

Research into Motivational Factors of Work Done by University Teachers from the Perspective of the Theory of Generations

Sergey V. Arkhipov, E. N. Vanchikova, N. A. Zolotareva,
A. E. Yantranov, D. T. Budaeva

Buryat State University, 24a Smolina Street, Ulan-Ude 670000, Russia

Abstract –The article is devoted to the study of the main motivational factors that determine the teacher’s work from the position of the Strauss-Howe generational theory. In the course of the research, the experience of organizing the activities of a teacher of a university in the Republic of Buryatia, the authors identified imbalances in the structure of employment towards extracurricular activities, which significantly reduces the efficiency of the teacher’s work and their motivation for teaching. The current situation is fraught with negative consequences, and the administration of the universities must constantly adapt and apply latest educational technologies together with the system of teacher’s work stimulation, both material and non-material.

Keywords – higher education, work motivation of a teacher, theory of generations, standardization of work activity.

1. Introduction

The role of higher education in the development of human capital of a region is determined not only by training of certified specialists but primarily by providing students with necessary professional competences, which are in demand in the labor market and can be evaluated only by employers.

DOI: 10.18421/TEM84-53

<https://dx.doi.org/10.18421/TEM84-53>

Corresponding author: S. V. Arkhipov,
Buryat State University, Ulan-Ude 670000, Russia

Email: sergey.v.arkhipov@mail.ru

Received: 20 August 2019.

Revised: 12 November 2019.

Accepted: 16 November 2019.

Published: 30 November 2019.

 © 2019 Sergey V. Arkhipov et al; published by UIKTEN. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 License.

The article is published with Open Access at www.temjournal.com

Nowadays the recruitment of talented young specialists is the key issue for representatives of many organizations. In the next decades, young specialists with their own values, needs and ideas of career development will enter the labor market. In their behavior they are not oriented towards stability. What is more important for them is the emotional comfort and being engaged in the process. Specialists belonging to this generation do not aim for vertical career growth — they prefer horizontal career development, i.e. searching for new knowledge and new spheres and using their potential to take part in many projects. In this situation, the commitment shown by teachers and other workers of an educational institution can be the key aspect: they have to do their best to adjust and accumulate students’ creative, scientific and practical efforts to reach the main goal and become a sought-after specialist in the labor market. Apparently, higher education institutions should transform the teaching process and employ effective methods of identification of behavior patterns adopted by teachers and students in the course of knowledge and skills transmission in order to form necessary professional competences. Experts think that Russian education system will be able to maintain its competitive positions only if vital staff transformations take place [6]. These changes will be accompanied by organizational transformations in the sphere of education, which, according to researches, can lead to both positive and negative consequences [22], [15] as a result of their implementation by teachers [26]. Thus, it is necessary to determine the main motivational factors affecting the work of teachers, their commitment and professionalism in the course of educating highly qualified specialists. For us, the area of scientific interest lies in the examination of employee incentive programs from the perspective of the theory of generations. Application of theses suggested by the theory of generations has been reflected in works by many researchers within the topics of theoretical interpretation of its foundations [23] and its practical usage, including composing descriptions of a set of

characteristics typical of a target audience belonging to a particular generation [1], [2]. Within the framework of our study it is important to point out scientific works devoted to the issues of application of this theory in the educational process [4], [11], [16], i.e. in the situation when transmission of knowledge and skills gained by the previous generation forms knowledge and skills in the current generation, which, in its turn, will transfer its experience to the following generation. Thus, the level of competences acquired by students in the system of higher education depends on the level of cultural interaction between different generations [8] represented by teachers and students [20].

According to the theory of generations, the introduction of innovative and information technologies considering the requirements and behavior patterns of students to educational process will definitely change the existing system of work motivation for teachers.

“It can be said that the theory of generation continues content theories of motivation, i.e. theories studying, which needs motivate people” [19]. Nowadays financial motivational components are an integral part of people’s behavior [19], but they are not exclusive. “Predominance of internal motivation, which characterizes a focus on the process, self-perfection and self-fulfillment, is preferable for conducting pedagogical activity” [9]. It is important to keep a teacher interested in the content of work, participation in team management and self-development in every possible way.

2. Materials and methods

In order to analyze the dynamic changes in the age of academic teaching staff, the authors have used data provided by government statistics in the “Education” section for 2010–2016. Further, graphic

method of representation was used to create a graph reflecting the structure of academic staff working at higher education institution across different age groups.

To study the professional activity of university teachers and determine the scope of their work, the authors have analyzed regulations applying to the activities conducted by teachers and local regulations implemented by educational institutions, such as job descriptions and individual plans. To determine the ratio between different types of work performed by teachers, the authors analyzed reports for the period of 2013–2017 provided by teachers working in two large state higher education institutions in the Republic of Buryatia.

To explore the levels of student engagement and proactivity, a total survey was carried out among 1st- and 2nd-year students of a state higher education institution in Buryatia. A questionnaire-based survey was chosen as the method of research.

To study the labor intensity of tasks performed by a student during the day, the continuous timing method was used. The research involved a total survey of 1st-year students of a state higher education institution in Buryatia.

3. Results

The analysis of age dynamics of academic teaching staff based on statistical data for 2010–2016 [3] has shown the following results. Firstly, the number of teachers working in higher education institutions aged from 25 to 34 over the period under review tends to decline. Thus, year by year the share of teachers under 35 years old is going to decline, whereas the share of workers over 55 is bound to rise. It should be noted that the growth of the share of teachers aged over 65 is observed [14].

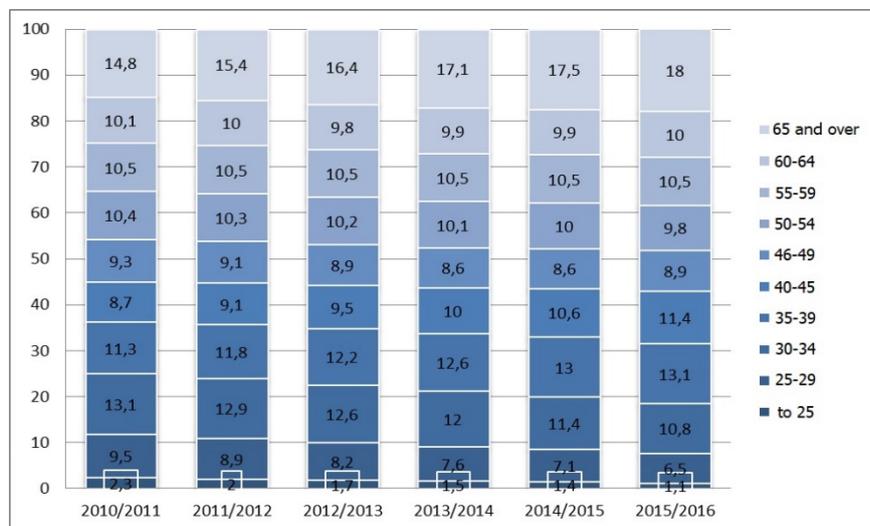


Figure 1. Structure of academic teaching staff of higher education institutions across different age groups %

Meanwhile, according to the results of the research conducted by experts from the National Research University Higher School of Economics, “2016–2017 were the turning point in the dynamics of the population aged 15–24. At this moment the demographic trend changed: the scarce generation born in 1991–2000 is being replaced by the new young people who were born in the digital age — “Generation Z” — at upper secondary school, colleges, and universities. It is them who are going to shape the demand for professional education services in the next 15 years” [18]. Hence, the question of readiness of university teachers for the advent of the new wave of students is becoming more relevant [17]. It refers not only to the educational process and formation of necessary competences in students but also to the organization of a teacher’s work at university in general. It is very important since the development of innovative educational technologies and communication resources in the sphere of education, as well as interaction with employers in the labor market, require corresponding competences and improvement of skills from each teacher. In their turn, these are components of the non-material instruments of motivation and stimulation of teachers’ work.

Result 1

Let us look at the existing system of motivation management related to teachers’ professional activities. Approaches to standardization and regulation of teachers’ work and a system of its stimulation have been developed within the Russian system of professional education by now. However, in spite of the fact that this process has been completed in many higher education institutions, there are still some problems connected with identification of types of work and their elements for different categories of academic teaching staff that would reflect the activities conducted by teachers and be subject to stimulation on the part of management, which can improve the efficiency of an individual

teacher as well as the corresponding institution in general. As a result, quite often teachers do lots of jobs that are poorly graded and do not comprise a unified system of indicators reflecting the level of performance shown by a teacher. Secondly, educational reforms and changes that involved the introduction of new educational and professional standards lead to the fact that the ratio between classroom training and out-of-class work within educational process shifted towards an increase in time spent on independent students’ work. Therefore, now a teacher acts as a mentor, who ensures complete acquisition of necessary professional competences by students while performing tasks outside of the classroom load, which are predominantly unpaid.

During the research, work was conducted to study the activities performed by each teacher working at the chosen educational institution in Buryatia from the perspective of the existing types of tasks broken down into categories depending on their purpose, scope, and time required to do a task. At the first stage, it was decided to classify types of tasks depending on their final goal. Thus, “in terms of goals, three types of tasks were identified: training, scientific and pedagogical (career-guidance, social, informational, etc.)” [21]. At the second stage, constituent elements were identified for each type of activity; in their turn, they reflected the requirements of federal state standards, regulatory documentation referring to monitoring of higher education institutions, local regulatory documents of an institution, requirements set by the main implemented educational programs, job descriptions, and individual plans for teachers. As a result of the sample survey combined with an expert poll and analysis of individual teacher plans, the following conclusions have been made. The total number of tasks performed by each teacher varies from 10 to 60. The shares of activities related to training, scientific and pedagogical work are represented in Figure 2.

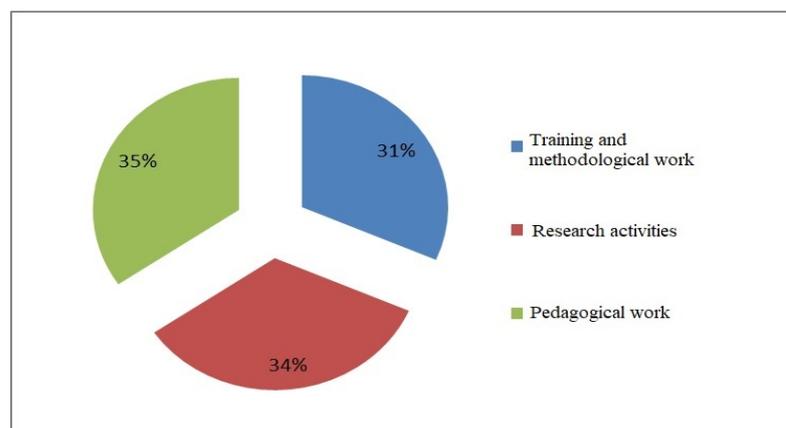


Figure 2. Teachers’ work breakdown by types of activities, %

Thus, judging by the results of the survey, the types of activities performed by teachers are evenly distributed. At the same time, each teacher can choose the direction of their work, whether it is research or pedagogical work. It should be noted that within the material component of employee incentive programs used by the management of educational institutions to motivate teachers, bonuses are awarded for the types of activities connected with doing research. Such practices of stimulating research conducted by teachers are spread not only in the Russian but also in foreign education systems [10], [12]. Consequently, the choice of tasks performed by teachers is largely determined by the scope of research activities.

It is noteworthy that the block of training and methodological work includes classroom teaching load involving lectures, seminars, tutorials and midterm assessment. This block accounts only for 35% of the total working time; the rest of activities (research and pedagogical work) accounting for 60% of the time is conducted in the so-called “second half of the day”. It means that after classes a teacher has to do lots of other tasks which are too time-consuming to be finished in the rest of the working day. So, a teacher has to stay at work, work at home or combine some tasks with classroom activities. Therefore, uneven workload leads to the situation when teachers’ performance and motivation for effective teaching decline, which affects the quality of education in general.

The research has shown that the development of professional competences in students implies the acquisition of knowledge and skills pertaining to the practice-oriented approach within the educational process [7], [5]. This approach involves the use of project management tools in different spheres: training, research and scientific activities, allowing future specialists to adapt in the labor market in the

most efficient way and use these tools to fulfill their professional needs. However, in the course of this research, it has been found that such experience of organization of project work within educational institutions is hardly ever reflected in the local regulations and is often conducted in an informal manner. It means that teachers who organize such activities with their students are largely guided by their own initiative, which is not going to be financially awarded. Having received no due remuneration, in the future these teachers will refuse to do such tasks.

Result 2

Next, let us consider the quality of education from the perspective of students. Young representatives of Generation Z are going to shape the demand for higher education services in the next decade. It should be said that many researchers in the sphere of education have acknowledged the fact that the education system does not always meet the educational needs of students; as a result, they cannot fulfill their full potential [24], [25]. In order to assess the readiness of teachers to the new wave of students and the willingness of the younger generation to acquire professional competences from the older generation represented by university teachers, a survey was carried out among 1st- and 2nd-year students. The choice of this target group has been made since young representatives of Generation Z, classified according to the theory of generations developed by W. Strauss and N. Howe, are now entering colleges and universities [13].

In the first place, the level of activity shown by students in lectures and seminars was assessed. The results of the survey suggest that every second student takes an active part in classes and is interested in acquiring new knowledge.

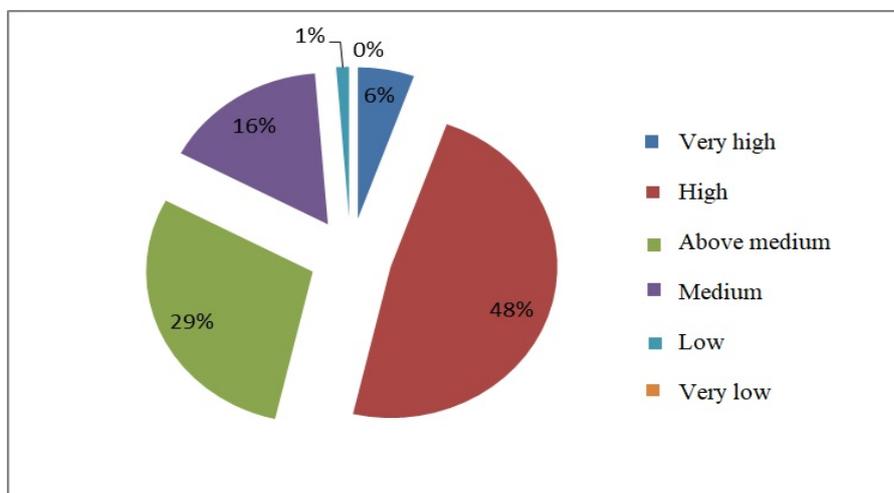


Figure 3. Rate of students' activity in classes, %

It should be noted that, according to the results of the research, only 1% of students remain totally indifferent to the educational process and show no interest in studies.

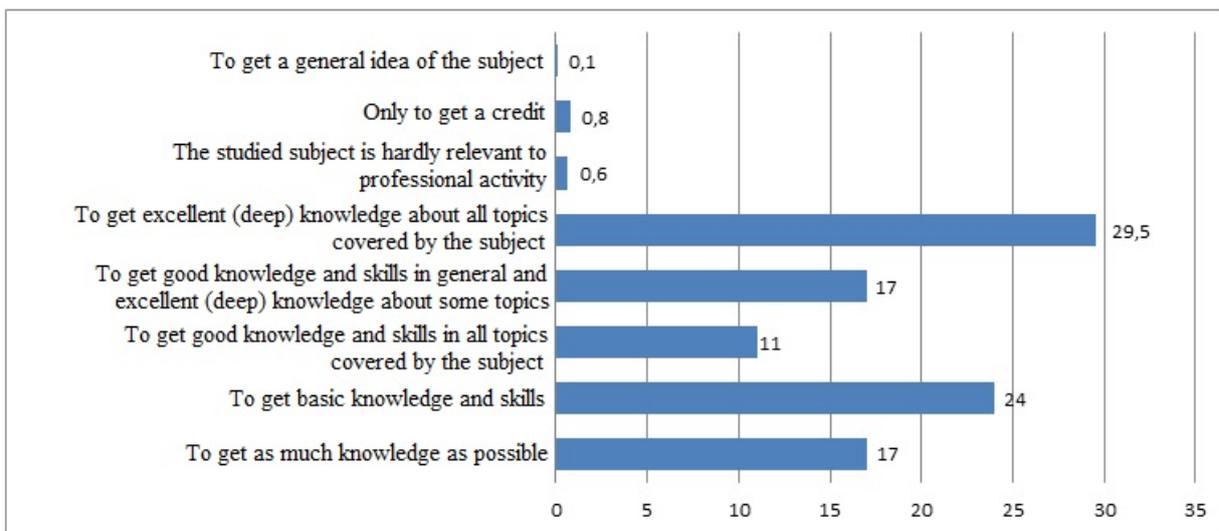


Figure 4. Level of students' engagement in studies of particular disciplines, %

Figure 4. shows that most students are interested in the subjects they are studying. Out of a hundred students, only one has a neutral or negative attitude to their principal subjects.

Despite the high level of students' engagement in the studied disciplines and their high activity during classes, there are students who grasp certain subjects poorly. The main reason for that identified within this research is the lack of time to prepare for classes, which accounts for 53% of students' poor performance. The second most important reason for academic failure is absence from classes (38%). It

means that every second student does not manage to get ready for classes. Five years ago, if a student explained that his or her poor performance in a subject was caused by lack of time, more detailed analysis usually showed that the student was not interested in this subject and doing the suggested tasks or was just lazy, while nowadays, according to the research, students are interested in studying disciplines. To understand the underlying factors, a stopwatch study of the academic day was conducted. It was found that an average student spends the rest of the day in the following way (Figure 5.).

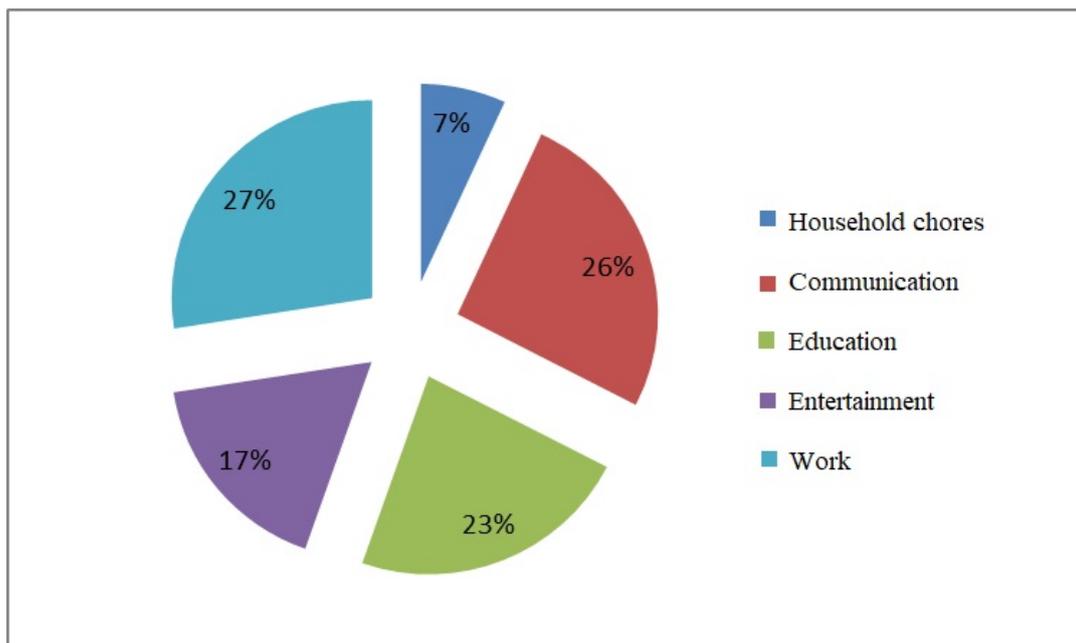


Figure 5. Time spent on different types of activities during the day, %

Figure 5. shows that an average modern student performs multiple tasks during the day; the amount of time allocated for different types of tasks is generally similar, i.e. students value the time spent on education (attending classes, doing independent work, etc.), communication (in the course of the research it has been found out that in most cases it implies communication in social networks), work (the results of the research suggest that every third student has a full-time or a part-time job, i.e. aims for independence and their own income), and entertainment (most students do sports, including professional sports, attend various creative clubs, dancing clubs and take part in training and development programs, etc.). Based on the facts mentioned above, it can be argued that an active life full of hobbies and aspirations lead by a modern student in most cases does not allow an opportunity to prepare for classes in the extracurricular time.

4. Discussion

The research into factors motivating university teachers and students to take an active part in the educational process conducted in the framework of generational theory has not identified any conflict between them. It means that the development of innovative information and communication technologies used within the educational process allows future specialists to acquire necessary competences in the most efficient way.

The main trends related to the changes in the educational process within the higher education system aimed at Generation Z will relate to usage of new approaches to the development of professional competences allowing students to get certain practical results in the process of training. The education system should show a clear example of how the acquired knowledge and skills can be used in real life right now. Studying an academic subject should be accompanied by a real result received by a student in real life. For example, an academic discipline connected with entrepreneurial competences should help a student to use corresponding skills when they independently carry out projects of events or business tasks. It should be noted that necessary professional competences which have to be acquired by students are often of interdisciplinary nature. Therefore, the list of academic subjects included in educational programs requires detailed examination and updating, implementation of a stronger correlation between educational programs and requirements imposed by the labor market, and coordination of actions undertaken by each teacher to use methods and technologies aimed at introduction of innovative principles of academic studies.

5. Conclusion

In present-day conditions of the educational process, the role of teachers working in higher education system consists in launching cognitive processes in students, helping and motivating them to enrich their knowledge constantly. To fulfill this role, teachers also need to be motivated, which will allow them to bring their ideas to life and instill them in their students; and most importantly, it should be reflected in the acquisition of professional competences. In view of this, work carried out by teachers is going to become more complicated from year to year. Thus, it is necessary to adjust the existing educational technologies and use new ones along with the implementation of effective incentive systems for the teachers.

References

- [1]. Astashova, Yu.V. (2014) Teoriya pokolenii v marketinge [The theory of generations in marketing]. *Vestnik YuUrGU, Seriya: Ekonomika i menedzhment*, 8(1), 108-113.
- [2]. Bencsik, A., Horváth-Csikós, G., Juhász, T. (2016) Y and Z Generations at Workplaces. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 8(3), 90-106. DOI: 10.7441/joc.2016.03.06.
- [3]. Bondarenko, N.V., Gokhberg, L.M., Zabaturina, I.Yu. (2017). *Indikator obrazovaniya: 2017: statisticheskii sbornik* [Indicators of education: 2017: statistical compilation]. Moscow, National Research University Higher School of Economics.
- [4]. *Deti, vzroslye, obrazovanie i teoriya pokolenii: strategicheskie vybory 2003–2023 godov.* (2015). [Children, adults, education, and the theory of generations: strategic choices of 2003–2023]. Retrieved from: www.rugenerations.ru/2015/06/13/. [accessed: 22 March 2019].
- [5]. Fitzsimons, M. (2014). Engaging students' learning through active learning. *Irish Journal of Academic Practice*, 3(1), 13.
- [6]. *Flot 2013: Soderzhatelnye itogi i klyuchevye vyvody.* (2013). [Fleet 2013: Conceptual results and key conclusions]. Retrieved from: www.metodolog.ru/node/1721. [accessed: 23 March 2019].
- [7]. Larkin, I., Beatson, A. (2014). Blended delivery and online assessment: Scaffolding student reflections in work-integrated learning. *Marketing Education Review*, 24(1), 9-14.
- [8]. Leoanak, S.P.P., Amalo, B.K., (2018). Teacher's behaviour towards students' motivation practice. In: *SHS Web of Conferences*. DOI: 10.1051/shsconf/20184200078.
- [9]. Makarenko, N., Ustimenko, S., (2015) Osobennosti motivatsii pedagogicheskoi deyatel'nosti v usloviyakh innovatsionnogo obucheniya [Specific features of motivation for pedagogical work within innovative education]. In: *Zeszyty Naukowe Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej im. Witelona w Legnicy*, pp. 39–53.

- [10]. Ming, J., (2010). *The impact of institutional and peer support on faculty research productivity: A comparative analysis of research vs. non-research institutions*. Seton Hall University.
- [11]. Mohr, K. A., (2017). Understanding Generation Z students to promote a contemporary learning environment. *Journal on Empowering Teaching Excellence*, 1(1), 9.
- [12]. Nasser-Abu Alhija, F.M., Majdob, A., (2017). Predictors of Teacher Educators. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(11).
- [13]. Ozhiganova, E.M., (2015). Teoriya pokolenii N. Khouva i V. Shtrausa. Vozmozhnosti prakticheskogo primeneniya [The theory of generations developed by N. Howe and W. Strauss. Opportunities for its practical application]. *Biznes-obrazovanie v ekonomike znanii*, 1(1), 94-97.
- [14]. Pugach, V.F. (2017). Vozrast prepodavatelei v rossiiskikh vuzakh: v chem problema? [The age of teachers in the Russian institutions of higher education: what is the problem?]. *Vysshee obrazovanie v Rossii*, 1.
- [15]. Ryan, S.V., von der Embse, N.P., Pendergast, L.L., Saeki, E., Segool, N., Schwing, S. (2017). Leaving the teaching profession: the role of teacher stress and educational psychology in the schools accountability policies on turnover intent. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 66(11), 1-11.
- [16]. Seemiller, C., Grace, M. (2016). *Generation Z Goes to College*. New York, Jossey-Bass.
- [17]. Singh, A. (2014). Challenges and Issues of Generation Z, *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, 16(7), 59-63.
- [18]. *Sistema profobrazovaniya k 2030 godu ne preodoleet posledstviya demograficheskoi yamy 2005–2015 godov* [The system of professional education will not overcome the consequences of the demographic pitfall of 2005–2015]. Retrieved from: www.ioe.hse.ru/news/207809612.html. [accessed: 15 May 2019].
- [19]. Sutyagina, A.V. *Pokolenie Y – problema ili potentsial dlya rabotodatelei?* [Generation Y – is it a problem or a potential for employers?]. Retrieved from: www.scientificjournal.ru/images/PDF/2017/VNO-29/pokolenie-y-problema.pdf. [accessed: 03 June 2019].
- [20]. Tutova, K.I. (2016). Sovremennye problemy realizatsii obrazovatel'nogo protsessa v kontekste kulturnykh peremen [Current problems of implementation of the educational process in the framework of cultural changes]. *Nauchnye zapiski molodykh issledovatelei*, 6, 72-75.
- [21]. Vanchikova, E.N., Garmaeva, E.T., Malinovskaya, N.A. (2015). Normirovanie deyatel'nosti prepodavatelya vysshei shkoly [Standardization of university teacher's activities]. In: *Trudy konferentsii VSGUTU materialy nauchno-metodicheskoi konferentsii*. East Siberia State University of Technology and Management, pp. 71–74.
- [22]. Von der Embse, N., Schoemann, A.M., Kilgus, S.P., Wicoff, M., Bowler, M. (2016). The influence of test-based accountability policies on teacher stress and instructional practices: a moderated mediation model. *Educational Psychology*, 37(3), 312-331.
- [23]. Vorontsova, Yu.A. (2016). Teoreticheskaya osnova teorii pokolenii [Theoretical foundation of the theory of generations]. *Uchenye zapiski OGU. Seriya: Gumanitarnye i sotsialnye nauki*, 3(72).
- [24]. Wijsman, L., Warrens, M.J., Saab, N., van Driel, J.H., Westenberg, P.M. (2016). Declining trends in student performance in lower secondary education. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 31, 595-612. DOI: 10.1007/s10212-015-0277-2.
- [25]. Wijsman, L.A., Saab, N., Schuitema, J., van Driel, J.H., Westenberg, P.M. (2018). Promoting performance and motivation through a combination of intrinsic motivation stimulation and an extrinsic incentive. *Learning Environments Research*, 22(1), 65-81. DOI: 10.1007/s10984-018-9267-z.
- [26]. Zuber, J., Altrichter, H. (2018) The role of teacher characteristics in an educational standards reform. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 30(2), 183-205. DOI: 10.1007/s11092-018-9275-7.