

Personality Orientation to Define General Competence. Psychological and Educational Formation Principles

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Abstract – The paper studies challenges of preparing students in higher education for professional life. Educational and psychological principles for the formation of general competence are theoretically introduced. The authors see students' personality orientation as a key characteristic of general competence and subdivide it into self-orientation, relationship orientation, and task orientation. The assumed analysis methods were experimentally justified. The correlation between difficulties in professional life and types of orientation is established. Educational and psychological recommendations for forming general competence in higher education are proposed. The research results may benefit university teachers, psychologists, postgraduate students who are interested in research of the same kind.

Keywords – *personality orientation, general competence, competence.*

I. INTRODUCTION

It is, first of all, necessary to state that *the relevance* of the research may be reinforced by the works of modern scholars that consider general competence as one of the results of higher education and a key characteristic of a socially-minded person [1–3]. Now that the educational system of Russia is undergoing intensive modernization and as it is stated in Federal State Educational Standards, general competence is a significant success factor in preparing bachelors for such professional activities as scientific research, career activities, organizational management and project management.

The concept of *general competence* integrates various life spheres of a person and the definition may vary depending on a degree type and a study programme. Most commonly though, general competence is described as an ability to apply basics of philosophy to form a worldview; an ability to analyse main historical periods and principles of society development for better civic engagement; written and verbal communication skills in Russian and in a foreign language for interpersonal and intercultural interaction and problem-solving; teamwork skills;

tolerance for social, ethnic, religious and cultural diversities; self-management and self-development skills, etc. [4, 5].

However, it is also worth mentioning that, as the Russian classical scholar V.N. Myasishchev pointed it out, only by objectively studying a person and the way *he/she relates to his/her environment* it is possible to investigate their mental reality [6].

Thus, it is rather relevant to take into account the psychological foundations of relations theory where subjective personal activities are characterized by the notion *personality orientation*, i.e. a sustained system of motives, interests, perceptions, beliefs, likings, etc. that demonstrate a person's needs [7].

Therefore, there is a discrepancy between the society's need for socially responsible citizens and a certain degree of immaturity of the research field and formation of general competence in higher education institutions.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research purpose is to present a theoretical account and a practical analysis of general competence, propose educational and psychological recommendations for their formation in higher education institutions.

The research objectives are:

- to present a theoretical account of the research field, viz, the nature of general competence and its key characteristics;

- to provide a practical analysis of general competence characteristics;

- to develop educational and psychological principles of general competence formation in higher education institutions.

Regarding the first objective it seems imperative to identify the research problem of general competence.

Competence is the combination of interrelated personality characteristics (knowledge, skills, abilities, work methods) within a defined scope of practice and required for effective competent performance [8].

I.A. Zimnyaya proclaims that competence must be comprised of such aspects as

- 1) readiness to demonstrate competence (i.e. the motivational aspect);
- 2) knowledge of the competence content (i.e. the cognitive aspect);
- 3) experience of showing competence in various standard and non-standard situations (i.e. the behavioural aspect);
- 4) attitude towards the competence content and its scope of practice (i.e. the evaluative aspect);
- 5) emotional regulation of the process and results of competence exercise (i.e. the regulating aspect) [9].

These days there is no one uniform understanding of the notion competence. The concept and its nature still undergo discussions.

Within the framework of this research it is general competence that is of great relevance and that defines how an individual relates to various life spheres.

According to V.N. Myasishchev, the psychological nature of the notion attitude is considered as one of the forms of an individual reflecting the environment. The author accentuates that it is important to analyse one person's contextual links with his/her social environment, as "it is not possible to relate to something/somebody per se".

Seeing conditions as an important parameter of a person's mental activity, V.N. Myasishchev underlines the negative attitude of an individual towards subhuman conditions and life's hardships, which may become pathological (e.g. weak unpleasant stimuli if frequent and long-termed). Regarding this, he agrees with the research results by N.E. Vvedensky (1901, 1912). Negative conditions for mental activity leave pain marks in the cortex and— as a further consequence— numerous neuroses and reactive (psychogenic) psychoses. Here the author links the works by N.E. Vvedensky with the research by I.P. Pavlov [10].

As far as a person's attitude is concerned, V.N. Myasishchev draws our attention to the principle of dominance, which is not only the neurophysiological principle of behavioural coordination among animals, but the psychological principle of a human mental activity as well. Regarding this theory, the author refers to the research by A.A. Ukhtomsky (Collected Works, Vol. I, p. 192, p. 197).

Furthermore, mental activity of a person is determined by proactive attitude, i.e. an ability to make socially meaningful differences in the world based on acquired values of material and intellectual culture. This very attitude takes place in art, acts of will and communication. The proactive attitude characterizes personality orientation that mainly comprises a system of beliefs that not only reflect a reality perception, but are also recognized as right and subjectively relevant for activity; it is a complex of knowledge, intellectual abilities,

emotional expression and acts of will; it is the basis for unity of belief and action [11].

According to O.P. Eliseev, personality orientation may reveal itself—which is of great scientific interest – in the following ways: 1) self-orientation that shows to what extent a person sees themselves as one expecting reward and satisfaction which are not connected with work and co-workers; 2) relationship orientation that shows to what extent a person seeks to maintain good relationships with people, which may harm his/her professional activity; 3) task orientation that shows to what extent a person feels responsible and eager to carry out professional tasks [12].

Thus, the conceptual structure upon the problem of the notion *general competence* is defined by:

- the works upon the psychology of relationships by V.N. Myasishchev;
- the fact that characteristics of the general competence research problem are presented by the analysis of contextual relations of a person and his/her personality orientation in certain conditions or life spheres (e.g. in married life, in family relationships, in professional life, in social life) in accordance with the principle of dominance.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Regarding the second objective, it is reasonable to present empirical results of:

- 1) the studied problematic nature of general competence in important life spheres;
- 2) and difficulties concerning the structural components of personality orientation (self-orientation, relationship orientation, task orientation).

Thus, *the preliminary empirical research* involved an experimental analysis of *an individual's relations* within various life spheres, i.e. married life, family relationships, professional life, and social life. Data was collected from 300 extramural students aged 25-40, which represents the period of emerging adulthood. The survey took place in the year of 2018 and in Industrial University of Tyumen, the city of Tyumen. The survey method No.1—*I. Koler's Questionnaire For A Patient's Satisfaction In Various Spheres*—was used [13].

The surveyed students were to assess difficulties in four life spheres (professional life, married life, family relationships, social life) according the five-point scale from 'absolutely true' to 'absolutely false', where 'absolutely true' is the highest point. By this means, and according to the principle of dominance, the most problematic life sphere appeared to be the professional one (106 students).

The next step was to analyse the very 106 questionnaire results that stated problematic professional life. The survey method No.2—*Questionnaire for Personality Orientation*—was used to determine difficulties in professional life in regard to the structural components of personality orientation (self-orientation, relationship orientation, task orientation). The

obtained individual results were returned as sten scores. The questionnaires with ranging from 6 to 10 stens were analysed.

The data interpretation may be justified by the correlation between the coefficient of difficulties in professional life and the structural component of personality orientation (in sten scores).

Consequently, there were three groups of survey students identified with difficulties in professional life and with this or that type of personality orientation – self-orientation (n=28), relationship orientation (n=38), task orientation (n=40).

The obtained empirical results subsequently underwent statistical analysis in order to reveal intensity and direction of the correlation between the individual coefficient of subjective difficulties in professional life and the structural type of personality orientation (self-orientation, relationship orientation, task orientation), presented in sten scores [14].

The choice of this method to define the correlation also defined the following condition: we have studied two characteristics in the same group of survey students.

The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient is computed using the classical formula:

$$R_{s \text{ emp}} = 1 - \frac{6 * \sum (d^2)}{n * (n^2 - 1)}$$

where

d is the difference between the two ranks of each observation; n is the number of observations (the number of survey students).

There is no correlation in case $R_{s \text{ emp}} \leq R_{s \text{ crit}}$.

The obtained empirical values were afterwards compared with the critical values, which varied depending on the number of survey students in each personality orientation group (self-orientation, relationship orientation, task orientation).

Here are the computed results of the correlation between the coefficient of difficulties in professional life and self-orientation of a student:

$$R_{s \text{ emp}} = 1 - \frac{6 * \sum (d^2)}{n * (n^2 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{6 * 1720}{28 * (28^2 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{10320}{21924} = 1 - 0.47 = 0.53$$

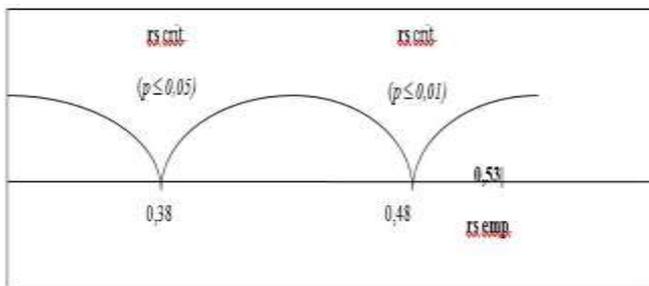


Fig. 1. Significance axis of the correlation between difficulties in professional life and personality self-orientation

The drawn conclusion: the empirical value 0.53 proves that there is a correlation between the coefficient of challenges in professional life and self-orientation of a student (Fig. 1).

Here are the computed results of the correlation between the coefficient of difficulties in professional life and relationship orientation of a student:

$$R_{s \text{ emp}} = 1 - \frac{6 * \sum (d^2)}{n * (n^2 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{6 * 5026}{38 * (38^2 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{30156}{54834} = 1 - 0.55 = 0.45$$

The drawn conclusion: the empirical value 0.45 proves that there is a correlation between difficulties in professional life and relationship orientation (Fig. 2).

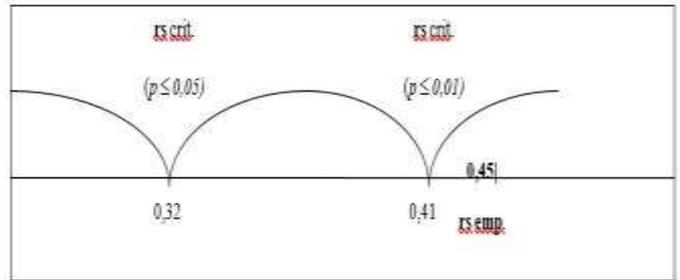


Fig. 2. Significance axis of the correlation between difficulties in professional life and personality relationship orientation

Here are the computed results of the correlation between the coefficient of difficulties in professional life and task orientation of a student:

$$R_{s \text{ emp}} = 1 - \frac{6 * \sum (d^2)}{n * (n^2 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{6 * 6689}{40 * (40^2 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{40134}{63960} = 1 - 0.63 = 0.37$$

The drawn conclusion: the empirical value 0.37 proves that the correlation between the coefficient of difficulties in professional life and task orientation of a student is within uncertainty (Fig. 3).

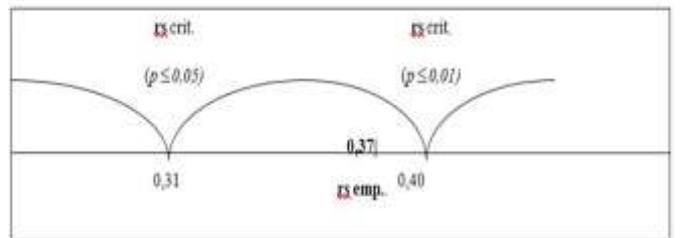


Fig. 3. Significance axis of the correlation between difficulties in professional life and personality task orientation

The obtained results may be served as psychological and educational recommendations for teaching adults in higher education institutions.

According to the third research objective, it is reasonable now to present educational and psychological principles for the formation of general competence in higher education institutions.

As V.N. Myasishchev aptly notices, intentional attitude formation and formation of mental organisation of a person occurs when reflecting social relationships only at the conscious level. In that respect, the conscious level implies the proactive nature of a person [10].

The results of the studied correlation between difficulties in professional life and personality task orientation demonstrated uncertainty, which may mean incompatibility with the proactive nature of a person.

From this perspective, it seems relevant to develop psychological and educational principles for the formation of general competence that will encourage an individual's proactive attitude and active performance of professional tasks. Within the research study, it also seems rather perspective to study the problems of self-orientation and relationship orientation in more detail.

As we see it, the formation of general competence in higher education must, first of all, imply a practice-oriented approach. And it is the theory about the characteristics of competences by I.A. Zimnyaya that may be served as the theoretical foundation.

Thus, *the cognitive aspect* presupposes that a student understands the psychological activity theory. Students must *know* the basic components of psychological structure and functional activities, types of actions and distinct differences between an action/operation and activity within the theories of an activity approach (P.Ya. Galperin, A.N. Leontyev, L.B. Elkonin).

The communicative aspect must include an individual's ability for effective social interaction, aimed, first of all, at performing professional tasks. A student must be able to determine psychological factors of communication (including the main functions of communication such as communicative, interactive, perceptive) in order to perform professional tasks.

The behavioural aspect includes experience of using gained knowledge and skills, an ability to perform a professional task in time and according to high standards, a personal presentation of a performed task.

The evaluative aspect implies that a student possesses his/her own personal meaning in performing professional tasks and this way it encourages task-orientation [15].

The regulating aspect implies emotional and will-based self-regulation of general competence performance and its results.

Taking into account the obtained results of the revealed difficulties in the certain life spheres (married life, family relationships, professional life, and social life) and the correlation between those difficulties in professional life and personality orientation (viz. self-orientation and relationships orientation), it seems necessary to continue further research works upon the matter.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

According to the theoretical objectives, the article strived to cover the problematic field of general competence within the works upon *the psychology of relationships* by V.N.

Myasishchev. The present research examined characteristics of general competence by analysing difficulties in *contextual relations* of a person and his/her personality orientation in certain *life conditions/spheres* in accordance with *the principle of dominance*.

According to the empirical objectives, the present research examined characteristics of general competence for students emerging adulthood in important life spheres (professional life, married life, family relationships, and social life). The most problematic life sphere, viz. professional, was established and the analysis of difficulties in the very sphere in regard to personality orientation was carried out.

According to the practical objectives, educational and psychological principles for forming general competence in higher education institutions were developed, based on the obtained results that showed uncertainty concerning the correlation between difficulties in professional life and task orientation of a student.

Thus, the article presents a theoretical account, an empirical analysis and practical educational and psychological recommendations for forming general competence in higher education institutions. Concluding, the research purpose has been achieved.

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