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Self-Attitude of a School Teacher as a Factor of the Development of His/Her Creative Potential

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Abstract

The rapid development of modern society, new social demands, and contemporary working conditions require that school teachers should be active and creative personalities. Teachers of a new type are able to independently manage their behavior, to determine prospects for their professional development, and find ways for achieving the stated goals. They are most efficient in their professional activities. To foster the development of creativity of school teachers, it is necessary to study factors that influence the development of their personalities. One of such factors is the self-attitude of teachers. At present, it is possible to study in-depth the inner world of a person, including his/her self-concept. In psychology, self-attitude is being studied under certain social conditions. Namely, this notion is being considered separately from an integral theory of personality. The study of its general and particular aspects on the basis of modern achievements in the field of personality research would allow one to integrate the scientific knowledge about the self-concept and self-attitude with the knowledge about self-improvement and creative potential. The goal of the study is to consider the self-attitude of a school teacher as the main factor in the development of his/her creative potential. The main research technique is based on the acmeological approach. It allows us to consider the development of the creative potential of a teacher as a mature person. This can help develop skill improvement programs on the basis of new paradigms.

Keywords: self-attitude of creative person, creativity, school teacher.

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Introduction

The pace of development of modern society is very high, especially in the intellectual sphere, in education. In contemporary conditions, teachers in schools and higher educational establishments should be active and creative personalities. They should be able to plan, organize, and manage their educational activity, set goals for their personal development, and determine ways and means for achieving these goals. They should also possess certain competencies in pedagogical design and communication with students during the teaching process.

Unfortunately, higher pedagogical education is now insufficient for the development of creativity in students. Though this issue has been studied by many Russian and international researchers for many years, it remains rather acute. Namely, one has to study the factors that help young people to unleash their creativity. Moreover, there is still no common understanding of the notions of creativity, creative potential, creative process, and the main qualities of a creative person. Because of the absence of effective diagnostic tools, it is difficult to estimate the development of the creative potential of an individual, in particular, a teacher. This is mainly due to the fact that creative personalities are diverse and they reveal their creative potential in various ways. Given the mentioned contradictions, it is necessary to develop new approaches to studying various aspects of educating creative personalities. This, in turn, requires systematic psychological and pedagogical scientific research. Universities should ensure certain conditions for unleashing the creativity in students of higher educational and skill improvement programs.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of the study is to empirically test the effectiveness of the developed pedagogical conditions for development of readiness of troubled adolescents for family life.

Literature review

It is very important that a teacher should be a creative personality. Rovis, Bezinovic and Basic (2015) study the development of creativity at school. Torretta and Black (2017) emphasize that by using a creative approach teachers can reinforce learning motivation. Moroz (2015) notes that the creativity is closely connected with innovations based on nonstandard ideas. Melnikov and Alabuzhev (2014) define the essence and consider specific features of the creative approach to activity.

Ponomarev (1998) also presented characteristic features of the teacher's creative personality.

Teacher is always endowed with freedom of choice, can choose goals and intentions, mental operations and actions that they perform.

Just this feature makes creativity more valuable in comparison with productive activity of human beings. In psychology and pedagogy, there exist two main point of views onto a creative personality. According to the first opinion, the creative ability or creativity in a certain measure is inherent (to a certain extent) in any mentally healthy person. Adherents of the second point of view believe that a personality is not necessarily creative. The very important question of whether it is possible to influence the creativity of an individual by changing his/her self-attitude still remains unsolved.

Most authors understand a creative personality as an individual with a high level of knowledge who demonstrates the desire for inventing or doing something principally new. Kir'yakova and Moroz (2015) study the axiology of creativity and its specific features. Silva (2014) and Adler (2015) consider creative features of leaders and innovative approaches to their activity. Bogoyavlenskaya (1999), Ozhiganova (2005) and Nikolaenko (2005) highlight the following features of a creative personality: the breadth and freedom of thought, developed imagination, risk-taking, a clear vision of problems, developed mental abilities, the ability to identify contradictions, the ability to take advantage of the acquired experience and knowledge in new situations, independence, flexibility of thinking, etc. Belan (2014) considers the semantic content of the innovative potential of a personality. Terekhova (2016) and Mironova (2016) consider structural components of the teachers' creative potential. Sergienko and Sunyaikina (2016) study the actual and potential creativity of a teacher. According to results obtained by them, many of characteristics of a creative personality should be necessarily formed in students of pedagogical universities. Gilmanshina et al. (2015) describe specific features of professional thinking. Grimes (2015) proposes to apply the cultural psychological approach to vocational training for developing the leadership and creative qualities of a personality. Bowes and Tinning (2015) study the main features of teacher training. Simons (2010) and Hutnick et al. (2017) propose various approaches to the leadership development. These approaches are also applicable to teacher training. Moroz (2015) presents the creativity as an axiological dominant of continuous teacher education. Ponomarev (1998) understands the main characteristic of a creative teacher as a person endowed with freedom of choice; he/she is free in choosing goals and intentions, mental operations, and actions. The way of thinking of a teacher defines his/her attitude to good and evil and, consequently, his/her behavior towards pupils (either humane and fair or not). We observe a positive concept of a personality who, having freedom of choice, controls his/her behavior, strives for a high self-esteem by forming a certain self-attitude. According to results obtained by Shmatova (2014), teachers' need in a certain self-attitude increases as the prestige of the pedagogical profession goes down and the image of a teacher suffers certain transformations.

The contradiction between the educational mission and contemporary sociocultural reality leads to a crisis of teachers' personality.

In order to form the future teacher's self-attitude of a creative personality, it is necessary to study characteristics of this self-attitude. Racine (2015) studies the development of leaders' social identity and self-attitude. McKay (2009) investigates the self-identification problem in education. Drobysheva (2016) analyzes the determination of the consciousness of a person at the stage of his/her primary economic socialization. Germanova (2014) explores deep changes in personality associated with the development of his/her self-identity and self-assessment. Kireeva (2015) considers the problem of the psychological support of constructive self-assertion of personality. Ronto et al. (2016) are interested in teachers' self-attitude. Shaidakova (2014) notes that the social identity and self-attitude of personality is still insufficiently investigated in Russian and International socio-psychological studies. Ponomarev (1998) considers the creativity as mechanism of productive development. The emotional development of creative personalities has certain specific features. Analyzing the classical scheme of the creative process, i.e., the preparation, maturation, inspiration, and verification, one can see that they are not equally studied in the psychology of thinking. Namely, the preparation and verification stages are studied more profoundly than maturation and inspiration ones. It is necessary to study these two stages better. The study of the inspiration stage allows us to establish conditions for making emotional assessments of one's mental activity. Despite the fact that the phenomenon of creativity has been being studied for more than 60 years, there still exist many misconceptions. They are connected with the uncertainty of the practical outcome of any creative activity. Sitnikova (2011) considers the professional pedagogical readiness as a multicomponent education. The author proposes diagnostic tools for determining the initial level of the theoretical and methodological readiness of a teacher-educator for his/her creative professional activity. However, it is necessary to improve the proposed diagnostic tools. The creativity, being a multifaceted phenomenon, requires the application of a proper diagnostic tool, which would allow one to assess one's creative potential in accordance with cognitive, emotive, and environmental factors. Diagnostic tools that allow one to assess self-attitude of teachers of various categories need to be improved.

Methodology

In our research, we have used the multi-dimensional questionnaire "Research methodology of self-relation" by Panteleev (2008). It contains 110 assertions that fall into 9 scales, namely, the Openness, Self-Confidence, Self-Guidance, Mirror Ego, Self-Worth, Self-Acceptance, Self-Attachment, Internal Conflict, and Self-Accusation. This research methodology is applicable for testing individuals or groups without any time limitations. Usually it takes from 30 to 40 minutes.

We have also developed a new questionnaire for assessing the creative potential of teachers. This questionnaire includes 10 questions that allow one to assess the creative potential of a personality (namely, risk-taking, a developed imagination, the ability to identify contradictions, the flexibility of thinking, the striving for creativity, independence, a particular interest in a certain area of knowledge, the quickness and easiness of learning, the self-control ability, and the analytical mind). We have assessed these characteristics in a 10-point scale.

We have highlighted the following 3 levels of creative potential in teachers: high (68-100 scores), medium (34-67 scores), and low (0-33 scores).

Results

The study was performed on the base of the Out-of-School Activity Centre of the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia in 2020. The Centre implements professional development programs for secondary education teachers and experts. The research involved 104 people divided into two groups. The control group consisted of additional education teachers. The experimental group consisted of specialist in teaching methods. In both groups, women of various ages were in prevalence.

The study included 3 steps.

On the first step, we have created experimental sites at the Out-of-School Activity Centre of the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia, and conducted a questionnaire survey aimed at determining the creative potential level of secondary education teachers.

On the second step, we have refined the theoretical concept of the research and conducted the forming experiment at the Out-of-School Activity Centre of the Republic of Tatarstan, Russia. The experiment involved 104 secondary school teachers.

The goal of the forming experiment was to develop an adequate self-attitude among secondary education teachers that would help to improve their creative potential.

Within the forming experiment (October, 2020) we have educated 52 teachers (members of the experimental group) within our skill improvement program "Creative potential of a teacher" (72 hours).

The proposed technique has the following features. While developing the creative potential in teachers, we take into account such phenomena as transposition (the positive impact of certain elements on the self-attitude) and interference (the negative impact of some other elements on the self-attitude).

In connection with the phenomena of transposition and interference, we have developed the teaching content of two themes, namely, “Creative potential of a personality” and “Self-attitude of a creative personality”.

Within the framework of the forming experiment, these two themes were included in the skill improvement program for teachers in the experimental group. The retraining of members of the control group was performed within a traditional program. The third stage involves reporting the results at scientific conferences and publishing them in scientific journals.

Tables 1 and 2 contain average group data (sten scale) obtained by questioning conducted by the Pantelev method for studying self-attitude.

Table 01. Average group data (sten scale) prior to the forming experiment*

Scales	Experimental group	Control group
Openness	5.4	6.3
Self-Confidence	6.3	8.7
Self-Guidance	6.8	6.1
Self-Attitude	5.6	5.3
Self-Worth	4.3	8.6
Self-Acceptance	5.3	5.1
Self-Attachment	6.3	4.7
Internal Conflict	4.1	2.7
Self-Accusation	3.7	3.2

* The Sten scale is the standard scale from 1 to 10 with the following parameters: the mean value = 5,5 and the standard deviation = 2. The term Sten represents the abbreviation of the English phrase “standard ten”. The formula $2 \cdot (X - M) / S + 5,5$, where X stands for a raw score, while M and S do, correspondingly, for the average value and the standard deviation calculated from the standardization sample. In the Sten scale, the obtained values lesser than 1 are set to 1 and those that are greater than 10 are set to 10.

This Sten scale is often used in professional (industrial) testology. The reason is that many tests and assessment procedures deal with the range of various factors rather than the exact value of a certain factor.

Table 02. Sample average data (sten scale) after the forming experiment

Scales	Experimental group	Control group
Openness	6.1	6.3
Self-Confidence	5.6	8.7
Self-Guidance	7.0	6.1
Self-Attitude	6.2	5.3
Self-Worth	4.3	8.7
Self-Acceptance	5.5	5.7
Self-Attachment	6.0	4.7
Internal Conflict	2.7	2.7
Self-Accusation	3.0	5.7

Tables 3 and 4 contain results of the questioning conducted by the author methodology. The data are given in percentages.

Table 03. The creative potential level in two groups prior to the forming experiment

Creative potential level	Experimental group	Control group
low	8	5
medium	50	38
high	32	57

Table 04. Creative potential level in two groups after the forming experiment

Creative potential level	Experimental group	Control group
low	4	5
medium	47	37
high	49	58

Discussions

According to the data given in the above tables, during the ascertaining experiment, in several scales (namely, the Openness, Mirror Ego (Self-Attitude), Self-Guidance, Self-Acceptance, and Self-Attachment Scales) the average values of indicators in control and experimental groups are approximately equal.

The Openness Scale indicates the intensity of a certain tendency: either the conformity connected with the desire for the public approval or critical self-attitude, profound self-awareness, and honesty. In the considered case, average OS values were close in both groups (5.4 and 6.3).

The Self-Guidance Scale helps to identify one's understanding of the main source of his/her activity and attained results. It indicates the prevalence of either one's Ego or external circumstances. In this scale, average values in both groups differ insignificantly (6.1 in the experimental group and 6.8 in the control one).

The Self-Attitude Scale also shows an insignificant difference between average values (5.6 in the experimental group and 5.3 in the control one).

The Self-Acceptance Scale indicates the level of one's sympathy for oneself. In both groups, this indicator has appeared to be medium-level (5.3 in the experimental group and 5.1 in the control one).

According to the obtained results, the Self-Confidence Scale shows a significant difference in average values of indicators in two groups. We observe higher average values of self-confidence, self-worth and self-accusation in the control group, while scores for inner conflicts are higher in the experimental group.

The Self-Worth Scale demonstrates higher scores in the control group (8.7) rather than in the experimental one (4.3). This distinction is significant. The self-confidence level is also higher in the control group than in the experimental one (8.7 and 6.3, respectively).

The Self-Accusation Scale indicates the intensity of negative emotions towards one's Ego. In both groups, values of this indicator are below the medium value, and the difference between groups is insignificant (3.7 in the experimental group and 3.2 in the control one).

Average Internal Conflict indicators are also below the medium level (4.1 in the experimental group and 2.7 in the control one).

Thus, both in control and experimental groups, the openness indicators are at the medium level, which means that teachers' behavior varies from conformity to criticism.

The self-control of members of both groups depend on the surroundings. We observe the high self-control level in familiar surroundings, when changes are predictable and the self-control level is high. In a new environment (especially, an unfriendly one) self-regulatory abilities of a person become weaker, while the impact of environmental factors increase.

People in both groups are apt to highly assess only those qualities of their personalities that are approved by other people. At the same time, they are quite loyal to their drawbacks.

According to the scores in the Self-Acceptance Scale, people in both groups soberly treat their personalities; they accept their shortcomings and are proud of their positive features. Members of both groups are ready to change their personalities but only to a certain extent. They have a strong binding to some of their personal properties but are ready to change some other ones. The readiness for changes and self-development was most evident in the control group. Changes in personal qualities of members of the control group, as well as changes in their attitude towards surroundings and themselves, were less painful for them. Members of the control group perceive themselves as confident, independent, strong-willed, and reliable people. They understand that other people appreciate their positive qualities, in particular, their adherence to public norms and regulations. They are sociable, emotionally open for communication, which helps them in establishing business and personal contacts. On the contrary, members of the experimental group believe that only some of their deeds and merits are worthy of respect.

Members of the control group consider their personalities as irreplaceable for the society and highly assess their creative potential. Such attitude allows one to perceive criticism reasonably and to resist adverse impacts of the environment. Members of the experimental group do not consider themselves as unique, highly developed personalities, moreover, they are often skeptical of themselves, sensitive to criticism, and vulnerable.

Members of both groups treat their failures selectively. They express annoyance and discontent for their failures and seek for their reasons in external factors. Results shown by members of the experimental group are worse, which means that they strongly protect their egos and claim other people or surroundings rather than themselves. It is characteristic that people in the experimental group oppose themselves to less successful colleagues, exalt themselves above them or even blame the latter. Members of the experimental group treat themselves positively but they often deny problems that they have and superficially perceive their personalities. This is also characteristic for members of the control group, but to a lesser extent.

Prior to the forming experiment, most people in the control group, as distinct from members of the experimental one, demonstrated a high level of creative potential. At the same time, creative potential of most people in the experimental group was middle-level.

After the forming experiment, we observe the improvement of several indicators. Namely, in the experimental group, the openness, self-guidance, self-attitude, and self-acceptance indicators have increased, while self-confidence, self-attachment, internal conflict, and self-accusation ones have become less. The self-worth indicator has remained the same. At the same time, in the control group there was no significant change of the mentioned parameters.

The forming experiment has also improved creative potential of members of the experimental group. Namely, some of them who previously had assessed their creative potential as medium-level have started to treat it as high. This, certainly, will help the development of their professional skills.

Creative personalities are much less sensitive to critical remarks from other people. They are ready to change themselves without losing their special qualities. They clearly distinguish between the features that are important for them and those that they are ready to change due to circumstances. Such people consider themselves as a holistic mature personality. They treat themselves with proper self-respect and rarely suffer from low self-esteem. As a whole, creative personalities are more liberated. They are open to new contacts and ready for changes both in themselves and in their environment. They soberly assess their capabilities and are positively motivated. The self-acceptance of a person, the awareness of his/her strengths and weaknesses allow one to assess correctly his/her chances for the future and to set adequate goals. Creative persons are more confident in their solutions. They are ready for accepting their mistakes. They are ready for criticism and treat their fails just as a useful lesson, which brings experience and helps to avoid mistakes in the future.

The development of a proper self-attitude of a person helps to improve his/her creative potential.

Conclusion

1. Prior to the forming experiment, most people in the control group, as distinct from members of the experimental one, demonstrated a high level of creative potential. At the same time, creative potential of most people in the experimental group was middle-level.

2. After the forming experiment, we observe the improvement of several indicators. Namely, in the experimental group, the openness, self-guidance, self-attitude, and self-acceptance indicators have increased, while self-confidence, self-attachment, internal conflict, and self-accusation ones have become less.

The self-worth indicator has remained the same. At the same time, in the control group there was no significant change of the mentioned parameters.

3. The forming experiment has also improved creative potential of members of the experimental group. Namely, some of them who previously had assessed their creative potential as medium-level have started to treat it as high. This, certainly, will help the development of their professional skills.

4. Creative personalities are much less sensitive to critical remarks from other people. They are ready to change themselves without losing their special qualities. They clearly distinguish between the features that are important for them and those that they are ready to change due to circumstances. Such people consider themselves as a holistic mature personality. They treat themselves with proper self-respect and rarely suffer from low self-esteem. As a whole, creative personalities are more liberated. They are open to new contacts and ready for changes both in themselves and in their environment. They soberly assess their capabilities and are positively motivated. The self-acceptance of a person, the awareness of his/her strengths and weaknesses allow one to assess correctly his/her chances for the future and to set adequate goals. Creative persons are more confident in their solutions. They are ready for accepting their mistakes. They are ready for criticism and treat their fails just as a useful lesson, which brings experience and helps to avoid mistakes in the future.

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