

EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCES AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE LEVEL OF TEACHERS

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Annotation. *Purpose:* Determination of the relationship between the level of emotional intelligence and educational competences of teachers. *Material and methods:* The study was conducted among 120 primary school teachers. Assessment of the competence of teachers were analysed by means of a questionnaire constructed by the author of the elaboration, and the study of emotional predispositions used Two-dimensional Emotional Intelligence Inventory DINEMO. *Results:* It was found that teachers have a much lower level of educational competences in comparison to the substantive and methodical competences. Sphere of educational competences is the area in the work of teachers, which causes the most problems, and to which they feel the least prepared. The results of research on emotional intelligence showed variation in the levels of teachers predispositions Most of them - 54% is characterized by the average level of the selected features, 30% achieved high results, and 16% have low level of understanding and recognition of emotions. *Conclusions:* It was found that there is a correlation between the level of emotional intelligence and ability to cope in the educational situations. Understanding one's own and other people's emotions favors achieving high educational competences.

Keywords: teachers, educational competences, professional skills, emotional intelligence.

Introduction

The issue of pedagogical competences of teachers is a lively discussed matter in pedagogical environments, both in academic and legislative circles, as well as by teachers themselves, who perform in this difficult profession on everyday basis.

There are numerous sources and analysis which are concerned with teaching competences, in which authors conduct meticulous classifications and analysis, showing the aspects which are most important in their interpretation [1, 2].

The competences which are required from teachers are very complex and refer to many aspects of his or her personality and skills. Moreover, they have to be continuously improved and developed due to rapid cultural transformations, and changing social expectations and needs [3]. Teachers have to be thoroughly prepared during studies to be able to meet the demands and goals set for them. Unfortunately, contemporary universities which educate teachers can be accused by many errors. In pedagogical universities, more attention is paid to conveying substantive and methodical knowledge, whereas educational skills – which are necessary for effective cooperation with students - are neglected [4].

Consequently, lack of these competences causes educational difficulties, which make teachers feel helpless, or taking incorrect actions. The effect of such actions is creation of incorrect or sometimes even disastrous relations, which are unfavourable both for pupil and the teacher [5].

Furthermore, teachers who are unable cope in difficult school situations are vulnerable for high levels of stress, which has a direct impact on health, psychosocial functionality and early symptoms of professional burnout [6].

The profession of teacher without a doubt requires specific personal predispositions, which make these profession easier, but also specific social skills, which should be practiced during the course of studies. According to Tucholska [7] personal traits and social skills of teachers determine in particular way the proper fit to profession, and additionally protect from the job burnout. On the other hand, their lack increases a risk of exhaustion, disappointment, discouragement, or excessive professional distance.

Among teaching competences, social and educational skills deserve to be looked at greater detail, as they are necessary for the effective functioning in relations with pupils. The ability to cope with one's and other's emotions is an important factor which influences these competences [8, 9]. This ability is called emotional intelligence, which can be defined as set of dispositions which allows monitoring feelings and emotions and using the information conveyed by them for influencing one's own or other's behaviour [10].

According to Salovey, Mayer and Caruso, emotional intelligence is a four-part construct. First part is perception and expression of emotions – the ability to perceive and recognise one's own and other's emotions. Second part is the ability to assimilate emotions for improving cognitive processes. Part three – understanding emotions – covers the knowledge concerning experiences connected with emotional sphere. The fourth part – managing emotions – is concerned with the ability to consciously regulate emotions and moods of one self and other persons [11].

Emotional intelligence largely depends on genetic factors but is also formed in the course of so called social training, or in other words developing during everyday interpersonal relations, and moreover, it can and should be improved by stimulations relating to social behaviours of any kind [12].

Purpose, tasks of the work, material and methods

The aim of the study was finding out teachers evaluation of their competences, with particular focus on sphere of educational skills, evaluating levels of their emotional intelligence and concluding whether there is correlation between emotional predispositions and coping in educational situations.

Material and method

The study was conducted among 120 teachers of elementary schools. Research group consisted of woman only, due to small percentage of men in these establishments.

The method of diagnostic poll was used. The evaluation of teachers' competences was analysed with the use of questionnaire constructed by the author of the study, while Two Dimensional Inventory of Emotional Intelligence DINEMO was used for determining emotional predispositions [13].

Results of the research

The evaluation of teachers on their competence

In determining the level of competence of teachers the focus was set on their subjective feelings and evaluation of professional skills in three areas: substantive, methodological and educational, using the classification of W. Strykowski [3]. According to this concept, substantive competencies are related to contents of taught course, methodological are focused on the teacher's workshop, especially his teaching skills, educational relate to the relationship and influence on the student.

When assessing substantive competences, the majority of teachers (88%) said that they felt competent in high degree, whereas 1/10 subjects has a sense of competence at the medium level. None of the teachers rated their merit as low, which indicates good preparation tangible in terms of the subject taught.

Methodological competence assessment looks a bit different. 76% of the teachers feel highly competent in this respect, and the 1/4 rate their level of competence as average. None of the teachers interviewed rated their methodological competence as low. Given the professional seniority variables it can be seen that the teachers with the shortest period of employment feel the least competent methodically.

Teachers assess their educational competences very differently . Most people (60%) feel this range of pedagogical activities moderately competent, one in five teachers (22%) found in each other a low level of educational competence, and it is by far the least numerous group of teachers who feel high competence in interpersonal relationships with students. Only 18% of respondents identified as highly competent in educational aspect. The highest scores were expressed by teachers with of seniority of 9 - 16 years. Teachers who have lesser seniority feel much less confident; albeit, some of the more experienced teachers expressed their lower level of educational competences. Another examined issue was the opinion of teachers regarding the suitability of didactic classes during university studies in the formation of three types of competence. Teachers estimated that study courses prepared them best in terms of content, a little worse in terms of methodology, and the least in terms of educational relations.

Specific deficiencies regarding the broad practice of teaching were expressed by teachers, both held in the schools, but also concerning the number of practical courses at the university, which are implemented in negligible rate compared to the number of hours devoted to theoretical subjects. Teachers lacked workshop forms of activity, during which they could develop the ability to deal with conflict situations and various other difficulties arising in relations with students, as well as prepare for work in the role of the class teacher. Another complaint relating to the area of education while studying theoretical content is the mismatch between the actual needs of the future teacher. Critical remarks on teachers refer to both the content and forms of education during their studies and related mainly to activities in the field of educational activities and social skills.

Educational sphere of competence is the area in work of teachers, which causes the most problems, and to which they feel the least prepared. Similar results were also obtained in the previously conducted studies [14], which means that this problem is still valid, important and not resolved.

Educational competences and the level of emotional intelligence of teachers

During the study of the emotional predispositions teachers the test focused on the measurement of the fundamental components of emotional intelligence, such as the ability to access their own and others' emotions and to respect and understand their functions. These skills are assessed on the basis of how a person interprets the different situations studied emotive and how willing one is to respond. DINEMO Inventory used in the study consists of 33 items, including descriptions of the various situations which are the source of emotions. For each situation, there are four different ways of reacting. The subject each time chooses this reaction, which is the most typical for him or her. Inventory allows the interpretation of the results for the two factor scales and obtaining a general result. The scales included in the DINEMO, is "OTHERS" - measures the ability to recognize, understand and respect other people's emotions, and "I", which measures the ability to become aware of, understand, respect and express their own emotional states.

The raw results were turned into standard tens using standard ten norms for women [13]. Used the following interpretation: the results of low adopted results in the range of 1 to 3 sten, the results of average (standard) from 4 to 7 sten, the results in the range of 8 to 10 sten were considered as high scores.

Using the interpretation described above, the level of emotional intelligence of teachers surveyed was determined. Most of them (more than half) is characterized by the average level of the selected features, about 1/3 scored high results, and 1/5 of them showed low level of understanding of their own and others' emotions, which is

indicated by the overall result. With regard to the scales I and OTHERS obtained results are similar. Teachers at a similar level to understand their emotions and the emotions of others (table 1).

Table 1.

The level of emotional intelligence of teachers surveyed

Scale DINEMO	Level of EI		HIGH		AVERAGE		LOW	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
„I”	37	31	70	58	13	11		
„OTHERS”	35	29	60	50	25	21		
General Result	36	30	65	54	19	16		

The results obtained by the teachers in the sphere of emotional intelligence were compared with their stated levels of educational competences (table 2). It turns out that the persons who evaluated themselves as highly competent educational and also characterized by a high level of emotional intelligence. The average level of emotional intelligence was characterized mainly teachers who have identified educational level of their competence as average. Teachers Low evaluating their parenting skills also presented a low level of emotional predispositions.

Table 2.

Educational level of competence and emotional intelligence

Educational level of competence		HIGH n = 22	AVERAGE n = 72	LOW n = 26
Level of EI (general result)				
HIGH	n = 36	20	14	2
AVERAGE	n = 65	2	56	7
LOW	n = 19	-	2	17

Conclusions

The research found that teachers have a much lower level of educational competence compared with the substantive and methodological competences. This were their subjective assessments, but personal feelings of managing (or not) in professional situations are equally valuable, and their weight is similar to the objective results.

The results of research on emotional intelligence showed differences in the levels of these predispositions. At the same time it was noted that a high level of educational competence goes hand in hand with high skill of understanding emotions. Furthermore, the lower the teachers rated their educational skills, the lower level of emotional intelligence they have presented.

As mentioned in the introduction, emotional intelligence can be shaped by various types of stimuli, focused on developing empathy and social behavior. This possibility is very valuable and should be used in teacher education as an important element to develop their interpersonal skills and educational competences.

In addition, understanding one's own emotions, the ability to express them, reign over them, and constructive emotional discharge is necessary to cope with stress [15]. Persons, who understand better the emotional states of their own, take more favorable measures that protect them from experiencing the negative consequences of stress, which is essential in the profession of teachers.

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