

THE SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND POSSIBILITIES OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: We discuss the research dealing with the possibilities of influencing some of the inter- and intrapersonal characteristics of the personality of students - future teachers by means of a specific intervention program: the social-psychological training (SPT). Research group N = 78. After the application of SPT we noticed in the characteristics under study a statistically significant increase in the scales which is the reflection of a direct, independent, cooperative, responsible and open behavior.

Key words: social-psychological training, social abilities, teachers, social learning

Recent tendencies toward humanization in education emphasize the need to develop not only the dimension of performance in the school work but also the educational dimension, i.e. the interest in the development of the social-emotional, interpersonal, value and creativity aspects of the lives of teachers and students.

Social competence, as one of the important areas in the preparation of teachers for their profession, forms a significant part of the demands laid on the professional competence of a teacher. According to K.T. Carey and M.S. Wilson (1995), a future teacher is not able to apply his/her knowledge if he/she does not have high quality interpersonal capabilities. One of the possibilities of acquiring such social competence and capabilities, and in a larger sense, also the possibility of maintaining mental health of both teachers and students, is represented by the specific psychological interventional programs. One of the forms of such programs is the social-psychological training (SPT). The aim of this article is to discuss the effects of the training program oriented toward the optimization and development of social competence of future teachers.

One of the research objectives was to find out whether the application of SPT influences the direction of the development of the interpersonal characteristics observed by the research methods that we applied. In one of the experimental groups we used a videorecording in the process of SPT as one of the means of feedback, the basic element of social learning in social-training programs. The results of several studies e.g. W.M. Watts (1973), F.J. McDonald and D.W. Allen (1976), M.P. Breen (1970) state that a self-confrontation via videorecording can encourage a change in the behavior of the students - future teachers.

METHOD

Altogether 78 students of the second and third year of the pedagogical studies at the UKF in Nitra participated in the research. They formed two experimental and two control groups. The average age of the students in all groups was 20.5 years. The first measurement was followed by the second one with the span of two semesters with the absence of a training intervention.

To determine the level of the interpersonal variables of personality, we administered the "Questionnaire of Interpersonal Diagnosis ICL" by T. Leary, R.L. Laforge and R.F. Suczek. In the statistical analysis of the data, we applied the sign - non parametric t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The application of the program of social-psychological training in the course of two semesters led, according to the results of the test measurements at the beginning and at the end of the SPT in the first experimental group, to a more distinct but statistically non-significant shift in the

dimension LM (affiliation). This tendency towards adaptable behavior can be classified as the increase in an adequately cooperative behavior and together with the indicated shifts in the dimensions DE (determination) and BC (independence and self-confidence) towards the increase and in the dimension NO (protectiveness) towards the decrease, they are a display of the adaptive forms of independent, self-confident, responsible and considerate behavior (Table 1). In neither group (where we made two measurements with a span without the application of SPT) did we record any statistically significant changes in any of the observed categories of interpersonal behavior (Table 3, 4).

Table 1: Measurements in the ICL questionnaire in EG 1

Scales ICL	Experimental group 1				t
	Measurement 1		Measurement 2		
	AM	SD	AM	SD	
PA	6.96	1.56	6.96	1.33	1
BC	6.16	2.49	6.32	1.93	0.263
DE	6.12	2.18	6.64	1.77	0.286
FG	6.68	2.10	6.80	2.54	0.479
HI	6.20	2.44	6.64	2.58	0.823
JK	7.72	2.33	7.44	1.80	0.813
LM	9.56	2.50	8.56	2.00	0.098
NO	8.72	2.17	8.32	1.77	0.238
DOM	50.64	7.54	50.48	7.76	0.540
LOV	52.60	11.11	50.16	7.80	0.007++

Legend: It concerns also the following tables of the ICL questionnaire

PA - power and force

BC - independence and self-confidence

DE - determination

FG - distrustful resistance

HI - submissiveness

JK - pusillanimous dependence

LM - affiliation

NO - protectiveness

DOM - index of power

LOV - index of affiliation

Table 2: Measurements in the ICL questionnaire in EG 2

Scales ICL	Experimental group 2				t
	Measurement 1		Measurement 2		
	AM	SD	AM	SD	
PA	6.22	1.76	6.27	2.49	0.605
BC	5.61	2.45	6.61	2.54	0.422
DE	5.61	2.40	5.50	2.74	0.605
FG	7.50	2.54	6.05	2.36	0.009++
HI	6.88	3.41	5.50	3.03	0.08
JK	7.88	3.00	7.50	2.17	0.301
LM	7.77	2.90	7.11	2.47	0.267
NO	8.33	3.32	6.33	1.81	0.121
DOM	51.88	7.72	49.72	11.02	0.145
LOV	52.50	9.06	48.72	10.16	0.026+

Table 3: Measurements in the ICL questionnaire in CG 1

Scales ICL	Control group 1				t
	Measurement 1		Measurement 2		
	AM	SD	AM	SD	
PA	7.66	2.82	7.53	3.06	0.723
BC	6.06	2.74	6.66	2.66	0.227
DE	6.60	2.74	6.53	2.66	0.751
FG	6.26	2.60	7.06	2.40	0.227
HI	7.60	3.26	7.13	3.24	0.751
JK	9.60	2.64	9.26	2.63	0.772
LM	10.66	1.91	10.00	1.96	0.386
NO	9.66	2.09	8.73	2.15	0.386
DOM	51.20	12.42	49.13	10.88	0.605
LOV	54.80	9.30	52.73	10.20	0.422

Table 4: Measurements in the ICL questionnaire in CG 2

Scales ICL	Control group 2				t
	Measurement 1		Measurement 2		
	AM	SD	AM	SD	
PA	7.50	2.57	7.00	3.23	0.301
BC	6.61	2.78	5.77	3.11	0.080
DE	6.27	2.71	6.50	2.45	0.422
FG	7.11	2.05	6.88	2.74	0.802
HI	5.61	2.17	5.44	2.43	0.579
JK	8.83	2.52	7.88	2.19	0.301
LM	9.27	2.84	8.87	2.55	0.301
NO	7.50	3.07	7.38	2.97	0.605
DOM	49.50	8.06	50.33	8.85	0.453
LOV	51.33	11.37	50.00	11.31	0.301

In the second experimental group (EG 2) (unlike in EG 1) we used another type of feedback in the form of videorecording during the SPT. We recorded a statistically significant decrease in the dimension FG (reticence) in the post-test measurement compared to the pre-test measurement. This can be interpreted as a decline in distrustful behavior and an inadequate reservation towards other individuals in favor of an increase in confidence and cooperation. On the basis of the decline in the scales LM (affiliation), HI (submissiveness) and NO (protectiveness), which do not reach the level of statistical significance, we can classify the behavior of the examinees after training as more responsible, considerate, successful and cooperative (Table 2).

From the point of view of the type and intensity of the mechanisms, which are represented by the factors LOV (love) and DOM (domination), we recorded a statistically significant decline of the values in

the factors LOV (love) after the SPT in both experimental groups. This represents a decline in a hyperaffiliating, extrovertly friendly behavior and is connected to the adherence to conventions and the effort to be accepted at all costs, and simultaneously, an increase in an independent, direct and open behavior. The obtained results correspond to other findings and confirm the indicated tendency in the development of personal characteristics from the first to the second measurement towards an increase in self-assertive and a decline in affiliating and friendly expressions in behavior.

As regards the results presented, there arises the question whether the orientation of an individual towards the achievement of individual personal intentions is compatible with the positive social (prosocial) orientation, or whether the positive social tendencies have any influence on the expressions of personality, its needs and interests. We assume, as does L. Páleník

(1995), that the signs of a prosocial orientation are connected to the social component of the adjustment of personality (good school, family, employee's relationships, social competence and norms) and the signs of an individualistic orientation to personal adjustment of personality (the feeling of individual freedom, value, self-confidence). Battistich et al. (in Páleník, 1995) presuppose a balance between the two essential motivation tendencies: the individualistic needs of personal capacity and determination and the needs for the creation of positive relationships to the others and for a productive participation in groups. Baumrind (in Brown, Solomon, 1993), for instance, claims that an adjusted individual has a balanced combination of a thoughtfulness towards the others and a pursuance of personal interests.

In our research, the signs of an individual orientation (personal tendencies) intensified after training as opposed to the social group variables, which in an adjusted individual are not in a dichotomous but a compatible relation and their compatibility and a balanced relationship are

considered, according to the above mentioned authors, to be an attribute of social competence involving successful integration of the abilities of an individual in various interpersonal situations.

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SOCIÁLNE SPÔSOBILOSTI A MOŽNOSTI ICH ROZVOJA

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Súhrn: V príspevku sa zameriavame na skúmanie možnosti ovplyvnenia niektorých osobnostných a sociálnych charakteristík (sociabilita, sebahodnotenie, dominancia-submisivita, láska-agresivita) študentov - budúcich učiteľov, prostredníctvom špecifického psychologického intervenčného programu - sociálno-psychologického výcviku (ďalej SPV). Po aplikácii SPV sme zaznamenali v sledovaných interpersonálnych a osobnostných charakteristikách v dvoch experimentálnych skupinách (N = 35) štatisticky významný nárast v škálach, ktoré sú odrazom priameho, úspešného nezávislého a asertívneho správania spolu s poklesom v škálach neurotizmu a aktuálnej úzkosti. Výsledky výskumu v nami aplikovanom programe SPV indikujú možnosť jeho aplikácie ako jedného z prostriedkov stimulácie sociálnych spôsobilostí, adekvátnejšieho sebaopoznania a sebahodnotenia študentov - budúcich učiteľov.