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## Tenor of Life as Base Unit of New Architecture in Higher Education: Search for Principles

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the basis of higher educational institution in the conditions of scientific knowledge growth and the rapid expansion of information according to modern socio-cultural changes. The authors take into consideration the most fundamental challenge in higher education - creation of conditions for evolution of a person's capability to change circumstances, to build his life trajectory, to overcome the knowledge fragmentation and to find his own integrity and identity. The answer to this challenge is attributed to creation of educational institution's own image – Tenor of Life - for overcoming the stereotypic installations upon formation of uniform ways of cognitive activity. In the paper the concept of “Tenor of Life” is associated with “hidden curriculum” in higher education, some historical insight is taken. The research is focused on definition of Tenor of Life’s principles. System of indicators and criteria of diagnostics are presented.

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### 1. Introduction

A period of complex reforming in the modern system of education can be observed. Ideas of subsystems interaction and conditions, content and results of the educational process are changing. System modernization of higher education is derived from those of socio-economic and cultural changes that characterize modern society. Transformations included already in the life of the organization are being actively discussed by the educational community. Discussions involve guiding principles that provide the flexibility of multi-level system and interaction

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of its components. The concept of Lifelong education, questions of education levels, personal educational orientation, exploratory activities, computerization, active teaching methods and others are discussed.

Scientists have often compared any organization with the living organism where all elements have a significance which increases according to the relationship between them (Meyer & Davis, 2007). But what kind of relationship should be there in the institution of higher education? What is the binding mechanism that does not violate the freedom of either students or teachers? How to prevent the centrifugal tendencies?

The significance of these questions can be analyzed on the basis of various grounds on which they are made and are considered to be important. For us the bases of study are the contradictions between:

- The need to update the structure and content of higher education and stereotypical attitudes to theoretical knowledge development, uniform methods of cognitive activities.
- Potential of the higher educational system and the lack of practice of constructing unique image of each higher educational institution.

We assume the idea of constructing the generative atmosphere that have always opposed the destabilizing effects of fluctuations arising in educational institution to be very important (Prigogine & Stengers, 2003). Its manifestation is expressed in such a phenomenon as the way of life of the educational institution which we call - "Tenor of Life". That is why our research is focused on need of definition of the principles of unique Tenor of Life for the educational institution.

The modern institution in higher education does not offer a uniform "ideal" image of the graduate, but gives everyone tools for reality development. Students gain both fundamental knowledge and skills of interaction with the other people, experience of independent activity and their own attitude to everything that surrounds them. Their active position and responsibility can be formed only in unique educational institution's Tenor of Life.

Unique Tenor of Life provides an originality of "the graduate's portrait" and allows solving a number of important problems:

- Interaction of all components of educational process such as content, setup, goals, active positions, technologies;
- Expansion of range of impact on the personality through social environment development;
- Modeling of conditions for self-realization and self-affirmation of the personality;
- Development of traditions as guarantees of viability of educational system.

Increase of human capital's role is one of major factors of economic development, creation of the flexible and diversified system of professional education. It meets the requirements of labor market and innovative economy and becomes the main trend of a development of education.

Educational results are integrative on the nature, are irreducible to separate elements (knowledge, abilities and skills). They characterize not the discipline but personal achievements, ability to put and solve problems, to get, to structure and to apply knowledge in non-standard situations independently.

Recognizing that the main task of modern education is to harmonize external and internal space of the person, to provide integrity of his development in variety of kinds of activity, in unity of intellectual, emotional, social experience, we believe that one of the most effective resources of this task solution is the created educational institution Tenor of Life.

Relevance of the appeal to a problem of Tenor of Life creation is also defined by the fact that education ceases being the closed system, the only especial and exclusive matter of pedagogical community. Special role in these conditions play higher educational institutions as educational complexes which provide formation and development of the human capital, development of high technologies, modernization of economic and social spheres. New circumstances, exhaustion of previous forms of activity, the consolidated need for system changes in them demand development of their organizational mechanisms of formation Tenor of Life corresponding to the present stage of education development. The complete, complex result can be received only in that case when the special atmosphere based on the general values, motives, the activity purposes, allowing each person to open himself is created. The formulated unique Tenor of Life will help to guide both the organized impact and the indirect environment influence to the same direction.

## 2. Objectives, methodology and research design

The common goal of this research is justification of the principles of the Tenor of Life in higher educational institution realizing the developing potential of modern trends of education.

Specific goals:

- Analyzing modern methodological approaches to justification of the principles of formation Tenor of Life;
- Developing the basic principles of Tenor of Life formation in higher educational institution;
- Presenting the system of criteria and indicators of tenor of life concerning the developed principles.

The concept "Tenor of life" is considered to be rather new in higher educational sphere, but it relates more likely to its verbal definition. But the content of this concept has been reason for steady interest both scientists in pedagogics and acting teachers for a long period of time. Back in the late 19th - early 20th centuries, many motherland scientists wrote about a special "spirit of school", not using the notion "Tenor of Life".

Foreign studies had a great impact on ideas of national scientists about the daily school life in the last decade of the twentieth century: The concept "hidden curriculum" was entered by P.W. Jackson (1968), some other scientist paid attention that at schools there was a certain phenomenon which they called "not studied training program". They explained inaccuracy of this term with not less inexact fragmentariness of the existing pedagogical experiments. Roland Meighan (1981) offered his interpretation which suggested that the "hidden curriculum" was not the content of training but an approach to life and education. At the second half of the twentieth century some foreign scientists understood the characteristics of various processes in the organizational life, the specifics of communication between all subjects (stakeholders) of the educational process under this term. J. Martin (1983) emphasized that the effect of this phenomenon consists in norms and values transfer.

The period of the second half of XX century – beginning of XXI century in Russia is characterized by search of new life-models in educational institutions. I.D. Frumin (1999) defined pedagogical meaning of "Tenor of Life" through the concept of "context". A.N. Tubelsky (2001) understood the set of the hidden factors of educational process (the atmosphere, educational process, relationship, norms and rules) as the Tenor of Life. V.I. Slobodchikov (2000) told about internal space of the personality as special educational environment and an important component of Tenor of Life. To meet the real needs of practice the conceptual model of the Tenor of Life of the educational institution had been developed (Korsakova, 2010). The unique educational institution shape is created on its basis as the source of stability and continuity of its development.

Changes of educational strategy from "education for life" to "education throughout life" led researchers to a problem of modern tenor of life formation in higher educational institutions. Reality activates scientists' attempts to structure this phenomenon (Tenor of Life) and illustrate its role in the development of education. They analyze the structure and visible functions of the educational institutions (Margolis, 2001). They consider the problems of unveiling the hidden curriculum and providing a blueprint for both students and teachers on how to navigate the institutional culture of higher education (Smith, 2013). So the questions of university's image formation are discussed (Fimina, 2011), the concept of "effective image of the university" is introduced (Alikperov, 2001), problems of improving educational management and student's gratification with studying conditions are considered (Korol', 2011).

Analyzing all variety of methodological approaches we come to a conclusion that the Tenor of Life is the universal instrument of constructing holistic space in educational institution. Tenor of Life thanks to the "the hidden contents" provides inclusiveness to the globalized world, the decision of significant tasks, updating of the gained knowledge and formed abilities, acquisition necessary practical experience for students. This idea becomes concrete through a choice and justification of the principles of Tenor of Life formation in higher educational institution.

*Principle of education orientation to the person* is revealed through a number of provisions:

- Priority of students interests in education in comparison with interests of the state, society, social groups as well as in comparison with interests of other participants of educational process (teachers, parents, administrations);
- Accounting of specific features and properties;
- Design of individual educational trajectories.

*Principle of subjectivity* assumes understanding Tenor of Life as an instrument of student's subject position to his own educational development:

- Ability not only to appropriate the world of subjects and ideas, but also to create the new one;
- Ability to choose good solutions for to be guided in a non-standard situation;
- The need for a reflection as condition of conscious regulation of own behavior; understanding of responsibility for the phenomena of social and natural reality; orientation on self-realization; forming dialogue with the external world.

*Principle of joint activity* is realized in creation of:

- Confidential easy atmosphere of communication;
- Partner relations between teacher and student in common creative decisions;
- Using of integrative and design technologies by the teachers.

*Principle of educational process integrity* means that Tenor of Life harmonizes all kinds of activity in higher educational institution. Integrity of the personality is the result of educational process integrity, coherence of functioning of all Tenor of Life components.

*Principle of variability* makes it possible for students to get all variety of educational trajectories, to select their own trajectory through variety and flexibility of training programs, textbooks, educational technologies.

*Principle of education contents openness* is supported by social partnership in the organization of Tenor of Life. Educational standards set the only part of requirements to results and structure of educational programs. Each educational institution forms the variable part of the program. The choice of the contents is defined on the basis of extensive social dialogue, with the assistance of public organizations, professional communities.

This way the design of Tenor of Life in compliance with the presented approaches and principles allows creating special style, spirit, the atmosphere of educational institution at the heart of which there is the care for development and creative self-realization of students.

### 3. Discussion of the research outcomes

It is extremely important for the designing of Tenor of Life in higher education to definite the system of indicators and criteria. However the solution of the designated problem is in a fog at the expressed correlation of Tenor of Life with hidden factors of educational process. The difficulties of studying the hidden parameters of any phenomenon begin to be revealed on a phase of definition of empirical indicators and criteria system. According to this there is some sense to emphasize a terminological difference between notions of “formalized tenor of life” and “formed tenor of life”. It is accepted in our research that these two variables are not connected one with another. For example there exists higher educational institution in which Tenor of Life does not correspond to any of known types but it is created completely. It can only mean that the educational institution is characterized by a number of the steady indicators of stability in educational activity. But our aim is to present the assessment of expressiveness of these or those tendencies of its high-quality changes, transformations according to the tendencies of development of education and allocated principles.

In the course of methodical promotion system determination of the revealed criteria and indicators the emphasis was placed on use of the educational environment examination technique of V.A. Yasvin (2001). However as we have considered a basic difference of concept of “Tenor of Life” from “educational environment” there was possible to attract these specified methodical tools to only separate criteria of Tenor of Life formation. That is in the diagnostics according to the principles of personal orientation and integrity the technique of an assessment of educational environment was used.

Basic irreducibility of phenomenon of Tenor of Life to concept of educational environment demanded attraction of additional techniques. For definition of an index of group unity the technique of C.E. Seashore (1961) was used. It allowed drawing conclusions about nature of intra organizational interrelations and interactions of subjects. For the definition of further opportunities of educational institution to achieve the ideal result of educational process the author's questionnaires based on self-determination of subjects of educational process were developed. Thus the system of indicators and criteria of diagnostics of Tenor of Life in educational institution is presented in Table 1.

*Perception of Tenor of Life* is considered to be the indicator of a conscious inclusiveness in it of all subjects of educational process. The conscious inclusiveness is possible only in case of understanding and acceptance the mission, target and valuable reference points of activity by subjects of educational institution.

*Subject Unity of Tenor of Life* is the indicator of teacher-to-student interaction, characterized as partner relationship. It means that student is not the object of teacher's activity but the subject of his own education. But if the integrative interdisciplinary sphere of teachers' development is created in the Tenor of Life the technologies they use will facilitate students' development.

*Generality of Tenor of Life* corresponds to indicators of supporting teams, existence of the concept of development of educational institution, various forms of work with pedagogical collective, an inclusiveness of students, realization of author's educational models which ensure coordination and integration of various processes in educational institution.

*Coherence of Tenor of Life* is logically correlated to the principle of openness since it shows the degree of local environment influence and influences of other factors of habitat on the identity.

*Dominance of Tenor of Life* characterizing the importance of the local environment for subjects of educational process illustrates the principle of variability.

Table 1. System of indicators and criteria of Tenor of Life formation

Principles	Indicators	Criteria
Principle of personal orientation	Perception of Tenor of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness about the educational institution</li> <li>• Symbols</li> <li>• Communication with graduates</li> <li>• Activity of employees</li> <li>• Activity of students</li> </ul>
Principle of joint activity	Subject Unity of Tenor of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Index of group unity</li> </ul>
Principle of integrity	Generality of Tenor of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team of adherents</li> <li>• The existence of concept of development of educational institution</li> <li>• The variety forms of work with pedagogical collective</li> <li>• Inclusiveness of students</li> <li>• Realization of self-created educational models</li> </ul>
Principle of openness	Coherence of Tenor of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Succession with other educational institution</li> <li>• Regional integration</li> <li>• Broad social integration</li> </ul>
Principle of variability	Dominance of Tenor of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extent of modern educational technologies development by teachers</li> </ul>

Thus the aspiration to the embodiment of the principles of Tenor of Life was aimed more at creation, but not at transformation of already created operating conditions of educational process. Nevertheless procedural installations of educational environment examination do not lose relevance within analytical activity therefore they were involved in definition of indicators and criteria of formation of tenor of life.

On the basis of the conducted research it is possible to make a number of conclusions significant for the idea of Tenor of Life in the higher educational institution:

1. The emergence and development of Tenor of Life is determined by selection of adequate cultural and historical conditions and justification of the principles of its formation.
2. They are: Principle of joint activity; Principle of integrity; Principle of openness; Principle of variability.
3. Solution of the problem of Tenor of Life formation is difficult due to the correlation of this phenomenon with a set of latent factors of educational process. In this connection the attention is given to a system of criteria and indicators for assessing Tenor of Life in educational institution which includes: Perception according to the principle of personal orientation; Generality according to the principle of integrity; Coherence according to the principle of openness; Dominance according to the principle of variability.

#### 4. Conclusions

Improving the quality in higher education is designated as the development purpose in the normative and methodical documents which appeared over the last ten years and reflected a state policy in the field of education. There is the great need of transformations in the system of education. Relevance of the studied problem is caused by

change of ideas of the educational content and its results, conditions of the organization of educational process, nature of interaction of its various participants. But neither quantity of programs nor the great amount of attempts to create new platforms, new disciplines and new technologies will bring new quality. It can only be born in the special Tenor of Life in the educational institution.

Tenor of life in the educational institution is determined by the system of relations between all participants in the educational process. The quality of these relations depends on the efficiency of the educational institution, satisfaction of all subjects of the process by the results of education. Tenor of Life has the integrative function which harmonizes cognitive, valuable, regulative sense of life in the educational institution.

One of the key characteristics of Tenor of Life is integrity. Solutions of modern problems in the field of education can't be based on rigid differentiation of functions. Harmonizing the motives and goals of the students and the educational institution is not easy, but necessary. Therefore, it is important to identify and validate principles of Tenor of Life in higher education which would meet the challenges of our time.

An important result of the research is studying the system of criteria and indicators for assessing Tenor of Life. It takes into account the correlation of explicit and implicit factors of life that allows transition of a higher institution to the quality level of educational activity that involves the optimization of the organization and proper functioning of the educational process at the expense of stability of Tenor of Life forms.

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