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The ways of police cadets' social competence evaluation

V.M. KIIKOV

Kharkiv national university of internal affairs, Kharkiv, Ukraine, E-mail: kiikov20@mail.ru

Abstract

In the article analysis of general theoretic approaches towards competent and motivated behavior definitions, the model of police officer social competence was proposed along with the ways of its study. Based on development theory conception the initial validation of social competence logical system as a mean of cadets' social competence evaluation was considered in the article. Additionally, the determination of personality development level as possibility for definition and evaluation of cadets' social competence based on social behavior theory perspectives was considered. As well the social features of social competence of law-enforcement officers were discussed and the theoretical construction for schematized representation of police cadets' social competence structure is presented. The model includes: social norms related to police activity; motivation to socially-oriented activity; social intelligence, as integrative characteristic of cognitive and operational processes; emotional steadiness and communication skills. It was stated that the main characteristic of police cadets' social competence is efficiency of interaction between police and community. The other important factor influencing social competence is professional activity and in our case it is law-enforcement. The social environment of departmental educational institution was explored as a main factor contributing to development of police cadets' social competence components.

Key words: social competence, social interaction, policing, education, social values, motivation, social intelligence.

Шляхи дослідження соціальної компетентності курсантів

В.М. КІЙКОВ

Харківський національний університет внутрішніх справ, м. Харків, Україна,
E-mail: kiikov20@mail.ru

Авторське резюме

У статті наведено модель соціальної компетентності правоохоронця та шляхи її дослідження на основі аналізу загальнотеоретичних підходів до визначення компетентної та мотивованої поведінки. Розглянуто проблеми початкової валідації логічної системи соціальної компетентності з позицій теорії

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розвитку, як методу оцінювання соціальної компетентності курсантів. У статті також відображено особливості вивчення рівня розвитку особистості, як можливості визначення соціальної компетентності курсантів з позиції теорії соціальної поведінки. У статті розглядається соціальна складова поняття соціальної компетентності правоохоронця, що визначається через якість взаємодії міліції з населенням. Наводиться теоретична модель соціальної компетентності курсантів через основні вимоги суспільства до правоохоронної діяльності, норми та цінності, мотиваційний профайл, соціальний інтелект, емоційно-вольову сталість, комунікативні здібності. У статті доводиться першорядна роль соціального середовища навчального закладу у формуванні компонентів соціальної компетентності курсантів. Також розглядається основний вид професійної діяльності як визначальний фактор оцінки соціальної компетентності курсантів, як площина генерації про-соціальних цінностей і мотивації до соціальної діяльності. Проводиться аналіз переходу предмета дослідження з площини особистісного дослідження на рівень групи, соціальної спільноти та визначається можливість використання поняття соціальної компетентності для опису соціальних процесів.

Ключові слова: соціальна компетентність, курсант, інтеракція, відомча освіта, соціальні цінності, мотивація, соціальний інтелект.

Background. Lately in the Scientific's circles the more attention is given to the problem of conceptualization and evaluation of social competence of various age and professional groups. Within the study of such problem we set the task regarding the investigation of police cadet's social competence. The scientists, who try to define the social competence using the categories of individual abilities characteristics, i.e. in terms of knowledge and skills, are losing the integrative part of social competence. On the other hand, more broad definitions include the integrative part of social competence, but do not explicitly explain the ways of its assessment. The topicality of this article is in consideration of personality development processes through the social interaction, as the main definition of social competence and elaboration of scientific approaches for study of social competence of semi-closed groups with regulated social ties and relations, such as police cadets within the educational social institution. In order to explore the social competence of police cadets we have to set forth its structure, distinguish its components and describe the educational social environment. The article is focused on the solution of outlined problems.

Analysis of previous studies. The notion of social competence emerged in western psychology during the study of psycho and physiology development problems in children, the complications of their social adaptation (Gresham F.M., Reschly D.J., Rubin K.H., Rose-Krasnor L., Dodge K.A., Pettit G.S. and others). Because of its explicit social trends the study of social competence passed to the subjects of social pedagogy and psychology sciences (N.W. Slot, H.J.M. Spanjaard, Peter J. LaFreniere, Jean E. Dumas) and encompass different age and professional groups (Шабатура Л., Бахтеева С., Гиндина О., Егоров Д., Цветков В., Докторович М. and others). It is worthy to mention that there are no studies of police officers social competence have been carried out by domestic scientists.

Aim. Based on the analysis of studies conducted by foreign and domestic scientists in realm of social competence, primarily in profes-

sional sphere, to outline the structural components of police cadet's social competence and point out the theoretical approaches of its study. As well to distinguish social competence social features and significant factors those influence its development in police cadets.

Main text. The term "competence" has been applied to various forms of behavior. Thus, for example, Anderson and Messick provided 29 different references starting from special skills and finishing with abstract conceptions, such as identity consolidation [4].

The basic individual quality, which form the paradigm foundation in social competence study is "initiative", that directly correlate with self motivation and effective utilization of own initiative. It is obvious, that without motivation impossible to achieve significant for personality goals. People have to be persistent, to think and understand the social environment, analyze own actions, apply themselves in direction to achieve the goals utilizing the innovative methods and adjust them according to situation. They have to predict complications and choose the correct ways of its overcoming, to be able to provide help, to interact effectively with others [5]. In our case we have to consider the social competence of police cadets through the law enforcement activity, which is meaningful for them and setting forth the significant goals. The quality of attainment of these goals reveals the level of social competence development. We can present social competence of police cadets as a two-levels structure, on the bases we have individual qualities, the requirements to police officer outlined in relative regulations. This layer more psychological and represent police officer pro-social knowledge, skills and abilities. The second level characterizes the quality of police officer social competence formation through social interaction. This layer is more social and characterizes the social nature of social competence. In law-enforcement activity the most important social interaction is cooperation with community. Therefore we can state that social nature of any competence reveals in social interaction and motivation for

interaction with community is paramount social characteristic of police cadet's social competence.

In our development attempts of own model of police cadets social competence we have to analyze general theoretical approaches regarding its definition and evaluation. In the study for theoretical foundation of social competence model and the ways of assessment we can consider the results of British scientist John Raven, who studies the problem of competence in modern society, determined the motivation types, norms and values, capabilities, roles and dispositions, which are distinctive to various social groups. During consideration of any type of competence it is important to define the content of this notion, in our case the social competence of police cadets in University of Internal Affairs.

Conception of social competence is important in consideration of motivation, intellectual development, social adaptation, professionalism, social interaction. Taking into consideration such multidimensional characteristic the social competence is difficult to measure quantitatively, the big number of features and skills that associate with this conception hinder the systematization and unification of its investigation. Social competence is not individual characteristic, internal potential, but rather appears as person's ability to manage own available resources in achievement of pro-social goals, such as social adaptation. Therefore, on individual level the social competence is qualitative personality characteristic in coordination of his internal resources.

It is worthy to mention that in attempts to clarify the nature of social competence the important aspect is social norms and values, which determine the scale of preference, type of behavior and actually guide the person in social environment [2, 44-139]. Therefore the social competence assessment has to be more value and norms oriented. The values that personality accepts may serve as goals and results of action, determine the type of action. The consideration of competence generally and social competence particularly based on knowledge, abilities and skills, that is why for its determination we have to understand the values, professional sphere, social environment and person's intentions. The development of significant abilities the people apply in important for them activity require time and efforts. It is impossible to determine abilities separate from values. This means that for evaluation of social competence there is a need to utilize two-level approach. At the first step we have to establish values and determined by them models of behavior, and then evaluate the persons' abilities and skills to utilize potentially important cognitive and volitional components of competence for efficient activity. Values, skills, abilities and cognition are so interconnected, that there is no point to study them separately and develop discrete di-

agnostic methods. The signs of competence manifest themselves and develop in the situations, when person is engaged in the activity to exercise the certain competence in attainment of important goals, that determined by social values. At the first stage we evaluate significant individual qualities and assign them quantitative indices, at most independent variable figures, which help to transfer qualitative characteristics into quantitative and predict the person's behavior. Thus, for evaluation of complex characteristics, as social competence, we have to work out the most heterogeneous internal indices. The investigators of social competence (Шабатура Л., Бахтеева С., Гиндина О., Єгоров Д., Цветков В. тощо) distinguish social competence or cognitive ability of social structure as one of such indices. As well in social competence assessment we can distinguish as pivotal point the person's ability for value-oriented perception of social processes. The persons' behavior from one prospective determined by individual believe in what is correct and proper action, from other by the acceptance level of own social role, that person reckon as necessity to do according to own social position and others expectations, possible relevant reactions. In assessment of social competence we have to consider such believes. As well, it is impossible to omit the consideration of professional sphere influence on activity efficiency and reverse affect of competent person on social context of professional environment.

Other aspect that has to be mentioned in competence analysis is the person's description of real and foreseen institutional context where the activity occurs. It is pointless to state that the person not competent if there no possibility or needs in certain activity, although the understanding and potential abilities are present.

The behavior itself is the result of such variables as skills, abilities, motivation and social environment in which the person acts. Within our research we can substitute skills on components of competence and values on motivational profile, but on some conditions, that components of competence may manifest itself and develop in the significant for person task fulfillment. They can't be studied separately from motivation, which is integral part of competence in competence-based approach.

Additionally, from theory of development prospective, certain practical recommendations are available for assessment of age competence, particularly large-scale measurements, that relate to problem of adaptation to real life, coordination of emotional and volitional state, level of cognitive development, behavior, problems of social interaction in group [3].

Efficiency of activity depends on number of independent and interchangeable competences, which individual utilize for attainment of mean-

ingful for him goals. Particularly from these set of competences we have to extract social competence, which present during the person's lifetime and study it.

Social environment directly effects the values and competences development, which person utilize and foster, directly influences individual behavior and set of values and motivation. Such influence is bilateral, person effects social environment picking out or reacting on most favorable for him directions. Therefore, by changing the social environment we achieve not only changes in social actors' behavior, but transformation of their motivation, skills and abilities.

We can distinguish two approaches in police cadets' social competence study, one consider social competence as basic conception and other focus on its more specific characteristics [1]. Each of them has pros and cons. First consider competence as integrative conception, which encompass the personality abilities effectively generate and coordinate flexible, adaptive reactions on social environment. If so, such approach omit the consideration of individual influence on situation or ability to react, recognition the ability or necessity for reaction, initial consideration and selection from available alternative reactions, modeling and mechanism of reaction adjustment or its change (strengthening or weakening). Unfortunately, such basic definition of social competence lacks specific criteria for its assessment. For example, what signs to choose for evaluation of behavior efficiency, in what situations and in what task fulfillment?

On the other hand, defining competence through specific skills we solve the problem of its assessment on the account of fundamental definition of social competence. Specific skills relate to understanding and the study of individual adaptation processes in dynamic. There are needs to avoid the evaluation of concrete situations and tasks in assessment of social competence, but such approach is useful in study of individual development level. Additionally, specific skills have strong correlation with intellectual level of individual development and in our case will affect, for example, the academic successfulness of police cadets.

At the first step there is necessity to find out professionally determined values, that is main task and pivotal subject of cadets' activity. Answers on this question provide regulations and in general it is preparation for professional activity, i.e. law-enforcement. Thus, we can outline criteria for evaluation of presented police cadets' social competence model. Social competence, as integrative characteristic encompass cognitive level, person's abilities for adaptation, motivational patterns of socially-oriented behavior (social interaction), professional level of development, emotional and volitional characteristics,

social values and norms. Using these particular criteria we explored the police cadets' social competence. It is worthy to mention that intellectual level of person's development and behavior explicitly correlative characteristics, but in case of semi closed and regimented groups such connection could be lost, for example the cadets social adaptation problems. We can summarize that components of competence can be assessed just in significant for police cadets' activity, during fulfillment of meaningful tasks. The main task of policing is prevention and fighting the crime and this can be effectively carried out only with community assistance. The social aspect of social competence in policing consists in quality of interaction with community.

Perceptions of surrounding social situation, understanding of social institute functioning, mutual anticipation of others reaction affect socially competent police cadets' behavior. Therefore, police cadets will exercise that level of competence for attainment of valued goals, which they are able to show at the moment.

Model of police officer social competence. Formal model of competence through assessment of motivation and behavior was presented by John Raven, based on his study and previous works of such scientists as McClelland, Fishbein, Adorno, Almond, Verba, Kohn, Flanagan and others, and provided theoretical grounds for definition of social competence model with consideration of our study subject. As we mentioned, it is worthless to assess competence without motivation and significant values, therefore we can distinguish values and motivation as a component in the police cadets' social competence structure. Values generate motivation for activity, in which the knowledge, abilities and skills are shown [6]. As well, we ascertained that competence consist of variety independent components, among them cognitive, emotional and volitional characteristics. Components of social competence are such qualities that assist to efficient behavior in goal achievement. Among significant goals in study of police cadets' social competence we distinguish establishment of efficient interaction with community, as one of main factors of formation the community trust towards police and consequently the quality of police functioning.

Regarding cognitive sphere, we are interesting in qualities, which help to understand the others' people behavior, facilitate interpersonal relations and successful social adaptation. Such cognitive qualities can be defined by term "social intellect" and was invented by E. Thorndike in 1920, as one of characteristics of interpersonal relations. The social intellect can be defined not only through intellect, knowledge, availability of social conceptions and such reflexive characteristics as ability to predict, adequately analyze own actions, but through operational characteristics:

social experience, skills of effective interaction with socium, fulfillment of social roles, ability to act appropriately to situation. It is impossible to omit the importance of communicative abilities in professions like law-enforcement, when dens contact with people is its main specific. This statement in psychology and pedagogy is well grounded and doesn't require additional prove, therefore communicative component we include in the structure of police cadets' social competence. And the last component that we consider important and that is emphasized by many scientists is emotional and volitional component. Considering the specific work in policing this component is impossible to omit. It outlines emotional stability and ability to make decisions in situations of psycho-emotional strain. Summarizing, the social competence model of law-enforcement representative can be determined through social values, motivation to socially-oriented activity, communicative abilities, social intellect and emotional component.

Conclusions. Notion of social competence derived from psychology and expanded to other fields of study. We witness its institutionalization within socio-cultural processes, regarding our study – in educative process of departmental educational entity. Social competence determine the efficiency of interaction with social environment, that is why the model of police cadets' social competence is scientifically substantiated and effective integrative approach for description not

only structural components of police officer, but the relevant socialization processes prompt the necessity for further study of social competence within institutionalization approach, as integral part of social process. The determined in the article criteria for police cadets' social competence assessment are specific indices of measurement and do not provide the basic definition of social competence in terms of universal approach for its assessment. Type of construct outlined can't be presented in quantitative shape, because it is qualitative conception. This model was formed just for assessment of study subject on example of social environment of departmental educational institution, taking into consideration the steady correlation between provided criteria.

There are needs to explore police cadets' social competence in dynamic of individual development for establishment of its construct validity. For integral constructs determination of its validity is a complicated task. If our hypothesis is correct, then the cadets, who are more socially active and have developed adaptation abilities and better formed presented above criteria of social competence, upon graduation will relatively easy overcome problems of social and professional adaptation, problems connected to new work and service duties. Therefore, the study of social competence in evaluation of construct validity should be of long duration. Particularly this direction is prospective for further study of social competence of police cadets.

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Kiikov Vitalii Mykolaiovych – applicant
Kharkiv national university of internal affairs
Address: 27-a, 50-rokiv SRSR Str., Kharkiv, 61000
E-mail: tat_yanka@ukr.net

Кійков Віталій Миколайович – здобувач
Харківський національний університет внутрішніх справ
Адреса: 61000, м. Харків, вул. 50-років СРСР, б. 27-а
E-mail: tat_yanka@ukr.net