

## **Training of Prospective Managers by Educational Institutions for Strategic Planning at the Stage of Studying for a Master's Degree**

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**Abstract:** In the given article the attention is focused on training of master's degree students – prospective managers of an enterprise, institution, organization (in the field of education and industrial training) for strategic planning by an educational institution. Ways of methodological accompaniment of educational manager's training for strategic planning are presented. Fragments of systemic work of master's degree teachers in the plane of the problem under investigation are demonstrated on actual examples.

**Keywords:** strategic planning; master's degree; strategy; educational manager; manager of educational institution

### **Problem Statement**

At the present stage of social development, training of professional managers is a topical issue, and it becomes even more urgent for the education sector due to innovations connected with the processes of educational European integration, as well as an innovative and information stage of the society. The lack of professional management education of the majority of education sector managers determines their focus on personal experience only, slowing down the development of manager as a professional. Also it is necessary to consider the age of an educational institution manager who does not have enough potential and time possibilities to implement strategic projects and personal management activity plans at the moment of holding a position of manager. Annually increasing demands of educational institutions in strategic management are based on the need to build their own activity on a well-defined strategic aim, adaptation to environmental changes, as well as to constantly refine the structure, programs and variety of educational services.

Also timeliness of solving an issue of training of future educational institution managers for strategic planning of educational institution activity and its

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development pathway tracing is included into documents of the expert personnel commission for review of activity issues of managers of educational institutions, vocational technical and non-formal educational institutions.<sup>1</sup>

The need to develop a strategy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century educational institution is based on objective laws of the modern stage of education development in Ukraine, namely:

- diversification and differentiation phenomena which determine an increasing demand for kinds, levels, quality of educational services and, at the same time, have to satisfy growing community needs for a wider range of educational services amid market deregulation;
- significant changes in technical, methodological and organizational capabilities of service delivery, such as Internet education, multimedia, distance education which is indicative of innovative changes;
- business struggle of national educational institutions, providing competition for market segments, prospective group of students, growing range of services and increasing advertising activities.

However, analysis of literary and regulatory sources, curricula and syllabi of master's degree program in the speciality of 8.18010020 "Educational Institution Management" by qualification of a manager of an enterprise, institution, organization (in the field of education and industrial training), examination of thesis studies, determination and evaluation of a practical condition have proved that the system of training of educational institution managers insufficiently meets modern requirements and educational standards in the field of postgraduate management pedagogical education, and studying an issue of an educational institution strategic planning is passed by teachers of master's degree program. The aforesaid is compounded by the fact that an overwhelming majority of school managers improve their qualification at postgraduate pedagogical education institutes as subject teachers, but not as educational institution managers. Traditionally, educational institution managers were not trained under special professional programs, but appointed from among those who, according to regulatory and legal framework, "acquired higher pedagogical education within master's or specialist's degree program, have working experience no less than three years and successfully passed attestation of executive educational staff".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Order No. 1511 "On Expert Personnel Commission for Review of Activity Issues of Managers of Educational Institutions, Vocational Technical and Non-Formal Educational Institutions" as of December 23, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> www.mon.gov.ua The Law of Ukraine № 651-XXV "On General Secondary Education" as amended on May 13, 1999. Clause 2. Art. 24.

### **The Analysis of studies and publications**

Timeliness of the selected study direction is confirmed by a number of scientific papers in theory and practice of postgraduate pedagogical education and qualification improvement of executive staff of educational institutions, written by leading scholars, such as: Yu.K. Babanskyi, V.P. Bezpalko, Ye.S. Berezniak, V.I. Bondar, M.M. Vashchenko, Yu.V. Vasyliiev, G.A. Dmytrenko, L.I. Danylenko, M.M. Darmanskyi, G.V. Yelnykova, M.I. Kondakov, Yu.A. Konarzhevskyi, V.V. Kraievskyi, M.Yu. Krasovytskyi, S.V. Krysiuk, Yu.M. Kuliutkina, L.M. Kalinina, V.I. Maslova, V.G. Onushkina, V.V. Oliinyk, V.S. Pikelna, N.G. Protasova, V.I. Putsova, V.O. Slastionina, M.S. Suntsova, T.I. Sushchenko, O.P. Tonkonoga, G.V. Fedorova, Ye.M. Khrykova, P.V. Khudomytskyi, M.V. Cherpinskyi, T.I. Shamova and others.

At the modern stage training of management professionals is conducted by management and pedagogical higher educational institutions and a network of institutions focused on postgraduate pedagogical education and qualification improvement of executive staff. During the last decade, education sector managers are trained under the master's degree curriculum in the speciality of 8.18010020 "Educational Institution Management" by qualification of a manager of an enterprise, institution, organization in the field of education and industrial training. In 1983, Adam M. Dreier (USA), an investigator of the education sector, was the first to classify the speciality of an education manager and define it as one of the gnostical and transformative specialities of the future educational system (Burdina, 2008, p. 33).

**The objective** of our article is to study potential opportunities of training of future managers for strategic planning at the stage of master's degree education.

### **Fundamental Content Statement**

The crisis state of an economic and political system of the society naturally leads to the crisis of an educational system. Crisis recovery requires an education sector manager having a new strategic vision and decision-making ability who will not only solve operative tasks, but also will be able to work for development prospects. In the context of European integration of an educational system, master's degree program of management and pedagogical higher educational institutions faces a strategic demand for an educational institution manager of a new breed.

According to education and qualification description, a master's degree is an educational and qualification level of a professional who acquires advanced special skills and innovative knowledge based on bachelor's or specialist's degree, as well as has some experience in their applying and producing new knowledge for solving

topical professional tasks in the field of educational institution management. Our research is focused on training of future managers for strategic planning, because strategic management provides the manager's ability to define problems of an educational institution, to state an objective of expected changes, to develop a strategy of changes and to make adjustments to the selected strategy. According to results of studies by V.I. Bondar, N.L. Kolominskyi, S.I. Frolov, Ye.N. Orlov, Yu.P. Volkov, V.I. Lugovyi (Yelnykova 2005), a real optimum of an educator's development and his/her readiness for management activity ranges within two to eight years.

We have undertaken a local study and revealed that readiness of a beginning teacher of a higher educational institution for management activity upon completion of master's degree program ranges within four to seven years. Besides, 69% of those surveyed, who have entered the speciality of "Educational Institution Management", had an "above average" level, 13% had a "high" level, and 18% had an "average" level of motivation to management activity.

The analysis of personal files of applicants entering master's degree program at Prydnai Branch of PrJSC "Higher Educational Institution "Interregional Academy of Personnel Management" over the last ten years in the speciality 8.18010020 "Educational Institution Management" suggests that they can be conventionally subdivided into two categories of students: the first of them is represented by the graduates dealing with or planning to commit their professional career to teaching at a higher educational institution and further scientific and research teaching activity. The aforesaid is grounded by the fact that students of master's degree program are economists, lawyers, mathematicians, physicists, linguists etc. Another category of applicants to master's degree program consists of beginning teachers planning to develop their future career in the capacity of directors of schools, pre-school educational institutions, sports schools, health and fitness centres, as well as industrial training managers, but having mainly pedagogical education.

Therefore, master's degree students are conventionally subdivided into those having basic pedagogical education and, at the bachelor's degree stage, having an idea of professional direction disciplines, such as "School Science" and "School Management", and those getting acquainted with higher education pedagogics and psychology and education sector management within master's degree program for the first time, but the very few of them have an idea of educational institution management and strategies.

The issue of training for management of a general education institution or non-formal education institution based on basic pedagogical education is covered in works by Ye.S. Berezniak, V.I. Bondar, V.M. Begei, L.I. Danylenko, G.V. Yelnykova, L.M. Kalinina, L.M. Karamushka, N.L. Kolominskyi, Yu.O. Konarzhevskiy, V.V. Kryzhko, V.I. Maslov, N.M. Ostroverkhova, Ye.M.

Pavliutenkov, V.S. Pikelna, V.I. Putsov, M.M. Potashnyk, T.M. Sorochan, Ye.P. Tonkonoga, Ye.M. Khrykov, T.I. Shamova and others.

The issue of training of master's degree students without basic pedagogical education for strategic planning at educational institutions is presented in the very few research studies, among which we would like to underline works by G.I. Yelnykova, O.I. Marmaza, S.D. Reznik.

So far, the issue of training of educational institution managers for strategic planning is presented as development of special courses and curricula, but still it has not been reflected in master's degree textbooks. Professor G.V. Yelnykova insists on the importance of mastering strategic planning of an educational institution in view of management competence formation in education (Yelnykova, 2005). Voron M.V., the author of the special course titled as "Organization and Development of a Socially Active School as a Centre of Community Development" (2010), presents the following interpretation of strategic planning: it is "a process of providing directions and content for everyday activities; it is a way of thinking and a continuous process" (Voron, 2010, p. 36). He underlines that a plan is never perfect and finished. Strategic planning makes an opportunity to check organization values, its current state and environment, factors connected with achievement of desired future.

At the same time, the studies by S.D. Reznik are focused on components of strategic planning and its stages, emphasizing "decomposition of an educational institution management system into large macro sub-systems and designing a strategy in activity directions" (Reznik, 2011, p. 117). For our study, the conclusion made by professor S.D. Reznik and stating that senior and middle managers unwillingly accept the challenge of solving strategic tasks was important. They spend their working hours on solving immediate issues which lead to short-term outcomes of their activity and corresponding rewards.

The scholar A.P. Yegorshyn underlines that the most valuable ideas of strategic planning were developed by those educational institution employees who have not addressed these issues before. He emphasizes that strategic planning must involve all the staff of an educational institution that allows including the most effective directions into the strategy, connected with extension of educational services, development of new markets and technologies (Reznik, 2011, p. 119). The aforementioned scientific idea enforces the assumption of involving all the categories of education sector managers of the given educational institution into strategic planning which allows them to develop strategic thinking and behavior. It is proved by the idea of A.P. Yegorshyn stating that "strategic planning allows involving a wide range of middle managers and professionals into strategic thinking which gives them an opportunity to pass higher level management training" (Reznik, 2011, p. 118).

A new strategy always breaks the style of mutual relations within an educational institution and sometimes comes into contradiction with governing policy. Managers should consider that implementation of strategic planning leads to the conflict between out-of-date activities (operations management) and new ones. At the initial stage of strategic planning implementation within an educational institution, there is neither corresponding motivation of employees, nor willingness to think strategically.

The training of an educational institution manager within master's degree program is built upon a competence-based approach providing introduction to the issues of strategic management of educational institutions, development of scientific knowledge based on different methodological levels and scientists' view of strategic planning. Hence, a master's degree student is aware and conscious of the issue of strategic planning and the need of its mastering and applying in management activity. Theoretical knowledge of a future manager is being deepened by gaining skills and applying strategic planning in operation of an educational institution. The aforementioned is provided by studying the following pre-requisite disciplines of the curriculum: "Business Management", "Corporate Theory", "Educational Institution Manager", "Educational and Pedagogical Management", "Human Resources Management", "Scope Management", each of them having informative modules developed by teachers and included into the aforementioned disciplines of practical and professional training course. The following methods are used for development of strategic planning ideas: expert evaluation, brainstorming, economic analysis, tree of objectives and criteria, graphic simulation and future scenario method.

The analysis of strategic plans of educational institution development was conducted by means of SWOT-analysis technique aimed at forecasting strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats with subsequent establishment of interrelations between them for prospective development of an educational institution strategy. SWOT-analysis is a strategic management technique involving the analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of educational institution activity.

The aforementioned determined a cognitive activity of students in management of an educational institution and planning of its strategy amid the crisis. This is precisely why master's degree students were acquainted with a method of future scenario which can be pessimistic, realistic and optimistic.

As a next stage, future managers defined a base line strategy for an educational institution where they had been working, planned to work or passed management scientific and research practice. It is common knowledge that selection of a base line strategy is the main stage of strategic planning. An educational institution selects a strategy from several possible options: to reduce service prices, to increase number of branches, to extend the range of services, to create more

attractive image of educational services by means of advertising. Let us give an example of base line strategy selection made by master's degree students:

- “active innovations by means of new educational technologies” (The student Vlada E. has been working as a deputy director of sports boarding school for three years. Speaking in favour of the aforementioned strategy, she reasons that there is an increasing demand for foreign language fluency among sportsmen and suggests holding sports training in different kinds of sports partially by means of a foreign language, as well as teaching trainers to speak a foreign language using professional sports terminology. During the period of practice, she implemented a complex of trainings, such as “Rugball and English Sports Terminology”, “Sports Commentation of Tennis Tournaments in English”);
- “an innovative nature of development of the Centre of Non-Formal Education and Children's Crafts by means of a local element” (The student Petro M. has passed a practice at the Centre of Non-Formal Education and Children's Crafts. Underlining a multinational nature of the southern part of Odesa region, he developed a suggestion in the strategic plan of the institution focused on promotion of folk art, national kinds of sports, folk dance and craft leading to social and economic development of the institution. In practice, he arranged a workshop in crafting cloth-made dolls of Bulgarian, Moldavian and Gagauz origin);
- “development of free areas in new education segments” (The student Olena K. is working as a committee member at the Higher Vocational School focused on training professionals for the sea and river field, defining the specifics of location of ports and ship companies on the Danube river which require hotel business professionals, engineers and navigators for passenger shipping. At a staff meeting, she suggested including an additional training of cadets for entertainment activities on passenger ships into the strategic plan of the Higher Vocational School No. 9).

At the same time, we should admit that consistent training of future educational institution managers for strategic planning requires a special or elective course related to the problem under study. The aforementioned discipline was developed by G.V. Yelnykova in 2006 titled as “Strategic Management in Education” and was taught as an elective course (Yelnykova, 2006). Its analysis confirms that the issue of strategic planning at the crisis stage of the society has not been covered in full in this course.

Development of personal resource of a future manager is provided by priority ranking of person-centered approach to the arrangement of professional training process. Content loading related to studying the issue of strategic planning and revealing attitude and evaluation of results is laid upon the discipline titled as “Management Psychology”. Attending practical lessons and completing scientific and research tasks, future managers master the methods of conflict prevention, arising at the initial stage of strategic plan implementation, as well as solving

conflicts between those employees who are unwilling to change traditional understanding of education management and those who are willing to think strategically and work in accordance with a strategic plan. Also they try to defend strategic projects of the educational institutions where they are passing a practice or working full-time. Among the exercises tested by us in practice, the most effective were role playing exercises, such as “Strategy in Dialogue”, “Polarity of Ideas”, “My Contribution into Strategic Plan of Institution” etc. Teaching methodology of “Management Psychology” is focused on support and development of professional and personal position, ability to defend it, to hold public debates with opposing parties, to design and implement a strategy and to follow the started task to its logical end.

### **Summary and Prospects for Further Findings in the Given Direction**

In conclusion, we have analyzed potential opportunities of the training of future managers for strategic planning within master’s degree program. Further research should be focused on the issue of training of future educational institution managers for strategic planning within scientific and research and teaching practice being mainly of management nature.

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[www.mon.gov.ua](http://www.mon.gov.ua) *The Law of Ukraine № 651-XXV "On General Secondary Education" as amended on May 13, 1999. Clause 2. Art. 24.*

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