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Aspects of a Categorization of the Concept "Personality" in the Professional Consciousness of Teachers - An Example from Belarus

Abstract: The article presents research into the concept of "personality" in the categorical grid of the consciousness of primary and secondary school teachers. The data obtained demonstrate the presence of an orientation in the teachers' minds and activities towards the implementation of personality-oriented, humanistic models of learning. At the same time, the structure of the concept of "personality" revealed in the pedagogical consciousness is not cognitively complex and holistic. This determines the specific tasks of psychological education to clarify and enrich teachers' perceptions of personality.

Key words: personality, personality-oriented education, pedagogical consciousness, associative experiment, factor analysis

摘要 (Natalia V. Bylinskaja: 在教师的职业意识中对“人格”这一概念进行分类的若干方面：来自白俄罗斯的一个案例)：本文介绍了在中小学教师意识分类网中对“人格”一词的研究。所获得的数据证实了在教师的思想和活动中存在着一种取向，用以实施以人格为导向的，人性化的学习模式。同时，在教育意识中所揭示的“个性”概念的结构在认知上并非复杂且具有整体性的。这决定了心理教育的具体任务，用以澄清和丰富教师的人格知觉。

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Zusammenfassung (Natalya V. Bylinskaya: Aspekte der Kategorisierung des Konzepts der "Persönlichkeit" im Berufsbewusstsein von LehrerInnen – Ein Beispiel aus Weißrussland): Der Artikel stellt Forschungen zum Konzept der "Persönlichkeit" im kategorialen Raster des Bewusstseins von Primar- und SekundarschullehrerInnen vor. Die gewonnenen Daten belegen das Vorhandensein einer Orientierung in den Köpfen und Aktivitäten der Lehrerinnen und Lehrer zur Umsetzung persönlichkeitsorientierter, humanistischer Lernmodelle. Gleichzeitig ist die Struktur des im pädagogischen Bewusstsein offenbarten Konzepts der "Persönlichkeit" nicht kognitiv komplex und ganzheitlich. Dies bestimmt die spezifischen Aufgaben der psychologischen Ausbildung zur Klärung und Bereicherung der Wahrnehmung von Lehrerpersönlichkeit.

Schlüsselwörter: Persönlichkeit, persönlichkeitsorientierte Bildung, pädagogisches Bewusstsein, assoziatives Experiment, Faktorenanalyse

Резюме (Наталья В. Былинская: О некоторых аспектах категоризации понятия «личность» в профессиональном сознании педагогов: на примере исследования в РБ): В статье представлены результаты исследования понятия «личность» на примере изучения категориальных структур сознания педагогов начальной школы и учителей «среднего» звена. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о том, что и на уровне сознания, и в «деятельностном» дискурсе у учителей отмечается ориентированность на имплементацию личностно-ориентированных, гуманистических моделей обучения. В то же время структура актуализируемого в сознании педагога концепта «личность» в когнитивном плане не является застывшей и однородной. Это

определяет специфику задач психологического воспитания для объяснения и наполнения новыми смыслами содержательной структуры исследуемого концепта.

Ключевые слова: *личность, личностно-ориентированное образование, педагогическое сознание, ассоциативный эксперимент, анализ факторов.*

In modern pedagogy and psychology research addressing students, teachers and practising psychologists, the concept of "personality" has a variety of theoretically substantiated approaches, supported by experimental studies. There are different points of view on the relationship of biological and social factors in the development of personality, on the ratio of the concepts of "individual", "individuality", "person", "personality" in psychology.

Starting in 1927 G.W. Allport identified about 50 different definitions of the complex term "personality" after analysis of the literature (Allport, 1998). It still unknown how many formulations exist today because the *person* is the object of research in many sciences and social disciplines. In psychology the term "personality" has two main meanings. First of all, it means a person, an individual who has consciousness, who has his or her own position in life, formed as a result of much conscious work in the process of social activity. Secondly, it means a person who has a psyche that makes him or her able to control his/her behaviour and mental development.

In the history of USSR psychology, the original understanding of the personality as a psychological category was based on the enumeration of the components that form the personality as a kind of mental reality. Such an approach deprived the concept of "personality" of its categorical content. By the end of the 1970s the problem of personality was being considered in the framework of the structural and systemic approaches developed in the works of USSR psychologists.

In textbooks of the 1960-1980's for students who were studying pedagogical special subjects, the concepts of "personality" were expounded by the leading USSR psychology scientists B.G. Ananyev (1980), A.N. Leontiev (1977), A.V. Petrovsky (1986) and S.L. Rubinstein (2000). The definitions of personality designated by these scientists were united by representations of the socio-historical and predominantly social nature of a person's personality.

At the present stage of development of psychological science and, accordingly, in educational publications, we can observe a transformation of the meaning of this concept. The phenomenon of personality is described in the relationship of biological and social factors in the mental development and life experience of a person, in their interaction and mutual influence. For example, personality is the integrity of subjective reality and the way for person to exist in the system of relationships with others; personality refers to a subject who is freely determined in the space of culture and time of history (Slobodchikov, & Isaev 2013, p. 370); man/woman is a socio-genetic being not only because he/she was born in society. Behind his or her birth is the most complex process of transforming the evolutionary patterns of lifestyle in the history of phylogenesis, anthropogenesis and socio-genesis. The socio-historical life of a person is a source of personality development in the system of social relations (Asmolov, 2019; see also Berulava, & Berulava, 2019, pp. 53-60). According to Petrenko (2010), a person's personality is the basis of his or her picture of the world, defining categories of consciousness, where cognition subject experience is structured and ordered. Petrenko thought that this picture of the world determines a person's behaviour and includes its cognitive, value and emotional aspects. The picture of the subject's world is revealed in the broad context of its meaning-formation of "not yet become being", in the context of the little-studied category of "fate", and perhaps in overcoming that fate. Because not only our knowledge about *person* is evolving, but also the *person* is evolving in the course of self-awareness (Petrenko, 2010, p. 86). Thus, not only the socio-historical nature of personality but also the characteristics of internal activity and individual identity are emphasized.

The relevant task of modern education is the implementation of personality-oriented, humanistic models of learning. According to some researchers, the essence of these models is to put the personality and prospects of its development in the centre of attention (Asmolov, & Guseltseva, 2016; Guslyakova, Vetkhova, & Kirsanov, 2019; Mendel, 2016; Slobodchikov, 2005; Sysoeva, 2019). The existing variety of theoretical approaches to the concept of "personality", on the one hand, and the need to focus the activities of a modern teacher not so much on the transfer of knowledge, skills, as on solving the problems of the personal development of students, on the other hand, have determined the purpose of this study: a study of the concept "personality" that exists among educators. The subject of the research is the categorical structure of the concept of "personality" in professional pedagogical consciousness.

Organization of the research

Three hundred teachers at Belarusian comprehensive schools were involved in this research: 100 primary school teachers and 200 subject teachers (chemistry, biology, music, Russian, Belarusian, German language teachers). The research was carried out from 2018 to 2019 by the author of the article and consists of several stages.

In the first stage, an associative experiment was conducted with teachers ($n = 200$), in which the concept of "personality" was the stimulus word. The experiment instruction limited only the associative flow (please answer with the first word coming into your head), but it left freedom in the choice of possible associations (the grammar class of associations was not prescribed).

The material obtained at this stage was processed by means of frequency analysis, since words that occur only once in the subjects' answers are considered "not semantically related to the main word and are the result of random or individual association" (Leontiev, & Gippenreyter, 1972, p.188). After the excluding of single answers to the stimulus word "personality", a list of 16 associations was obtained: a person (27% of answers), a child (20%), a student (19%), "I" (13%), an individual (7%), individuality (3%), respect (2%), teacher (2%), character (1%), outstanding (1%), bright, authority, soul, interesting, problem, creativity (less than 1% of answers).

The task of the second stage was to check the completeness of the content of the compiled list of associations, to clarify how they represent the desired concept in the minds of teachers. For this, a reverse associative experiment was conducted, in which 40 primary school teachers and 60 subject teachers ($n = 100$) were the respondents. Respondents were offered a list of associations that they needed to re-indicate in one word.

Data processing revealed a high accuracy in determining the initial concept, because the word-stimulus "personality" was correctly identified by 87% of the participants in the experiment. That is a high probability that the compiled list of associations really represents the concept in the minds of educators.

In the third stage, the list was offered to teachers ($n = 100$) for classification with the instruction: combine the available words into any number of groups. The data obtained (similarity matrix 100×16) were processed by factor analysis using the principal component analysis with the varimax rotation.

Results and discussion

As a result of factor analysis, 6 factors were identified in the group of teachers: 2 strong and 4 weak according to the Humphrey criterion, according to which a factor is considered subjectively significant if the absolute value of the product of two maximum factor weights (load of qualities) is twice as large as a unit divided by the square root of the number of observations. The Humphrey criterion

is used to determine subjectively significant factors and the cognitive complexity of respondents (Buyul, & Tsefel, 2005).

For discussion, the identified category factors are presented in descending order of their subjective significance for teachers. The percentage of total variance indicates the subjective significance of the factor, and the numbers (factor weights) represent the load of qualities combined into a factor.

The first power factor (31% of the total variance) is formed by the scale values: student (0.957), child (0.957), teacher (0.944), individual (0.835), "I" (0.833). The content of this factor can be described as a "role position". Because the first constituents are the "student" and "child", it can be said that the personality of the student as a subject of the educational process is the most important for teachers.

The second powerful factor (17% of the total variance) is formed by the scale: authority (0.899), character (0.893), problem (0.589), creativity (0.457). The content of this factor is a combination of diverse personal manifestations, which complicates its interpretation. In order to more accurately indicate the identified category as an auxiliary, the expert method was applied. According to most experts (psychologists, n = 50), it is advisable to combine the qualities discussed as a "creative leader."

At this point it is useful to discuss less significant factors.

The third powerful factor (11.5% of the total dispersion) is formed by the following scale: bright (0.980), interesting (0.962). The content of this factor can be described as "originality of the individual."

The fourth powerful factor (10.5% of the total variance) is formed by two scale values: respect (0.891), people (-0.803). The content of this factor may be described as more complex and bipolar in structure. It fixes the opposition between respect and a person that exists in the minds of teachers, so the general name of this construct can be fixed as "an unrespectable person." The idea of a disrespectful, negative attitude towards a person is, in our opinion, a kind of projection of respondents on the existing attitude to the teacher on the part of society, associated with the insufficient importance of the status of a teacher in modern society (low wages, incompetence in solving different problems, etc.).

The fifth (most) powerful factor (8.5% of the total dispersion) is formed by the scale values: outstanding (-0.832), soul (0.659). This factor presents the dichotomy of the extraordinary (close to the content of the third factor "originality of the personality") and the soul, which allows us to designate the selected category as "extraordinary soullessness".

The sixth (weakest) factor (7.5% of the total variance) is represented by only one "individuality" scale value (0.895). It is interesting that this characteristic is isolated from close meanings in the pedagogical consciousness. We may thus assume that in the minds of educators, knowledge about the differences and individual characteristics that distinguish one particular person from other people is present. But this knowledge is more closely defined and not related to other knowledge, therefore not always implemented in the practice of the educational process.

Conclusions

As a result of the study, it was found that the concept of "personality" is described by teachers through two significant categories: "role position" and "creative leader". The leading categories demonstrate that in the minds of educators there is no scientific understanding of a personality. The revealed general categorical structure of the concept suggests that this idea is quite contradictory (the categories of "disrespectful person" and "outstanding soullessness").

The presence of the categories "creative leader" and "originality of the individual" indicate the assimilation and specific rethinking by teachers of modern ideas in the field of understanding the person with their emphasis on the importance of the subject's activity. This fact is evidence of the ongoing reorientation of professional consciousness and the teacher's activity from the traditional, cognitive education paradigm to a more modern, humanistic one. A change in the direction of the teacher's professional activity is also indirectly evidenced by the absence in the content of the concept "personality" of characteristics indicating cognitive processes and the achieved level of knowledge and skills.

The humanistic ideas that are being introduced into school practice in the pedagogical consciousness are presented somewhat one-sidedly, because the attention of teachers is mainly focused on the personality of the student. Teachers need to study not only the individual and personality characteristics of students, but also individual characteristics of themselves. You become a person only through interaction with another person, that's why professional and personal growth is as important a task for teachers as well as caring for the personal development of students.

Research data confirm the need for the psychological and pedagogical education of teachers to strengthen the orientation of their professional activities towards the implementation of a personality-oriented, humanistic model of education, focused on the development prospects of the personality of the teacher and his or her pupils. Personality-oriented education provides the transformation of traditional conservative, authoritarian, enlightening pedagogy into a new cultural pedagogy, whose subject is not only intellectually and professionally competent, but also an original, tolerant, person-developing and self-developing person.

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