



ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Empathy in the Structure of Psychological Competence of the Teacher of the Higher Educational Institution

Author's Contribution:

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- A** – Study design;
- B** – Data collection;
- C** – Statistical analysis;
- D** – Data interpretation;
- E** – Manuscript preparation;
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Abstract

Background and Aim of Study:

The efficiency of pedagogical activity depends not only of the level of professional knowledge and abilities of the teacher but also of the presence for him of the personality qualities necessary for optimal cooperation. One of such professionally-meaningful qualities of the teacher is the empathy able to do the process of education emotionally comfortable and productive.

The aim of the study: to explore of level of empathy's display of the teachers depending on experience of their pedagogical activity.

Material and Methods:

Theoretical (analysis and synthesis of the psychological literature); empirical (pilot study). 97 teachers of the higher educational institutions participated in the study; at the age of 27 to 62 years, with the work experience from 1 year to 30 years.

Results:

The results obtained indicate that the empathy is the important component in the structure of the professional competence of the teacher of the higher educational institution, and also that the empathic ability of the teacher is transformed with the development of life and professional experience. The empirical research shows the lowest rates of empathy among the teachers with the work experience of more than 25 years and among the young teachers with the work experience up to 10 years.

Conclusions:

It is concluded that there is the dependence of the empathy of professional experience, necessary to develop the empathy both at the stage of the training of the future teachers in the higher educational institutions and in the process of continuous professional education.

Keywords:

competence, psychological competence, teacher, pedagogical activity, empathy.

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Introduction

The analysis of the psychological and pedagogical literature on this issue suggests that the most of the scientists (Holovan, 2014; Strelnikov, 2013; Kyrychok, Mitina, and Ilchenko, 2017; Melnyk, 2017) determine the professional competence of the teacher as the complex integrated personal education, which includes the theoretical knowledge, the practical skills, the experience and personal qualities, which generally allows effectively to carry out the educational activities and provides the process of development and self-development of personality.

Strelnikov (2013) notes that in the professional competence of the teacher of the higher educational institution is primarily the psychological and didactic procedures for interacting with the students, motivational-value, cognitive, affective and conative components, as well as the system of professionally important qualities and abilities of the teacher. The studies of Melnyk (2017) show that the most popular competences are of the instrumental and systemic ones, in particular: cognitive, methodological, technological and linguistic abilities.

As is generally known, the essence of pedagogical activity is the interpersonal interaction with the students. For this purpose, the teacher needs the knowledge and communicative skills to establish the business contact, the emotional attitude for future cooperation. Vitvytska (2012, p.69) notes the techniques that ensure the effectiveness of the interaction: - the ability to show interest and respect to the student, to understand his position during communication; - to own the means of non-verbal communication; - the tolerant attitude to all participants of the educational process.

As we see, the psychological competence of the teacher is inextricably linked with his communicative competence. The results of our previous studies have shown that it is the communicative competence of the teacher that is one of the important components of his psychological skills. The communication in the activities of the teacher is not only the means of pedagogical communication, but also the condition for the improvement of the professionalism, the source of personal development, and is also the means of influence on the students (Mitina, 2016).

In the structure of the communicative competence of the teacher Shestopaliuk (2011) distinguishes the following professionally important personal qualities, namely: - the interest to the people and the work with them; - the presence of need and ability to communicate; - the verbal and non-verbal abilities; - the ability to show empathy to the people. We share this point of view and believe that the successful professional activity of the teacher is impossible with the absence or low level of empathy.

Recently, the problem of empathy has been actively studied by the scientists in the professional context as the important property of the personality of socioeconomic professions (Kuntsevskaya, 2004; Popova and Horvat-Yanushevskaya, 2013) and as the factor of the effectiveness of the pedagogical process (Goroshit and

Hen, 2016).

According to the scientist Ilin (2013, p. 39), the empathy is the source of altruism and the factor of the helping behavior, so the more the person is prone to the empathy, the higher his willingness to giving help in the particular case. The author underlines that for the manifestation of the empathy, is obligatory the emotional response – the empathy, namely a person's awareness that his feelings are the reflection of his partner's feelings.

The empathic personality differs from the other people by his ability to see the others positively; the quick orientation in the situations of interaction; the democratic and altruistic strategies of interaction prevail; the openness and sensitivity to social emotions and moral feelings (Dolby, 2013). The characteristics of the empathic personality is the stability, the tolerance towards the disadvantages of others, which in our opinion is necessary for the effective professional activity of the teacher.

Sannikova (2014) considers the empathy as the property of the personality in which structure the three levels are distinguished: 1) the formal-dynamic, including the dynamic and qualitative (modal) properties of the empathy, reflecting the psychological essence of the empathic process; 2) the content-personal, concerning the choice of space for experiencing the empathy, the moral and ethical content of its object; 3) the imperative level reflecting the public and individual ideas about the existing socio-cultural "norms" of empathic manifestations.

According to Baron-Cohen and Wheelwright (2004), empathy is about spontaneously and naturally tuning into the other person's thoughts and feelings, whatever these might be there are two major elements of empathy. The first is its cognitive component (understanding the others feelings and the ability to take their perspective), the second one is the affective component (an observer's appropriate emotional response to another person's emotional state).

Orishchenko (2015) also defines the empathy as the stable integral property of the person. The author underlines that the leading psychological characteristic of the person with a high level of the empathy is the social activity, the interpersonal skills, the sincere interest to the person, the orientation on the understanding of another, the sensitivity and the responsiveness. It is precisely the kindness, the tolerance, the sufferance towards others makes such people capable to the sympathy and the empathy.

The aim of the study: to explore of level of empathy's display of the teachers depending on experience of their pedagogical activity.

Material and methods

The following research methods were applied: theoretical (analysis and synthesis of the psychological literature); empirical (pilot study, questionnaires). The study was conducted at the basis of the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology of the Institute of Postgraduate Education of the Bogomolets National Medical University, Kyiv. The sample composed the

teachers of the higher educational institutions, a total number of 97 persons aged from 27 to 62 years, with the pedagogical work experience from the 1 to 30 years. The following psychodiagnostic techniques were applied: questionnaire “Diagnostics of the level of empathic abilities” (Boyko, 1996), multifunctional ϕ -criterion of Fisher.

Results

The results of diagnostics of the level of empathy of the teachers show that the most feck of the teachers (73%) have the low (16%) and below average (57%) level of manifestation of empathy, which may indicate to certain emotional “callousness” of the teachers. Only to 27% of the studied group the empathic abilities are at the sufficient level, which manifests itself in the ability to understand and “feel” the psycho-emotional state of the students.

The analysis of the integral characteristics of the empathy (see Table 1) showed that more than half of the teachers have the low or understated level of attitudes toward the manifestation of empathy. Perhaps that it is precisely the lack of focus on establishment of the personal contacts, the conviction that it is inappropriate to show interest for the experiences and

problems of the students, limits the range of emotional responsiveness and reduces the ability to empathy’s manifestation.

The “penetrating ability in the empathy” as the important communicative property of the person, allowing to create the atmosphere of openness and trust that in turn contributes to the empathy’s manifestation. And vice versa, the atmosphere of tension and suspicion, the absence prevents the functioning of the rational channel of the empathy, which is why the majority of the studied group of the teachers have low and below average values for this indicator of the empathy.

The necessary condition for empathic personality is the ability to identify, namely the ability to put oneself to the place of another person and understand him on the basis of empathy. However, as the results showed, more than half of the teachers have the low and below-average level of identification, which in turn blocks the intuitive channel of the empathy and obstructs for empathy’s manifestation on the whole.

At the next stage of the study, we analyzed the dependence of the manifestation of the level of the empathy of the experience of the teacher’s professional activities. The results are presented in Figure 1.

Table 1. The characteristics of integral indicators of the empathy.

The characteristics of the empathy	The frequency of manifestation (%)			
	high	average	below the average	low
The rational channel of the empathy	3	28	30	39
The emotional channel of the empathy	11	43	19	27
The intuitive channel of the empathy	11	34	22	33
Adjustment to the empathy	3	34	27	36
The penetrating ability in the empathy	4	33	31	32
The identification	5	38	23	34

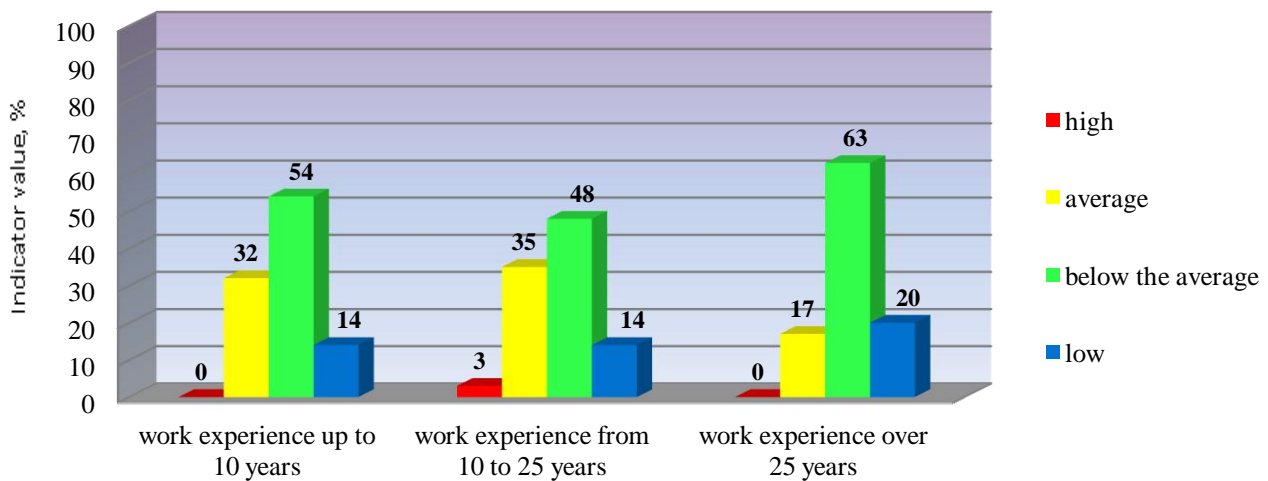


Figure 1. The manifestation of the level of the empathy of the teachers depending of work experience.

As can we see in the Figure 1, the lowest rates of the empathy are observed to the teachers with the work experience of more than 25 years and to the young teachers with the work experience up to 10 years.

Table 2 presents the results of the statistical analysis of the differences in the frequency of manifestations of the low level of integral characteristics of the empathy, depending on the experience of the professional activity of the teachers.

To prove the statistical significance of the differences in the frequency of manifestations of the low level of the empathy in the studied groups of the teachers, we applied the multifunctional φ -criterion of Fisher. If $\varphi_{exp.}$ is less than $\varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$, so the differences of indicators in the studied samples are not statistically significant, and if $\varphi_{exp.}^{**}$ is more than $\varphi_{0.01} = 2.28$, so it can be argued that the differences of indicators in the studied samples are significant. If $\varphi_{0.05} < \varphi_{exp.}^* < \varphi_{0.01}$, so the differences in the manifestation of low level of the empathy among the studied groups of the teachers can be considered significant at the 5% level of significance.

Thus the differences in the functioning of the intuitive channel of empathy of teachers with the work experience of 10 to 25 years and the teachers who work in the university up to 10 years or for more than 25 years are statistically significant. Also the differences in the manifestation of the ability to the empathy and to the identification are statistically significant.

Discussion

In the process of research, we held the point of view of Boyko (1996, p. 74) on the empathy, as the means of reflecting the inner world of another person, allowing to understand the causes and the consequences of his behavior. Understanding the empathy as

comprehension the psycho-emotional state of another person implies the existence of three empathic channels: rational, emotional and intuitive. The rational empathy characterizes the focus of attention, intellection on the condition and behavior of another person. The emotional empathy is the ability to enter into the energy field of another, to understand his inner world. The intuitive empathy is the subconscious processing of information about another person, which is based on the past experience and determines the personality's ability to foresee its behavior.

In our opinion, the low level of the empathy of the teachers with the little experience is due to insufficiently developed communication skills and empathic abilities. The beginners teaching specialists cannot yet build the effective pedagogical interaction, find it difficult to the search of the individual approach to each student, they do not always succeed in creating the atmosphere of trust working with the academic group. It should be noted that the empathic ability of the individual is transformed with the development of life and professional experience.

Stojiljkovic, Djigić, and Zlatković (2012) notes that the empathy is essential for successful carrying out the various professional roles of teachers. The pedagogical empathy as the teacher's personality's quality has the particular social and practical importance for optimizing and regulating the interpersonal relations with the students and improving the efficiency and the effectiveness of the pedagogical process. The pedagogical empathy is the powerful tool, in realizing the functions of cognition of the students by the teacher, its presence ensures to the teacher the success in the professional activities.

Table 2. The results of the mathematical-statistical analysis of the differences of manifestations of the empathy of the teachers.

The characteristics of the empathy	work experience up to 10 years (n=24) / work experience from 10 to 25 years (n=31)	work experience up to 10 years (n=24) / work experience over 25 years (n=42)	work experience from 10 to 25 years (n=31) / work experience over 25 years (n=42)
The rational channel of the empathy	$\varphi_{exp.} = 0.46$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$	$\varphi_{exp.} = 0.93$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$	$\varphi_{exp.} = 0.48$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$
The emotional channel of the empathy	$\varphi_{exp.} = 0.26$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$	$\varphi_{exp.} = 0.54$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$	$\varphi_{exp.} = 0.41$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$
The intuitive channel of the empathy	$1.64 = \varphi_{0.05}$ $\leq \varphi_{exp.}^* = 1.77$ $\leq \varphi_{0.01} = 2.28$	$\varphi_{exp.}^{**} = 2.47$ $\geq \varphi_{0.01} = 2.28$	$\varphi_{exp.} = 0.59$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$
Installation to the empathy	$\varphi_{exp.} = 0.67$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$	$\varphi_{exp.} = 0.39$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$	$\varphi_{exp.} = 1.22$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$
The penetrating ability in the empathy	$\varphi_{exp.}^{**} = 2.53$ $\geq \varphi_{0.01} = 2.28$	$\varphi_{exp.} = 1.37$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$	$\varphi_{exp.} = 1.52$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$
The identification	$\varphi_{exp.} = 0.35$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$	$\varphi_{exp.} = 1.33$ $\leq \varphi_{0.05} = 1.64$	$1.64 = \varphi_{0.05}$ $\leq \varphi_{exp.}^* = 1.89$ $\leq \varphi_{0.01} = 2.28$



The studies of Goroshit and Hen (2016) suggest that empathic teachers were found to possess a higher level of morality and excellent communication with students which in turn encourages empathic peer relationships and the successful motivation of their students and also contributes to the improvement of the academic performance of the students.

The studies of Zhuravlova (2007, p. 71) show that as the empathic process functions become more complex, the level of emotional tension of the subject of interaction changes in the direct proportion to this, which makes it possible to speak about the decrease or increase of the level of emotional inclusion of the subject to interpersonal interaction. Thus, in the process of professional development of the teacher, it takes place the development and the transformation of the empathic.

The results of our study show that the optimal level of empathy's manifestation is typical for the specialists with the teaching experience of 10 to 25 years. These are already the highly qualified specialists who have the developed skills of the professional communication; they understand students better, thanks to the developed professional competence. However, as evidenced the results of our research, to the teachers with the work experience of more than 25 years, the decrease of level of the empathy is observed. In our opinion, the teachers with the long work experience, who have been in intensive interaction with the students for a long time, some of whom are unmotivated to learn, trigger the psychological defense mechanism in the form of the emotional disregard and indifference. In so far as empathic person is more emotionally vulnerable, the decrease of the empathy in this case can be viewed as the acquired stereotype of the teacher's professional behavior, which allows to him to use metered the psycho-emotional resources and protect himself from excessive emotional stress. On the other hand, as shown by the results of our previous studies, the emotional callousness, the indifference to the feelings of the students and colleagues, can be the symptom of the teacher's emotional burnout (Mitina, 2017).

The studies of Cooper (2004) show that despite a desire to support and relate deeply to pupils, teachers were continually constrained by the conditions in which they worked, namely: the fragmented and rigid curriculum; the bureaucracy of modern education and the large numbers of pupils and low frequency of contact. The author notes that in consequence of these teachers are show lack of care towards individuals.

Conclusions

Summarizing the results of the study, it can be stated that the empathy is the important component in the structure of the professional competence of the teacher of the higher educational institution, which provides the constructive interaction of subjects of the educational process and contributes to its effectiveness. The pedagogical empathy involves the teacher's emotional attitude towards the student, the understanding of his emotional experiences, and giving

help to the student in overcoming the life difficulties and negative psycho-emotional states. In so far as the level of empathy's manifestation depends of the practice and experience of necessary to form it both at the training stage of the future teachers in the higher educational institutions and in the system of continuous professional education.

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