements for knowledge, skills and abilities of graduates of various specialties, where in addition to the knowledge paradigm there were the terms “readiness”, “ability”, “responsibility”, “understanding” and “worldview”, expanding the close framework of such a paradigm.

At the same time, the principles of the specialist model development were subjected to critical analysis and improvement. Thus, N.F. Talyzina points out that “the description of the purpose of education (specialist model) means the representation or system of typical tasks, or a system of adequate skills (activities)”. The structure of the specialist model should include: “a) tasks (activities) determined by the peculiarities of the century; b) tasks due to the peculiarities of the socio-political system; c) tasks dictated by the requirements of the specialty”. These general requirements to clarify the aims of education are also valid today, contributing to the modernization of education.

The need to describe the personality traits of a professional school graduate in terms of the competence approach is long overdue, and the Bologna process requires a common understanding of the content of qualifications and degrees in all programs of the participating countries and as a priority direction of joint efforts calls the definition

of general and special competencies of graduates. S. Smirnov points out that “it is impossible to reduce all the reforms in education only to the Bologna process. Russia should have its own national educational policy and, in parallel with participation in the Bologna process, form its own specific education system, based on domestic needs and focusing on global trends”. At the same time, the fundamental changes in society and the peculiarities of the Russian education system require the rapid development and solution of many problems, and the Bologna process could become a “good companion, providing a solution to the tactical problems facing the Russian education”. One of these tactical tasks is the description of the qualities of the graduate’s personality in terms of the competence approach and the definition of ways of forming these qualities.

The competence approach developing in the last decade in the European and Russian educational spaces is considered by all its researchers as one of the necessary new conceptual resources for the revision of traditional goals, theory and practice of vocational education, adequate to the rapidly changing world, as a tool for updating education and achieving its measures and standards of modern quality. Actualization of interest in this phenomenon on the part of the domestic academic community is associated with the signing of the Bologna Declaration by the Russian Federation (September 2003). The competence-based approach acts as a new approach to goal-setting in education, and competency and competence are approved as new target categories, which mean the shift of professional education from the subject-centered orientation of the educational process to its student-centered orientation. The most important factor in the recognition of the competence approach is the transfer of emphasis from content to results, from knowledge to personal development. According to European scientists, the trend is that learning outcomes are usually expressed in terms of competencies or skills and competencies. The European project “Tuning education structures in Europe” (TUNING) argues that information on the aims of education expressed in the language of competences provides a more holistic view of educational programs, based on the premise that degrees (qualifications) can be internationally comparable and compatible if what the holders of these degrees are able to accomplish is comparable with the relevant academic professional profiles.

The main idea of the activity approach in education is not connected with the activity itself, but with the activity as a means of formation and development of the student’s personality. This means that in the process and as a result of the use of forms, techniques and methods of training, not a robot is born, programmed to clearly perform certain types of actions, activities, but a person capable of choosing, evaluating, programming and designing those activities that are adequate to its nature, satisfy its needs for self-development, self-realization. Thus, as a common goal, we see a person who is able to turn his own life activity into a subject of practical transformation, to relate to himself, to evaluate himself, to choose the ways of his activity, to control its course and results.

In our opinion, for the training of practice-oriented specialists in demand in the labor market, the *activity-competence approach* is necessary. In contrast to the traditional education focused on the assimilation of knowledge, practice-oriented education is aimed at acquiring in addition to knowledge, abilities, skills, practical experience. Education cannot be practice-oriented without the acquisition of experience, the level of which is more accurately determined by the methods of competence-based approach. The activity approach is directed to the organization of the learning process, technologies of practice-oriented education, where the whole learning process becomes activity-oriented. A competence-based approach is focused primarily on achieving certain results, the acquisition of significant competencies. The acquisition of competencies is impossible without the acquisition of experience, i.e. *competencies* and *activities* are inextricably linked. Competencies are formed in the process of activity and for the sake of future professional activity. Under these conditions, the learning process takes on a new meaning; it turns into a process of *learning/studying*, i.e. the process of acquiring knowledge, abilities, skills and experience in order to achieve professionally and socially significant competencies. In the report of the International Commission on Education for the XXI century “Education: the hidden treasure” Jacques Delors called four times the verb “learn”: learn to know, learn to live together, learn to do, learn to be. Hence, it is the activity-competence approach that can become an effective methodology for building practice-oriented education in the XXI century.

**Conclusion.** The *content component* of the model involves the formation of students’ economic competencies in the form of key, professional and additional economic competencies at different levels of professional education, taking into account training in economic and non-economic specialties.

The basis of the classification of economic competence is the modules of the studied disciplines:

Module 1 – general humanitarian and socio-economic disciplines;

Module 2 – general professional disciplines;

Module 3 – special courses (professional modules).

Taking into account the revealed basis of classification we defined economic competence through:

key economic competencies;

professional economic competencies;



additional economic competencies.

**Key economic competencies** include the basic economic knowledge necessary to adapt to professional activities in market conditions.

**Professional economic competencies** imply the ability to apply economic knowledge in practice, the ability to assess new economic situations and take optimal economic decisions on them.

**Additional economic competencies** are considered by us as the ability of creative economic behavior, the ability to effective behavior in the labor market, the ability to professional growth and continuous economic self-education, the ability to apply economic knowledge systematically in investment projects; these competencies are formed in the process of studying the students' elective courses and optional subjects.

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