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Personal Psychological Culture as a Condition for Psychological Health Preservation of Lecturers, in the Context of Education Modernization

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the problem of modern society – the preservation of mental health of individuals. It is noted that in the conditions of modernization of higher education special requirements for high school teacher, which should have a new set of competencies and a certain set of psychological characteristics that characterize the level of its professional and psychological culture. The article describes the concept: the psychological health of the individual, psychological culture, its structural components. The results of empirical study of psychological culture and mental health of high school teachers. The study showed that in some of the teachers there is an insufficient level of development of the intellectual component of psychological culture – teachers are not well aware of the psychology students, the high level of young people knowledge of psychology was marked by the teachers who have special (mental) training; study of regulatory and practical (behavioral), and value-semantic components of psychological culture revealed that most of the teachers have high and medium level of development of these indicators, however, part of the teachers is not enough ability to rapidly establish deep and rapid establishment, to subject-subject communication. It has been established that there is a close correlation indicators of psychological health and psychological culture of personality of high school teacher.

The article noted that the findings are important for the further development of preventive measures, as well as to develop guidelines aimed at the preservation and development of the psychological health of the individual university teachers, on the alignment of the university system of improving their psychological culture.

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Keywords: psychological culture, personality, intellectual (cognitive) component of psychological culture, regulatory and practical (behavioural) component of psychological culture, axiological and semantic (spiritual and moral) component of psychological culture, psychological health, higher education teacher.

1. Introduction

The entry of Russian Federation into the Bologna Declaration allows our country to carry out educational reform in higher vocational schools according to European standards.



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Modernization tendencies of the 21st century set essentially new tasks for professional education. Some of these inclinations are listed below:

- acceleration of societal development rates which results to the need for training people to adapt to fast changing life conditions;
- transition to post-industrial, information society, significant increase of cross-cultural interaction, and, in this light, communicative skills and tolerance are deemed important;
- the rise and expansion of global problems, which can be solved only through cooperation within the world community, and a general demand for modern thinking patterns;
- democratization of the society, growing political and social choice opportunities assume the need for raising the level of readiness of citizens for such choices;
- dynamic development of economy, growth of competition, reduction of the sphere of unskilled and low-skill work, and profound structural changes in the sphere of employment will define constant need for professional upgrading and retraining, as well as increasing of professional mobility;
- growth in the value of human capital assets (in the developed countries it makes up for 70-80% of national wealth) causes an intensive advancement of education of both the young and adult population.

Additionally, conformance to international standards, orientation of educational programmes contents, development of the key capabilities, changes in job markets, education continuity during human life, and transition from subject teaching to inter-subject modular training leading to the flexibility of professional education are the tendencies of modern education development (The Bologna Process and its Implications for Russia: Integration of Higher Education in Europe, 2005).

Currently, in the Russian Federation, a formulation of strategic tasks aimed at the development of education is being worked out. In recent years, these problems are being solved by means of implementation of the programme of pedagogical education modernization, the main objective of which is the improvement of preparation quality of the teaching staff, making the system of pedagogical education consistent with the standards of teachers' professional activity (Margolis, 2014; Vinokourova, G.A., 2015).

The key figure of higher education modernization, is the higher education teacher possessing a new set of competences, for the purpose of transforming the society possessing a certain set of psychological traits characterizing the level of his/her professional and psychological culture. Absence or insufficient completeness of these personal competences and properties, on one hand, can obstruct the performance of the teacher's professional duties, interfere with the realization of tasks set for each member of the professional community, and on the other hand, can be the reason for dissatisfaction with professional activities, which becomes a source of emotional imbalance and increased anxiety.

2. Problem Statement

Researches in previous years have shown noticeable deterioration of teachers' health, especially teachers within the productive ages of 35-45. Psychological researches also confirm that this age can be associated with factors leading to destructive changes in the functional condition of organisms of

people who are actively trying to actualize themselves in their professions, especially lecturing related professions (Khusainova, R. M., 2006; Petanova E., 2011). It was also discovered that this age accompanies a syndrome of «professional burnout», which demands special measures of psychological prophylaxis and correction (Mitina, L. M., 2005; Maklakov, A. G., 2006). In conditions of education modernization, the problem of preservation of higher education teachers' psychological health is particularly important, as the main function of psychological health lies in the maintenance of active dynamic balance between the person and environments demanding the mobilization of personal resources (Hukhlayeva, O. V., 2003; Shuvalov, A. G., 2004; Vasilyeva OS., 2007).

Nowadays, the concurrent resource of teachers' activities is not only special knowledge, possession of information, mastering the technologies of training and education, but also the cultivation of professional and psychological cultures, which leads to the professional success of higher education teachers (Mukhametzyanova, F. Sh., 1995; Psychological culture as a basic competence in teacher training in the conditions of modernization of Russian education: Proceedings of the IV Inter-regional scientific-practical, 2005; Lezhenina, A. A., 2007; Belousova, A. K., 2010). Research of psychological health and psychological culture of higher education teachers is especially important in the conditions of higher education modernization happening in Russia.

3. Research Questions

The major concern of this research is the question of the existence of interrelations between indicators of psychological health, and psychological culture of higher education teachers, and also possibilities of treating personal psychological culture as a condition of preservation and development of psychological health.

4. Purpose of Study

The purpose of this research is to study the features of psychological health and psychological culture of the modern higher education teacher, stating the existence and the nature of interrelation between these indicators.

The first research problem consisted in studying theoretical methodological approaches in psychology for the separation of the main components of personal psychological culture.

The main indicators of higher education teachers' psychological culture were considered to be the following: intellectual (cognitive) component of psychological culture, namely, knowledge of adolescent psychology; regulatory practical (behavioural) component of psychological culture, the indicators of which include ways of reaction to conflict, flexibility of behaviour, and sociability; valuable semantic or spiritual moral component of psychological culture, the indicators of this component are self-esteem, self-acceptance and ideas of human nature were.

As a result of the theoretical analysis of the objectives of this research, an indicator of personal psychological health was noted: personal anxiety and aggression, the high level of which can be seen in disturbances of psychological health.

5. Research Methods

Methods of theoretical analysis and empirical methods were used in the research.

Theoretical and methodological base of this research was made by conceptual statements of humanistic psychologists on the study of personality as a self-developing and self-improving system (Maslow, A. , Rogers, C. etc.); scientific works on the problem of psychological culture (Bodalev, A. A., Kolmogorova, L. S., Romanov, K. M., Semikin, V. V. etc.) and also works of domestic and foreign researchers on the problem of personal psychological health (Dubrovina, I. V., Frankl, V., Hukhlayeva, O. V. , Lynch, M., Slobodchikov, V. I. & Shuvalov, A. V. etc.).

The empirical methods included: studying psychological culture indicators of intellectual (cognitive), regulatory and practical (behavioural), axiological and semantic (spiritual) components and indicators of psychological health (anxiety and aggression); according to the named indicators the following techniques were picked up: “Assessment of knowledge of adolescent psychology” (N. I. Andrianov), K. Thomas behaviour description test (adaptation by N. V. Grishina), Technique of measurement of personal self-updating level (modification of L. Ya. Gozman and M. V. Kroz), Anxiety level self-rating Scale (Ch. D. Spilberger, Yu. L. Khanin), questionnaire «Determination of aggression and hostility» (A. Bass & A. Darki, 2001); processing the results (description of psychological health and psychological culture features of higher education teachers, stating the existence and nature of psychological culture and psychological health indicators interrelation by means of mathematical processing methods (Spearman’s Rank Correlation Coefficient).

160 teachers of the Mordovia M. E. Evseviev State Pedagogical Institute acted as subjects of research. The age of the participants varied from 30 to 56.

5. Findings

At the first stage of the research, the study of intellectual (cognitive) component of teachers’ psychological culture was carried out. For this purpose we used the technique “Assessment of knowledge of adolescent psychology which allows defining the level of formation of teachers’ psychological knowledge.

According to the technique three levels of knowledge were determined: low, medium and high. Analysis of the data showed that most teachers 85 (53%) had medium levels of knowledge of adolescent psychology, 35 (22%) had high levels of knowledge, and 40 (25%), showed low levels of knowledge of adolescent psychology. Low level of knowledge is was as a result of teachers’ false theoretical ideas about students’ age peculiarities. Medium level of teachers’ knowledge showed that teachers based professional activities on common sense - that is the knowledge is received from their own experience, there is no scientific basis in them. High standard of knowledge is based on scientific data. High level of knowledge of adolescent psychology was shown by teachers having special (psychological) preparation.

Further we studied indicators of psychological culture by means of personal self-updating research

technique (SUT). By means of this technique, the valuable data confirming the level of formation of indicators of psychological culture such as “Regulatory and practical (behavioural)”, and “Valuable and semantic” were obtained.

Research of psychological culture of higher education teachers by means of Measurement Technique of Personal Self-updating Level showed that the highest rates are received on Self-esteem scale (SE) and Ideas of human nature scale (N). According to the contents of these scales teachers are capable of estimating their advantages, positive features, they respect themselves because of that. Also it is typical of them to perceive human nature as positive in general. Most of respondents showed medium results, within the ranges of 45-55 points on Self-acceptance scale (SA). These results are indicators of mental and statistical norm of examinees. However, the received results on this scale mean that not all participants of the research accept themselves as they are, with all the disadvantages and weaknesses, it is sometimes more difficult for them to get self-acceptance than self-esteem. Examinees showed low marks on the scale of Flexibility of behaviour (F) – 44 points – and Sociability (S) – 44 points – that speaks about inability of teachers to react to changing situations quickly and adequately, and the incapability of teachers to quickly establish deep and emotionally close contacts with people.

Furthermore, in accordance with the plan of research we carried out a study on higher education teachers’ behavioural styles in conflict. According to the Thomas Test, results showed that «competition» as a behavioural strategy in conflict is chosen by 16 (10%) persons, “adaptation” – by 48 persons (30%), “avoidance” – 16 (10%), “cooperation” – 40 (25%), and “compromise” – 40 (25%).

It is necessary to notice that behavioural strategies chosen by participants of the research have crucial importance for its subsequent development, for the resolutions of conflict. Psychological culture helps the person understand how to achieve the desirable objectives, using his/her abilities and opportunities, especially if it concerns behaviour in everyday conflict situations.

Thus, the analysis of the studied indicators of psychological culture confirms various levels of higher education teachers’ psychological culture formalization that demands development of the differentiated system of psychological and pedagogical maintenance.

Further, according to the set objectives, we investigated the psychological health of higher education teachers by studying the levels of personal anxiety and aggression. Analysis of the data showed that a high level of personal anxiety is shown by 40 (25%) of teachers, medium levels of anxiety is demonstrated by 104 (65%) of examinees, and low levels of anxiety is established for 16 (10%) of higher education teachers. According to indicators of aggression and hostility it is established that a high level of aggression is shown by 24 (15%) of examinees, an average level of aggression is demonstrated by 80 (50%) of teachers, and a low level of aggression is established for 56 (35%). High levels of hostility is shown by 96 (60.3%) of teachers, an average level of hostility – by 48 (30%) of examinees, and a low level of hostility – by 16 (10%).

The obtained data were mathematically processed. For stating the interrelations between indicators of psychological culture and psychological health we used Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Value and importance of correlation coefficient between indicators of teachers' psychological culture and psychological health

Indicators of psychological culture	Indicators of psychological health	
	Aggression	Hostility
Intellectual (cognitive) component	0,707	-1,97*
Regulatory practical (behavioural) component:		
1. Flexibility of behaviour (F);	- 3,36**	- 3,86**
2. Sociability (S)	- 1,78*	- 2,16*
Valuable and semantic component:		
4. Self-esteem (SE)	- 2,35*	- 2,24*
5. Self-acceptance (SA)	- 4,67**	3,16**
6. Idea of human nature (N)	- 4,89**	5,83**

Note: n = 160, * – 1,9600 (p < 0,05); ** – 2,5758 (p < 0,01);

Statistical data processing allowed for establishing the existence of interrelation between indicators of personal psychological culture and psychological health. Negative interrelation (at $p < 0,05$) was stated between the following indicators: “aggression” and “sociability”, “aggression” and “self-esteem”; “hostility” and “intellectual component”, “hostility” and “sociability”, “hostility” and “self-esteem”; “anxiety” and “sociability”, “anxiety” and “self-esteem”. Accurately significant negative interrelation of high significance value (at $p < 0,01$) is found between the indicators: “aggression” and “flexibility of behaviour”, “aggression” and “self-acceptance”, “aggression” and “idea of human nature”; “hostility” and “flexibility of behaviour”, “hostility” and “self-acceptance”; “anxiety” and “sociability”, “anxiety” and “self-esteem”, “anxiety” and “self-acceptance”, “anxiety” and “idea of human nature”.

There is no interrelation found between indicators of psychological health (“aggression” and “anxiety”) and intellectual component of psychological culture, and also between anxiety and sociability as an indicator of regulatory practical components of psychological culture. Negative nature of the available correlations allowed us to assume that the higher the indicators of psychological culture, the lower the level of higher education teachers' aggression and anxiety.

8. Conclusions

Through empirical research we received the following results:

- Most teachers possess medium level of manifestation of intellectual (cognitive), regulatory and practical (behavioural), valuable and semantic (spiritual) components of psychological culture. Along with it, part of higher education teachers show low level display of psychological culture;
- Higher education teachers more often demonstrate medium level of anxiety and aggression that testifies to a safe condition of psychological health. Along with it, a number of higher education teachers possess raised indicators of personal anxiety and aggression, and also high level of hostility that can be signs of psychological trouble and disturbances of psychological health;
- Close interrelation between indicators of psychological health and psychological culture of the personalities of higher education teachers is stated; negative nature of the found correlation allows for the assumption that the higher the indicators of psychological culture, the lower the level of higher education teachers' aggression and anxiety.

The received results confirmed the need for development of scientific and methodical bases of preservation, and development of personal psychological health by means of the formation of psychological culture.

Practical significance of this research is defined by the fact that the received results can be used for activity projection, for organization of the work of psychological service in a higher education institution. The results of the research are important for further development of preventive measures and development of methodical recommendations directed to preservation and development of personal psychological health of higher education teachers, and forming a system of psychological culture improvement in institutions of higher learning.

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