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Personality-related self-efficacy of psychology students

Since late 1990s the profession of a psychologist, related to a fashionable society or even elite, has become not only popular, but prestigious.

The range and scope of the field of psychology are so broad that psychologists share commitment to better both individual lives and society, and the topics they explore range from a personal inner life to social, economical and political areas. However, these positive aspects are opposed to a fragmentary, non-systematic character of knowledge, concerning the profession, personality and education of a psychologist. This contradiction can be considered a distinctive matter of the so-called psychology of a psychologist, the subject which combines general, pedagogical, developmental, social and industrial branches. It enhances research on professional performance at all stages of training including higher education. One of the topical issues is self-efficacy of psychology students as an important resource of their successful training and work.

According to American psychologist A. Bandura, the author of Self-Efficacy Theory, the concept of self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs that they can master a situation and produce positive objective and personal outcomes in professional activity, communication and behaviour.

Nowadays, self-efficacy, which powerfully influences students as well as practical psychologists, still needs to be studied carefully. Self-efficacy of a student «develops» into self-efficacy of a professional psychologist, so enhanced self-efficacy is one of the major goals in higher education. Research in the area of self-efficacy has both practical and theoretical importance and guides us to distinguish between different forms of self-efficacy.

A. Bandura doesn't emphasize any forms of it, but argues that it has environmentally specific character, so it's not reasonable to view it as a generalized feature [1, 3 et al.]. The only attempt to define generalized forms of self-efficacy was made by American psychologists who devised the self-efficacy questionnaire [4]. Specific self-efficacy beliefs which have positive practical outcomes can be used as a criterion for defining different forms of self-efficacy. According to this criterion there are activity-related, communication-related and personality-related forms of self-efficacy [2].

Personality-related self-efficacy of a psychologist involves his self-appraisal of capabilities and traits necessary to produce designated levels of professional performance and is used as a specific instrument for handling professional matters. Admittedly, those professionally valuable qualities (PVQ) which are most important for personality and carper development, seem to be connected with personality-related self-efficacy.



We assume that PVQ are necessary but insufficient without self-confidence in their actualization. Unfavourable self-evaluation of the ability to actualize personal qualities produce barriers at the beginning of work and inactive or avoidance behaviour. Personality-related form of self-efficacy affects a psychologist's desire to achieve his professionally-valuable goals all by himself. Therefore, we believe that personality-related form of self-efficacy is a necessary element in the system of PVQ and a psychological subjective condition for realization of specific features needed for professional performance. It ensures self-sufficiency of PVQ which enables a subject to cope with professional tasks.

We define personality-related form of self-efficacy as a professionally valuable metacharacteristic which can't appear prior to PVQ potentially necessary for successful activity. PVQ are developed first and then promote self-efficacy which in its turn determines favourable attitude to PVQ and confidence in capability to use them as a reliable professional instrument.

Theoretical assumption given above form the basis for empiric research aimed to test the hypothesis about the interrelation between the high and medium levels of any form of self-efficacy and specific PVQ common to psychology students, i.e. personality-related self-efficacy is related to empathy, internality and self-acceptance; activity-related self-efficacy is related to organizational qualities; and communication-related self-efficacy – with communicative abilities and tolerance as communicative PVQ of a psychologist.

Subjects of the research were 67 students (2-nd and 4th-year students from Voronezh University). The procedure included «The Self-Efficacy Scale» devised by M.F. Scheier and J. Maddux, S.R. Pantileev's technique for investigation of self-concept, questionnaire «Communicative and organizational traits» devised by V.V. Sinjavski and B.A. Fedorishin, questionnaire «Level of Subjective Control» by E.F. Bazhin, E.A. Golinkina and A.M. Etkind, Empathy Test by I.M. Yusupov and V.V. Boiko's technique «Diagnosis of Communicative Tolerance».

The accuracy of our hypothesis was partly proved. Self-accuracy is positively interrelated with self-acceptance, general internality and internality in professional performance and interpersonal relations (at $\alpha \leq 0,01$). However, it unexpectedly negatively correlated with general empathy. It might be explained by the assumption that a psychologist who shows a distinct empathy «dissolves» in his patient's troubles, loses his individual self and, consequently, can't feel confident about his professional capabilities. Activity – related self-efficacy is positively connected with organizational abilities which belong to activity PVQ, while communication – related self-efficacy – with communicative abilities belonging to communicative PVQ (at $\alpha \leq 0,01$).

Perspective research on the issue discussed above involves profound analysis of the interrelation between self-efficacy and PVQ of psychology students at different stages of higher education, the development of personal self-efficacy of future practical psychologists, its specific features common to continuous and critical stages during higher education.



Literature

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