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**MODEL OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING OF UNIVERSITY
TEACHER IN PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY: CONCEPTUAL
FOUNDATIONS**



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Abstract

The article touches upon the conceptual foundations of the model of subjective well-being of the university teacher in professional activity. This is a holistic psychological characteristic that reflects the teacher's attitude to various components of his activity. It reveals the level of conformity of the subjective world of a University teacher with his real professional activity and indicates the degree of adaptation of the teacher to this activity. In the developed model, the components of the professional activity of a university teacher act as the basis of a subjective image that characterizes the relationship between the existential and everyday experience of a teacher. Two indicators are used, the first of which represents the teacher's existential experience, and the second represents his everyday experience. The values of the first indicator are set according to the criterion of importance (significance) of the components of the university teacher's professional activity. The values of the second indicator are determined in accordance with the criterion of time spent by the teacher on the components of his professional activity, they characterize to what extent he can realize various components of the professional activity. Both indicators are characterized by relative assessments; in order to obtain them the procedure of direct ranking of the components of professional activity following the two indicated criteria is most suitable. The results of testing the diagnostic tools developed on the basis of the described model will be presented in the next article (in the empirical part of this study).

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Keywords: University teacher, subjective well-being, professional activity, model, existential experience, everyday experience



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1. Introduction

Pedagogical activity is usually described as a set of functions implemented by teachers, and they (teachers) are most often represented as bearers of the corresponding competencies. However, the formalized system of standard requirements for teachers' professional competencies does not reflect the human nature of their professional activities. This approach is convenient for education managers and performs the traditional scientific paradigm, according to which 1) there is a real object of study, description, evaluation; 2) the subject of study is formed; it represents the object and provides an opportunity to assess its state. Assuming, in accordance with this paradigm, that the activity of a university teacher is an object of study, it is usually characterized following the requirements of the education system. At the same time, when the teacher's activity is effective, then it is considered that the importance of each implemented function is determined by the degree of its influence on the result.

However, the subject of activity (teacher) cannot be represented only as a performer of certain functions. Pedagogical activity is ineffective without immersion of the teacher in it, without his personal involvement. Ignoring the human measurements of such an activity in its functional representation causes a reduced, distorted representation. Therefore, a special value-semantic contextual framework is necessary for an adequate analysis of the activities of a university teacher. The human essence of pedagogical activity is shown in the statement: 'the teacher works by himself, he is the main tool of his pedagogical activity.' The capabilities of these human tools are determined not only by their professional competencies, but also by their personal qualities, their values, and their own aspirations. Therefore, it is important to have a personal resource from which a university teacher can draw the strength, motivation, and values necessary for his work. Such a personal resource is his subjective well-being in activity. This well-being significantly affects the self-perception of the teacher, the relationships and interaction of participants in the educational process, and the quality of educational activities.

Subjective well-being is one of the most important parameters of human capital. It is considered by various authors as an indicator of the quality of life and health of a person. It is also a factor of the success of adaptation to the professional environment, and a condition necessary for high results in work. When defining the concept of "subjective well-being", researchers consider that it is an integral psychological characteristic of a person's life and reflects the value basis of his attitude to various spheres of his own life and activity, as well as the level of adaptation to them (Zenina, 2012). Recognizing the systematicity and integrity of such a characteristic as subjective well-being, the authors of this research believe that the measure of its presence may differ in different constituents of human life. Thus, it is advisable to study this state in all life activities of a person, and in their various particular aspects. Since the personality of a university teacher is an object of our scientific interest, the authors, first of all, consider it fundamentally important to study the teacher's subjective well-being in his professional activity.

2. Problem Statement

The known concepts of subjective well-being are based on the use of various indicators that reflect feelings, opinions, or perceptions of respondents (Fitch et al., 2017; Song et al., 2020). These concepts are oriented on perceiving the very phenomenon of subjective well-being and the factors that determine it.

However, they are not yet used in education due to the laboriousness of the diagnostic tools and the need to enlist the services of qualified specialists with psychological education. In addition, it is difficult to personify the state of subjective well-being of each university teacher. The authors believe that such an assessment is important. It is necessary to develop a conceptual basis for personification of diagnostics subjective well-being of each university teacher in his professional activities. This will allow identifying the needs of each university teacher and designing management decisions aimed at taking them into account and satisfying them.

3. Research Questions

There are various descriptive models of subjective well-being in the publications. For example, univariate models are known in which the corresponding index of subjective well-being is used. To assess it, people are asked how satisfied they are with their lives in general or how happy they are. When answering, the respondents rate their feelings according to the proposed scale. Indirect methods based on specific causal relationships are also used. In particular, it is believed that the underlying cause for subjective well-being “is the self-actualization, which provides the possibility of including the personality in external spaces, the achievement of congruence between the inner and outer worlds and, as a result, a sense of personal identity” (Ryabikina & Tanasov, 2010, p. 14).

Detailed assessments of the state of subjective well-being are obtained using the multivariate indices. To determine their values, respondents are asked to evaluate their contentment with specific constituents of life and activity. Since there is no general notion of the constituents of subjective well-being, various complex models are used. In particular, in the article (Eremina, 2017) used a model with three constituents, namely emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction. In the study (Fitch et al., 2017), the subjective well-being of educators is described by a model containing four components. Two of them represent satisfaction with 1) life in general and its specific aspects; 2) work and working conditions. The third one describes satisfaction throughout the year and the fourth – the moods and emotions of the past week. The work (Shamionov & Beskova, 2018) shows a model consisting of five components of subjective well-being: emotional; hedonistic; existential activity; socio-normative and ego-well-being.

It is known that subjective well-being sets a fairly broad value-semantic contextual framework that allows us to consider a university teacher as a person, professional, and a subject of activity. Besides, it determines the nature and quality of the professional activity of a university teacher, and also depends on the nature and quality of this activity.

4. Purpose of the Study

This work is aimed at forming a model according to which subjective well-being is a criterion for harmonizing the personal world and the professional activity of a university teacher. The use of this criterion makes it possible to judge how the university teachers feel when doing their activities.

5. Research Methods

The achievement of this goal was ensured by a study containing theoretical and empirical parts.

In the theoretical part, a set of analytical methods that are adequate to the problem under consideration was used.

First, a system of requirements was developed that defined the essence of the created model.

- The model should provide an opportunity to receive a personalized assessment of the state of subjective well-being of a university teacher in his professional activity.
- Primary data should reflect a subjective view of professional activity and provide an indirect description of subjective well-being in order to reduce the impact of the social expectations.
- The resulting indicators should adequately show the psychological meaning of the ‘subjective well-being of a university teacher in professional activity’ phenomenon.
- The values of the resulting estimations should be determined by simple processing of the primary data, and instrumental diagnostic procedures should be suitable for use by professional pedagogues.
- The obtained assessments should allow determining those aspects of professional activity that carry the risk of developing subjective stress and subjective ill-being of a university teacher.

Then the well-known concepts of subjective well-being were analyzed. They describe it from different sides and are applicable to a university teacher. In particular, subjective well-being is considered as a characteristic indicating the degree of meeting person’s needs in his life. The subjective well-being describes how good, in the opinion of a person, his life is, what he feels and thinks about his own life and activities. From the standpoint of activity, subjective well-being determines the assessment of a person’s ability to choose available resources and use them to realize his desires and preferences. It also demonstrates the degree of correspondence between self-actualization and vitality of a person, and is an indicator of the full functioning of his personality. These and other definitions of the concept of ‘subjective well-being’ were interpreted. Taking into account that the purpose of the developed model is to provide a personalized assessment of the state of subjective well-being of a university teacher in his professional activities, the following definition was adopted. The subjective well-being of a university teacher in professional activity is an integral characteristic, representing his attitude to various constituents of his activity, as well as the degree and nature of involvement in their implementation. This characteristic indicates the level of correspondence between the subjective world of a university teacher and its real professional activity. It indicates the degree of adaptation to this activity felt by the teacher.

The meaning of this definition has been compared with the content of well-known concepts that are used in assessing subjective well-being. As an analysis result, it has been found that the concept according to which the subjective well-being of a university teacher in professional activity is characterized by the degree of correspondence between two semantic formations corresponds to the above system of requirements for the model. The first of them represents the specified activity in the value sphere of the teacher, reflecting the corresponding existential experience. The second is formed in the teacher’s personal world as a result of feelings caused by the processes of pedagogical life, and it takes the form of the teacher’s everyday experience. Thus, the relationship between the existential and everyday experience of a university teacher reflects the relationship between the ‘value’ and ‘accessibility’ of various components of professional activity for him. This ratio, in fact, characterizes the correspondence between the two layers of the teacher’s consciousness, one of which contains the results of awareness of the leading values from

the sphere of professional activity, and the other contains the idea of what is directly accessible to the university teacher, what he can reach (Fantalova, 2001).

Thus, the degree of subjective well-being of a university teacher in professional activity significantly depends on whether and to what extent he can carry out various components of this activity in accordance with what their personal significance is for him. The greater the value of such a degree, the more fully the personal potential of the teacher is revealed, and the higher the assessment of the level of his subjective well-being in professional activity (Belyaeva & Belyaeva, 2019; Moskvina, 2016).

6. Findings

Performed analysis means that professional activity is not only a means of performing functions inherent in the educational process, but also a system that provides self-actualization of teachers in specific conditions of higher education.

University teacher in his professional activity develops his own subjective view of such activity, identifies its constituents, and forms his attitude to them. “A person does not just move from one activity to another, activities act as certain value life tasks solved by a person, which he himself sets and solves, or which life sets before him” (Abulkhanova & Berezina, 2001, p. 25). As a result, the components of professional activity become the basis of a subjective view that characterizes the balance between the existential and everyday experience of the teacher. In our model, the existential experience of a university teacher determines the value preferences of certain components of professional activity and is characterized by their significance and importance for the teacher. Therefore, the first indicator, which represents in the model the existential experience of the university teacher, should reflect the measure according to which each component of professional activity is filled with personal meaning is important, significant for the teacher.

At the same time, everyday experience accumulates the priorities of actual practice. Such experience is formed both on the basis of the university teacher’s own value preferences, and in accordance with external conditions and requirements. It indicates to what extent the resources available to the teacher are used to meet the need for self-realization, self-fulfillment, self-expression in specific forms of their activity. This need predetermines the value meaning of time for a person, because time is the most important resource that a person controls. But time is not only some kind of objective entity. It can and should also be viewed as an entity with its subjective characteristics which are adequate for a human (Moskvina & Fishman, 2020). The significance for life and activity of a university teacher of one or another constituent of the professional activity is reflected in his assessment of the time spent on this constituent. Therefore, the second indicator, which represents in the model this significance, should display the measure that corresponds to the specified assessment. The first and second indicators are characterized by relative estimates that can be obtained using the following procedures: 1) direct ranking of objects (Rokeach, 1973); 2) pairwise comparison of objects (Fantalova, 2001). In both cases, the objects compared are components of the university teacher’s professional activity.

We appreciated the capabilities of these procedures. The analysis revealed that results obtained when using them are affected in different ways by cognitive distortions, which often make people's judgments and assessments not rational (Blanco, 2017). When ranking directly, the respondent must simultaneously

use a significantly larger amount of information and perform more complex mental operations than in each pairwise comparison. This leads to more significant cognitive distortions than those that occur in paired comparisons, since the human mind is able to use a limited amount of information productively. In addition, the factor of social expectations has a stronger effect on the results of direct ranking than on the results of pairwise comparison. Consequently, the risks of cognitive biases in pairwise comparison are significantly lower than in direct ranking. When making a pairwise comparison, the next object is compared with each object from the existing list. In this case, the respondent chooses which object from this pair is more important for him, significant (the first indicator) and more time-consuming (the second indicator). Then, for each object, general relative estimates of the values of the first and second indicators are formed as the total numbers of the corresponding elections of this object

The developed model adequately represents the essence of the subjective well-being of a university teacher in professional activity. The model gives an opportunity to characterize the degree of correspondence between the existential and everyday experience of the university teacher. Reflecting the values and meanings of the teacher's professional activity from his internal positions, the model makes it possible to answer the following questions.

- To what extent does professional activity affect the state of subjective well-being of each university teacher?
- What is the level of congruence achieved by a university teacher between his inner world and the outer world in which his professional activities are done?
- What are the most probable risks of developing subjective stress of a university teacher in his professional activity?

7. Conclusion

In the course of the theoretical part of the study, a model has been formed that makes it possible to carry out a systematic diagnosis of each university teacher's subjective well-being in his professional activity.

In the empirical part of the study the following tasks are to be solved:

- 1) to specify the resulting indicators, allowing to assess a) the state of subjective well-being for each university teacher; b) the state of subjective well-being for a sample of university teachers;
- 2) to create tools that allow obtaining primary data online and / or offline;
- 3) to test the developed diagnostic tools on the basis of a sample containing at least 100 teachers.

The results of testing the developed diagnostic tools are presented in a separate article.

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