

Determining Psychoemotional Stability of Future University Teachers

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Abstract: The importance of psychoemotional stability in successful performance of a future teacher is conditioned by the role of emotions and their influence on the cognitive processes and on the quality of such activity. Development of psychoemotional stability becomes especially significant for professional and personal qualities of future teachers and their work. The author made an attempt to determine the psychoemotional stability based on investigations of different scientific approaches. The results of this study allow for a fresh look at orientation of the mechanism of psychoemotional stability formation in future university teachers.

Key words: Psychoemotional stability • Teacher • Personal qualities

INTRODUCTION

The XXI century offers a new basis for dynamic social development, namely, the education as a catalyst of innovative economy, a factor of people's well-being and the country's security. The modern educational concept calls for improving the quality of pedagogy on the ongoing basis. This process begins with professional training of future teachers and forming of knowledge, abilities and skills of successful pedagogic activities.

Inadequacy of the levels of the required real and practical education of future university teachers results in distortions in the entire education chain and is finally reflected on the quality of human resources in the country. Sustainable social development requires an "advanced or anticipating" training of teachers, when the graduates of the pedagogic colleges exceed social expectations in their professional activities. Having such education the novice teachers form the professional environment that encourages the experienced teachers to reassess and improve their work.

The importance of forming psychoemotional stability in future university teachers is conditioned by three factors. First, high level of psychoemotional stability is a necessary condition of teacher's work. Secondly, development of psychoemotional stability is a preventive measure of professional burnout, the state of full exhaustion, according to the International classification of diseases [1]. Thirdly, psychoemotional stability of the

university teacher should be developed at the stage of professional training rather than "complementing" it to the experienced teachers with already formed style of teaching.

Psychoemotional stability is a significant factor in regulating actions, providing an emotional and volitional component of psychological preparedness of a person to different types of work. It determines the development of different work components, including the assessing, motivational and gnostic ones. In fact, the psychoemotional stability of future university teachers is one of the components of their professional competence.

The most acute is the problem of psychoemotional instability among the youth. The performed investigation of random selection of 100 last year students has shown that 65% are in the state of continuous emotional stress and 40% already suffer from diseases of stress etiology (stress disorders).

Complex life situations, frustration, stress, crisis and conflicts require activation of the individual's resources. This conditions the interest of scientific psychology in investigating psychoemotional stability of a person in different environments, methods of its formation, support and development with the use of individual capabilities.

Emotions have been the subject of many investigations of the known psychologists being a part of their concepts. Among them there are the evolutionary idea on the origin of emotions (H. Spencer, T. Ribot), physiological approach to investigation of

emotions (W. Wundt, D. Hebb), emotions in the context of psychoanalysis theory (J. Shedler, A. Adler); somatic theory (W. James, C. Lange) and etc. However, the psychoemotional stability has not yet become an independent subject of investigation and a basis for establishing scientific schools. Thus, the research problem starts from the complex definition of psychoemotional stability, its substance and indicators. As a consequence of this unsolved problem, the fundamental concepts and theories have insufficiently studied the emotional conditions of students significant for their future professional activities; the qualimetry of their dynamics during training activities and accordingly, the method for forming the psychological and emotional stability have not been developed.

In this respect, the scientific search for objective conceptual and concrete definition of psycho-emotional stability is necessary and topical for the pedagogy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Using the method of monograph review we have studied the scientific approaches of different psychologists to the definition of emotional stability. The material for research was found in the works of psychologists investigating emotional stability. Having studied 58 authors' approaches we have selected 9 of them which differ in their focus. Applying analytical, logical and induction methods we managed to derive the author's definition of psychoemotional stability as part of emotional stability in the conventional sense.

RESULTS

The emotional stability is studied by psychologists within the frameworks of professional activities investigation. The analysis of the concept of emotional stability may be presented by the following definitions.

R. Bretz [2] considers emotional stability as a stability of motor and mental components under the influence of emotive situation. The author uses the term "emotional stability" in the sense of a definite indicator of mental stability of a person under the influence of external and internal emotional factors. In this case, the author refers not to the emotional stability but to the functional stability resulting from the personal ability to resist the emotional irritants and the evolving emotional states negatively influencing the performance and activities.

J. Longe [3] considers the emotional stability as a personal quality, an integral and mental state providing appropriate behavior at emergency situations. Hence, the author, emphasizing the lack of certainty in the functionality of the emotional component, equates the orientation and structure of emotional stability with volitional and mental stability.

R. Finchman [4] distinguishes the main type of emotional stability - neurosality and characterizes it by an individual's sensitivity to emotiogenic situations, excitability and capacity of self-control and self-evaluation. Such emotional type, on the author's opinion, is essentially constitutional but may change and even appear as a result of diseases or severe emotional stresses, etc.

From the point of view of J. Marcia [5] the emotional stability is a property characterizing the subject during intense activities. Such emotional mechanisms harmonically interact with each other and help reaching the objective. This approach brought us to the following conclusion. Since the emotional process includes the adaptation effect and all its structural elements are dynamically similar (by receiving an ongoing feedback on the stage of accomplishing the objective), it is expedient to attribute it to the functional system of emotional regulation of activities.

The concept of emotional stability is also analyzed by A.P. Vanbreda [6]. In his investigation on the psychology of military profession, he points out that emotional stability is unreceptiveness of emotional factors that negatively impact the mental state of an individual and the ability to control and restrain the emerging asthenic emotions for successful realization of the required actions. Thus, the author emphasizes some duality of the nature of emotional stability.

Other researchers [7] also note the duality of the nature of functional emotions. On the one hand, it is in setting interrelation between the emotional processes and the course of events that agree or contradict the individual's requirements and the individual's activities oriented at meeting these requirements. On the other hand, it is the internal processes determinant for human life in the whole; as a result the individual "is tuned" to appropriate actions or resistance. Based on this approach it is possible to assume that emotions are simultaneously a determinant and a criterion of the efficiency of psychological adaptation of a person during professional self-determination.

During their practical studies Timothy A., Annelies V. and Pater I.E. [8] have drawn a conclusion that the emotional stability is a person's property, which under non-standard conditions provides mental transition to a new level of regulatory, stimulating and executive functions that allows saving or even increasing the efficiency.

Some researchers [9, 10] defining emotional stability include the parameters characterizing nervous and physiological endurance, the ability of people to successfully solve complex and important tasks in a stressful emotiogenic environment without significant adverse effect of the latter one on health and further human performance.

According to [11] the emotional stability is a systemic quality acquired by a person and manifested during his intense activity in the unity of rational, emotional and physical components. An important in this approach is that the basis of this unity is experience as an activity; and the criteria for this unity are occurrence of invariants, high compatibility and conjugacy of rational, emotional and physical manifestations of self-regulation process.

Thus, in the works of psychologists we have distinguished four approaches to the understanding of emotional stability: the first approach considers main psychological factors beyond the emotional stability and reckons them, first of all, in volitional qualities; the second approach considers emotional stability as a result of different mental processes and phenomena integration; the third approach considers the emotional stability based on the reserves of neuro-psyche energy; and the fourth one is based, first of all, on the qualities and properties of the proper emotional process in a complicated situation.

Considering the emotional stability as an integral property of a person or a property of mind it is very important to determine the place and role of the proper emotional component, otherwise it is difficult to avoid identification of the emotional stability as volitional and mental stability that may also be regarded as integral properties of a person providing successful achievement of the objective in a complex emotive situation. In other words, correlating results of any activity with emotional stability it should be taken into account that the success of performance in a challenging environment is provided not only by the emotional stability but by many individual qualities and experience of a person.

On this basis we distinguish two types of emotional stability of future university teachers (Fig. 1).

Such a radical and different approach (ignoring the duality of nature) was chosen on the basis that the emotional stability should be considered as a phenomenon necessary not only for the quality of teaching (in the interests of students) but for professional self-esteem of the teacher. The essence of this approach is that forming of emotional stability should be focused not so much on the regulation of the external form of emotions (controlling) but on prevention of their occurrence (intrapsychic processes) under the action of external stimuli.

This is important with respect to our research, because the university teachers often experience strong negative emotional excitation. In such circumstances it is hard to say whether the teacher's activity is successful if he continues teaching with seemingly unreadable irritation. This results from the fact that the activity is not independent but performed by a person with his or her peculiar psychophysiology.

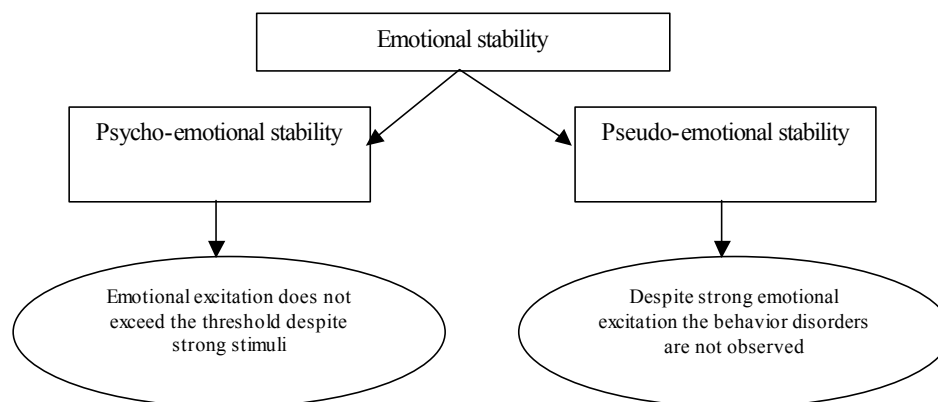


Fig. 1: Types of emotional stability. Source: Developed by the author of the article

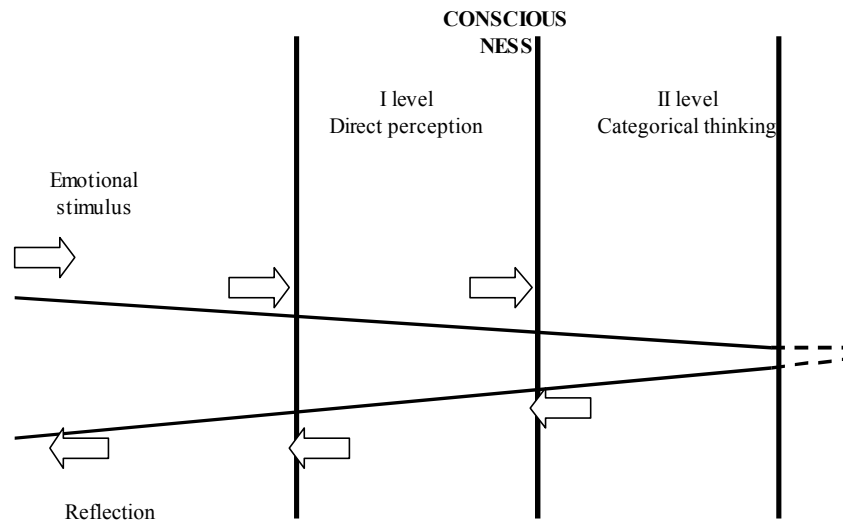


Fig. 2: Mechanism of emotion reflection (display). Source: developed by the author of the article

The subject may reflect (display) the emotion at least at 2 levels of consciousness (Fig. 2).

First, at the level of direct perception, there is experiencing of the proper emotion. At this level, the person is aware of the emotions "unity" with both the material world and with mental and physiological phenomena of his inner world. Secondly, the emotions are realized through generalization (collation) of the data of direct perception. At the level of categorical perception (mediated by thinking process) the emotions are an independent object of analysis; they have their specific features and are accompanied by external manifestations. At this level of perception, people imagine that they serve as a reason of the experienced emotion and gain knowledge about such experience.

Thus, the subject uses various sources of information that bring him knowledge on the quality of emotional experience. Among these sources there are bodily sensations, vegetative changes that accompany the experienced emotions, changes in behavior, the nature of the situation where certain emotions appear, etc.

The main characteristic of the emotional sphere is reflection existing in the form of the subject's relation to the world and psycho-emotional stability is manifested in a type of emotional reactions on negative environmental stimuli. The emotional pattern of behavior is based on the dominating formula for transforming the internal and external effects into positive, neutral or negative energy of states and behavioral acts, which largely determines the level of psychoemotional stability of a person. The level of emotional excitability, being the dynamic characteristic of emotions manifested in their diversity,

turnover and mobility, is the most important indicator of the level of psychoemotional stability. The level of psychoemotional stability depends on the level of an individual's neurotization, i.e. the state of emotional instability that may lead to neurosis and neurotic tendencies in the individual's behavior.

At psychoemotional stability the person does not experience undue excitation, apathy, or restraints leading to deterioration of cognitive abilities, poor coordination, breakdown or deterioration of health. On the contrary, pseudoemotional stability is characterized by over-excitation, apathy, nervous exhaustion that may not be recognizable in outward appearance (suppressed by the subject).

In addition, the research, conducted at the Department of Psychology of Individual Differences, Warsaw University, shows that the psychological and physiological optimums of excitation not always agree with each other. Psychologically the optimal level of excitation is when the greatest success of activity is achieved [12]. Therefore, lack of external expression of emotions at strong irritant (pseudoemotional stability) can not serve a basis for success since it does not reflect the real level of the individual's excitation.

This approach allows revealing preconditions of emotional stability inherent in the dynamics of psyche, the content of emotions, feelings, experiences and dialectically determining its dependence on the needs, motives, will, preparedness, awareness and willingness of the individual to perform certain tasks, as well on the degree of the development of such psychological processes as attention, memory, thinking, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

The topicality of this problem is conditioned by the increased requirements to young teachers, the emergence of new types of educational institutions, unrealized potential of higher educational institutions in training of the highly qualified teachers with advanced emotional stability and by insufficient elaboration of theoretical and methodical issues.

To manage any phenomena and efficiently influence them we need to understand their essence and regularities on which they are based. Unfortunately, at present, science and practice lack due clarity in understanding of the mechanisms of psychoemotional stability. The role of psyche is generally underestimated and the role of biological factors is vice versa overestimated: emotional stability is associated primarily with the innate features of the nervous system rather than with personal qualities.

Despite the proximity or even coincidence of methodological positions and scientific concepts of the researchers of emotional stability; there is a difference between their approaches: some study emotional stability understanding it as an integral property of a person; others, emphasizing specificity of emotional stability, pay attention to investigation of emotional reflation of behavior depending on the strength, sign, lability and content of emotions; others believe that it is an ability to overcome excessive emotional excitation while performing complex activities and thus, unwittingly put emphasis on investigation of volitional self-control; and some other researchers see its origin in the reserves of neuro-psychic energy.

Two types of emotional stability have been distinguished: 1) a person is emotionally stable if his emotional excitation does not exceed the threshold despite strong irritants (psychoemotional stability); 2) the person is emotionally stable if despite strong emotional excitation there are no distortions of his behavior (pseudoemotional stability). At that the mechanism for forming the emotional stability should proceed from pseudoemotional to psychoemotional stability. Future university teachers shall have persistent psychoemotional stability, motivation and knowledge of the mechanisms of its support.

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