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**SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE ISSUE OF EDUCATION
QUALITY IN SCHOOL TEACHERS**

The issue of Education Quality is discussed from the prospect of Public Opinion formation in the Subjects of Education Process. The aim of the paper is to assess the quality of school education from teacher's perspectives. School teachers of Kherson Region administered the "Quality of education" questionnaire and social psychological tests. The results demonstrate that teachers perceive QE in terms of amount of knowledge, practical use of knowledge, and ability to learn. At the same time, teachers underestimate relevant competencies (foreign languages, computer skills, and business skills). It is concluded that there is the need to improve knowledge on education quality and the role of research in education, quality management, and innovative character of modern education.

Key words: Competencies, Group Identity, Modernization, Public Opinion, Tolerance, Quality of Education

Quality of education can be considered as a multidimensional model of social norms and requirements to personality, educational environment, and educational system that is provided at the certain levels of education. Despite the multiple approaches and definitions existing in research literature, among wider public there exists quite popular and hardly articulated understanding of education quality [1]. Implementation of educational reforms often fails because of the lack of comprehensive understanding of the complex nature of education quality in schools or higher education institutions. As education has many purposes and components, questions regarding quality may be posed about any important aspect of a system: infrastructure, school buildings, administration, teaching, or student achievements [8]. Besides, the different parties – subjects of educational process, e.i. providers and consumers of educational services – have their own vision and notions: as a social ideal of educated person, as a result of one's educational activities, as a process of education and training, as a criterion of educational system functioning [3].

In 2007, the Institute for social and political psychology of the National Academy for Pedagogic Science of Ukraine organized the poll (2900 SS), with particular interest to public attitudes towards the education quality. This poll revealed that the most important quality of education indicator is ‘personal development of a student’. The connection between knowledge and life, ability to use them in practice are also important [6]. At the same time the results revealed the undervalued role of informatization, science and culture in raising the education quality; it is not connected to the state standards, education management, innovation process. M. Slusarevsky comes to the conclusion that “respondents are indifferent to the ideas of modernization of education, its content update. There is a paradox: people are interested in the quality education, supportive to the formation of self-sufficient personality but are not willing to change it or have no idea of how to achieve positive changes or misunderstand them” [6; p.83].

In 2014, we studied this issue more specifically, focusing on popular beliefs and opinions, and social psychological characteristics of school teachers. The study was aimed at a group perception of education quality and attitudes towards modernisation of education in school teachers.

The aim of the paper is to assess the quality of school education from teachers’ perspectives. The information gained from the study will form the basis from which an appropriate quality model will fit the innovative character of modern education.

Empirical study

We designed a questionnaire where in Section 1 the respondents were asked for their opinions on quality in school education (definition, components, factors, important measures). In Section 2, we had 15 items of expectation and perception statements [2]. Additionally respondents were given social psychological questionnaires (Tolerance Index, Resistance to Change, and Group Identity Scale). The subjects were 93 school teachers (6 males, 87 females) from Kherson Region of Ukraine, age 20 to 66 years (mean 42 years). We include in the study the teachers

from Kherson Region only, and will continue with representatives from other regions due to learn if there is any regional specific.

Findings

Teachers were given the list of factors of quality of education to be rated from the most important to the less important. On the first place respondents placed the facilities and equipment of the educational setting, on the second – qualification of teachers. The next comes the level of methodological support of educational process. While educational management, the level of student training, and practical implications of acquired knowledge are on the bottom of the list and underestimated by teachers (Table 1).

Table 1. Factors of quality of education

What is the most important for quality of education?	Rank
Facilities and equipment of school	1
Qualification of teachers	2
Level of methodological support of educational process	3
Educational Management	4
Consistence of educational content with needs of labor market	5
Level of student training	6

An important component of education quality is the competencies of graduates acquired while studying. Eight items were proposed to be rated, selected from the list of 36 competencies according to the standards of the Bologna Process [9]. The first position in the list is ‘ability to adjust creatively to the changes’; the second one – ‘ability to learn’; the third one – ‘general culture’. It is indicative that such competencies, required by the society of knowledge, as ability to use digital technologies, languages, and entrepreneurship are on the bottom of this list (Table 2).

Table 2. Competencies according to the standards of Bologna Process

Competence	Rank
Ability to adjust creatively to the changes	1
Learning abilities	2
General culture	3
Field-specific theoretical knowledge	4
Computer skills	5
Native language proficiency	6
Foreign language proficiency	7
Entrepreneurial skills	8

Efficiency of education quality assessment. There is approximately equal number of SS who believes that existing system of education quality assessment is satisfying (16,1%) and those who consider it's inefficient (17,2%). One third of SS believe that an student's attitude towards learning should be the focus of assessment rather than level of acquired knowledge (33,3%). Other 18,3% of teachers believe that the quality of educational process, and teacher qualification should be the subject of assessment. Just 2,2% of respondents suggest that they don't know how this assessment is done.

Improvement of education quality (Table 3). The most important for teachers is to create conditions that stimulate students for independent cognitive activities (74,2%). 34,4% of respondents believe in establishing cooperation between education and science. Less amount of respondents believe in old means of growing responsibility of the leaders and checking the educational settings – 18,3% and 3,2% respectively. Again, instruments required by the international standards – specialized agencies, monitoring of education quality, rating system, - are estimated by the teachers quite low: from 6% to 16% of the respondents believe in their validity.

Table 3. Estimation of education quality measures

What should be done in order to improve quality of education?*	%
Establish cooperation between education and science	34,4
Establish specialized Agencies for attaining quality education	6,5
Regular monitoring of the quality of education	16,1
Strengthening responsibility of the managerial staff of educational settings for the quality of educational service	18,3
To check the functioning of educational settings more often	3,2
Improving rating system for estimation of outcomes as an instrument of education quality management	14,0
Creating conditions that stimulate students to independent cognitive activity	74,2

* multiple responses

Section 2 includes 15 items of expectation and perception statements: attitudes towards education, innovations, life position. Each statement to be assessed as ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘don’t know’. We consider prevalence of one type of answers as an indicator of consolidated position of the SS; approximately equal number of answers ‘yes’ and ‘no’ as an indicator of ambivalent or polarized position; approximately equal number of answers of each type as an indicator of indefinite or absence of position among teachers.

Among the teachers the biggest agreement exists concerning the aim of education (‘to teach lifelong learning’ – 89,9%) and accordance of knowledge to practical needs (89%). Teachers are also sure, they should stand for their own interests and rights (91,2%). Teachers are oriented towards collective decisions, they are interested in what others think (86,8%), and quite reluctant to innovations (81,3%).

The most indefinite position of teachers is about question of integration into the world educational space: 37,8% of respondents are not sure in that. At the same time, almost half of the respondents (48,9%) do not agree that returning to the old Soviet traditions would be helpful in improving quality of education. The same ‘fifty-fifty’

distribution is concerning the external or internal influence on people's life: 46,2% of respondents believe that one's life is determined by external conditions, while 41,8% do not agree with that. At the same time, 48,9% of respondents sure that it's more important to adjust to the reality rather than to struggle with it.

Social Psychological indicators

Additionally, the respondents were given two questionnaires. We tried to find some indicators that may be connected to teachers' perception of education quality. The level of personal tolerance was measured with the express-questionnaire "The Tolerance Index" by G. Soldatova, et al. [4]. It was found that the group Tolerance Index is middle (85,7 points), that means that SS are quite tolerant in some areas, and intolerant in others. The reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the scale is 0,738. Individual data show that there are no individuals with low tolerance (below 60) in this sample, while about 10% of SS demonstrate high tolerance (more than 100).

Resistance to change was measured by the RTC Scale (Oreg, 2003) [10]. Items on the RTC Scale consist of statements concerning one's typical orientation toward and reaction to change. Response options range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the scale is 0,782. No significant correlations were found for both scales.

Group Identity of teachers was assessed by the modification of Svetlana Ryzhova's technique [5]. Respondents were suggested a list of We-Identities including age, nationality, regional, professional and other identifications. Teachers should assess to what extent they feel themselves belonging to a certain category by the 4-item scale. The measure was a percentage of respondents in each category of answers (Table 5).

The most important for the teachers is National Identity: 53% of SS always consider, and 32% - often consider themselves as citizens of Ukraine. The second identification is a local identity: regional (38%) and town dwellers (40%) identity is always present in their mind. Next group is professional and (working) group

identity. 36% SS ‘always’, and 42% ‘often’ feel themselves as members of a professional group (the school where they work); professional identification: 32% of SS always consider themselves as educators, and 40% - ‘often’. The less important for the teachers is religious and political identity: 42% of them mentioned that just sometimes feel their belonging to these categories, and 17,4% never feel any political affiliation. At the same time, for the one third of respondents religious affiliation is quite important for 30,7% of teachers. For 18% of SS, gender is not significant.

Table 5. We-Identity (%)

I feel integrity and unity with people from the group:				
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never
We're people of one generation	22	42	30	6
We're representatives of one sex	28	27	27	18
We're representatives of one profession	32	40	24	4
We're citizens of Ukraine	53	32	10	5
We're from one region	38	32	24	6
We're from one town/village	40	30	22	8
We're representatives of one ethnic group	36	28	27	9
We share similar politic attitudes	15,2	25	42,4	17,4
We're representatives of one religion	21,5	30,7	42	6,8
We're representatives of one group	36	42	16,5	5,5

Conclusion

Social psychological study of group opinion on quality of education in teachers demonstrates that teachers perceive education quality mainly in terms of amount of knowledge, practical use of knowledge, and ability to learn and out of the ideas of modernization of education.

The teachers believe that the most important factor of education quality is the material and technical equipment of schools. Among the competencies, composing education quality are “ability to adjust creatively to the changes” and “ability to learn”. Teachers believe that students’ cognitive activities should be stimulated in order to improve education quality. In their opinion, the aim of education is to ‘teach lifelong education’. At the same time, teachers underestimate relevant competencies (competence in foreign languages, information technologies, and business skills).

It is concluded that there is the need to improve knowledge on quality of education and the role of research, quality management, and innovative character of modern education. Further investigation into this topic will provide a basis for policy and quality improvement plans undertaken by education institutions.

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Іванченко С.М., Гончаренко Л.А. Соціально-психологічне дослідження проблеми якості освіти серед освітян

Проблема якості освіти обговорюється у статті з точки зору формування громадської думки серед суб'єктів освітнього процесу. Метою статті є вивчення розуміння та оцінка поняття якості освіти освітянами. У дослідженні взяли участь вчителі загальноосвітніх навчальних закладів Херсонської області, які давали відповіді на анкету «Якість освіти» та соціально-психологічні опитувальники. Результати показали, що вчителі сприймають якість освіти переважно як певний обсяг знань, застосування знань на практиці та здатність навчатися. Одночасно вчителі недооцінюють деякі компетенції, які має формувати сучасна освіта: володіння іноземними мовами, комп'ютерні та підприємницькі навички. Зроблено висновок про необхідність підвищення обізнаності вчителів щодо зв'язку якості освіти з такими аспектами як роль науки в освіті, менеджмент якості освіти та інноваційний характер сучасної освіти.

Ключові слова: групова ідентичність, громадська думка, компетенції, модернізація освіти, толерантність, якість освіти

Іванченко С.Н., Гончаренко Л.А. Социально-психологическое исследование проблемы качества образования среди педагогов

Проблема качества образования обсуждается в статье с точки зрения формирования общественного мнения среди субъектов образовательного процесса. Целью статьи является изучение понимания и оценки понятия качества образования педагогами. В исследовании приняли участие учителя общеобразовательных школ Херсонской области, которые отвечали на вопросы

анкеты «Качество образования» и социально-психологических опросников. Результаты показали, что учителя воспринимают качество образования преимущественно как определенный набор знаний, применение знаний на практике и способность учиться. В то же время учителя недооценивают некоторые компетенции, которые должно формировать современное образование: владение иностранными языками, компьютерные и предпринимательские навыки. Сделан вывод о необходимости повышения уровня информированности педагогов о связи качества образования с такими аспектами, как роль науки в образовании, управление качеством образования, инновационный характер современного образования.

Ключевые слова: групповая идентичность, качество образования, компетенции, модернизация образования, общественное мнение, толерантность