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**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF STUDENTS MASTERING THE
PROFESSION OF A DEFECTOLOGIST**

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Abstract

The topicality of the given research is explained by high requirements for the teachers of speech pathologists' education, whose professional activity is performed in complex conditions, associated with the support of the development of children with disabilities in the educational process, with their conflict-free integration into everyday life. In this regard, this article is devoted to the emotional intelligence of future defectologists. It characterizes an ability to accept and understand both other people's emotions and feelings and their ones and control the way communicative behaviour is realized. We consider emotional intelligence as one of the professionally crucial qualities of a person, a key element of professional suitability and readiness to implement adequate psychological and pedagogical support for children with disabilities. The leading research method is an experiment that opens up the opportunity to re-evaluate the personal preparedness of future defectologists for independent pedagogical activity and improve their professional training. In the experimental work, the original author's methodology was used. The research participants were students mastering a Bachelor's degree program in Special (defectological) education. The article presents the peculiarities of students' reactions to their feelings and others' feelings, to the need to control emotions when fulfilling professional duties.

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1. Introduction

At the present stage of the development of the public education system, every child, regardless of the type of his development, is considered to be a unique person worthy of respect and adequate psychological and pedagogical support. Moreover, creating conditions in the educational environment, which are optimal for student socialization, is among the priorities of national importance. These demand optimal requirements for the teaching staff training for mass and specific (correctional) educational institutions and emphasize the relevance and timeliness of our research.

The works of Markova (2016), Saitbayeva and Graboreva (2018), Slobodchikov (2019), and other specialists are devoted to the problem of professional teacher training. According to the authors, teaching skills necessarily imply respect for the chosen profession, based on awareness of its social significance and teachers' capabilities, finding the meaning of life in professional activity. And the effectiveness of this activity largely depends on the teacher's readiness for self-improvement, on his ability to vary flexibly educational technologies and constantly enrich the profession with creative innovations (Markova, 2016; Saitbayeva & Graboreva, 2018; Slobodchikov, 2019).

That is, mastering the teaching profession is available only to a person with a sufficiently high intellectual potential, which, as you know, includes not only a cognitive but also an emotional component. And if the cognitive functions necessary for future teachers are covered intensely and thoroughly, many issues concerning their emotional intelligence require additional study.

2. Problem Statement

The professional activity of a defectologist teacher is particularly complex since it is associated with the realization of the educational needs of children with disabilities who have congenital or acquired developmental disorders that complicate socialization. Psychological and pedagogical support of such children can be carried out both in mass educational institutions, where they are trained and brought up jointly with healthy developing peers, and in specific (correctional) educational institutions, for example, for children with visual, hearing, or intellectual disabilities.

In both cases, it is necessary to solve not only didactic but also remedial and developmental tasks, paying the most precise attention to overcoming violations that distort the interaction of such children with the environment and to the development of high and preserved qualities of their psyche. And this is available only to a highly qualified professional, which can be called a specialist who has the necessary knowledge alongside competencies and a certain level of development of professionally significant personality qualities and emotional intelligence.

In our article, emotional intelligence is the ability to understand their feelings and others' feelings and control them to solve practical problems (Lyusin, 2009). The importance of the paper is connected with skills necessary for successfully mastering the profession of a defectologist and the realization of remedial and pedagogical work.

3. Research Questions

Many domestic and foreign experts emphasize the high requirements of society for the training of a defectologist teacher and his role in the social development of personality and integration of children with disabilities into the environment.

For instance, Nazarova (2000) notes that the work of a defectologist is limited to the scope of official duties since it requires a humanistic worldview, mercy, and a tolerant attitude to the shortcomings of other people and their weaknesses. People who do not possess these qualities, according to the author, should choose another profession.

The fact that certain personality traits of a teacher, realizing the special educational needs of children with disabilities, have a significant impact on the quality and results of his professional activity is proved convincingly by French and Chopra (2006).

Yakovleva (2019) focuses attention on creativity in the profession of a defectologist. In her opinion, it is a creative principle that underlies the professional self-determination of the defectologist, and it is simply impossible to implement the remedial and educational process or predict its results without such personality qualities as initiative and innovation.

In the work of Karynbaeva et al. (2017), the current problems and prospects of training teachers to support the development of children with disabilities in inclusive education, which requires maximum concentration, dedication, and responsibility, are considered.

Cagran and Schmidt (2011) also write about the importance of the psychological preparedness of a teacher to work in inclusive education. The authors believe that both the psychological climate in such a classroom and, in general, the effectiveness of a joint education of children with disabilities and their healthy developing peers largely depends on them.

Noting the considerable role of emotional intelligence in ensuring the successful solution of professional tasks, Urquijo et al. (2019) write that the stress resistance of the individual, the influence of various kinds of experiences on the result of the work performed, and the ability to manage industrial conflicts largely depend on its level. The properties of emotional intelligence determine the effectiveness of interpersonal interaction in general and mediate its humanistic orientation.

At the same time, in those professional activities that involve constant communication with other people, emotional intelligence becomes particularly important. Farnia et al. (2018) name professions related to law, medicine, and education. In these aspects of public life, according to the authors, it is simply impossible to choose a career reasonably without the ability to recognize the experiences of partners in communicative interaction and the ability to control their emotions and the emotions of other people.

In their study, Miao et al. (2017) examine the features of the influence that emotional intelligence has on a person's attitude to work. They again emphasize its importance for successful self-realization in professional activities related to interpersonal interaction.

O.I. Maksimova, N.I. Trubnikova, E.V. Malikova, and E.B. Manuzi consider emotional intelligence one of the main factors, ensuring the effectiveness of professional activity in education and mediating the formation and development of professional competencies. As an integral component of pedagogical skill, emotional intelligence contributes to achieving set goals and stimulates the teacher's self-development (as

cited in Trubnikova et al., 2020). It makes a person more adaptive, allowing him to overcome difficulties and find conflict-free solutions to problematic situations. Therefore, the formation and development of such a crucial personality quality among students of pedagogical specialties should be considered among the main tasks of professional training (Maksimova, 2021).

Psychological and pedagogical support of children with disabilities has specific requirements for a teacher. When considering the motivational and personal preparedness of a teacher to work with such children in inclusive education, Karynbaeva et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of such components of emotional intelligence as empathy, self-control over behaviour and emotional reactions, the ability to understand children's feelings and react sensitively to them.

It should be noted that at Sholom-Aleichem Priamursky State University, during the training and retraining of teachers of speech pathologists, the most serious attention is paid to the development of their emotional intelligence, on which the success of their professional activities largely depends.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to study the features of emotional intelligence of students mastering the Bachelor's degree program in the field of "Special (defectological) education". The realization of the goal allowed us to obtain a significant amount of new data contributing to this vital component of personal preparedness for professional activity among future teachers of speech pathologists and improving their professional skills.

5. Research Methods

The study was conducted in September - October 2021 based on Sholom-Aleichem Priamursky State University. Ten girls, third-year students, who chose a noble but challenging profession of a defectologist teacher, which requires a particular emotional impact, took part in the experiment. The subjects were offered an original "Emotional List" technique. This list included eight emotional states:

- positive emotions (joy, admiration, pride, satisfaction);
- negative experiences (sadness, anger, shame, disappointment).

The task included two sets of individual assignments, and the respondents fulfilled them in writing. In the first part of the experiment, we asked the respondents to evaluate their ability to recognize the given states, the attitudes to their manifestation by other people (offered either to students or their parents), and their willingness to take these emotions under control using a three-point system. If a student could easily recognize an emotional state by facial expressions, gestures, voice intonations of another person, was ready to treat a person with understanding and sympathy, and knew how to respond to this emotional reaction, the testers gave the respondents two points. Those emotions that were well recognized, but did not arise in the subjects any sympathy or confidence in reacting accordingly, was rated at one point. Conditions that were difficult to perceive and control, or caused a negative response of the future defectologists, were evaluated at zero points.

In the second part of the experiment, the testers asked the respondents to evaluate the ability to control their own emotions, manage them, and show both positive and negative experiences in an

exclusively socially acceptable form without violating professional ethics. We asked to evaluate with two points the conditions, the management of which did not cause any difficulties for the subjects. Emotions, occasionally subordinating the subjects' psyche and being difficult to control, were estimated at one point. And the states, which the students consider unnecessary to manage, should have been evaluated at zero points.

To clarify the obtained data, each respondent had interviews with the organizing team at the end of the work, when the girls gave the necessary explanations. Then the scores for both parts of the experiment were calculated. If the result was 0 - 10 points, that indicated a low level of emotional intelligence. The result of 11 - 22 points was supposed to be an average level, and the outcome of 23 - 32 points was high.

6. Findings

As expected, all our trainees showed an average level of emotional intelligence. Moreover, seven respondents had a result in the range of 20-22 points, which was close to a high level, and the results of the other three girls corresponded to 15 points. These data underline the need to strengthen work in professional education. At the same time, it also indicates that the self-assessment by future defectologists of their abilities to recognize, understand and control their emotions and other people's emotions were objective and adequate. The university teachers conducted the study in an atmosphere of goodwill and mutual trust, so the students did not give wishful thinking.

Let us mark that, according to the subjects, the recognition of the emotional states of other people, whether they were children or adults, did not cause any particular difficulty. And the emotions presented in our list were usually experienced by all people quite vividly and were quite recognizable in their expression. As for the attitudes to the feelings of future students or their parents, they were dubious. Future speech pathologists could not take these emotions under control, either.

As it turned out, positive experiences almost always caused a vivid emotional response. The girls noted that they were almost ready to show understanding and empathy towards people experiencing joy, admiration, pride, or satisfaction. Of course, people displayed positive emotions on an adequate occasion. For example, a person who was proud of having committed some improper action, admired the ugly behaviour of a bully, or sincerely rejoiced at the failure of a friend, can cause a whole range of emotions, but not sympathy among the absolute majority of people.

According to our respondents, it is often quite complicated to express positive emotions, especially when dealing with disabled children. The students said that while studying the professional disciplines and school-based experience, they got a clear understanding that feelings of pride and satisfaction significantly reduced the susceptibility of children with disabilities to the influence of the teacher. People could express joy and admiration so violently that their behaviour becomes almost uncontrollable. And in such cases, only an experienced teacher-defectologist, a true master of his craft, can master the situation.

For obvious reasons, all the students highly appreciated their attitude to such emotions that other people feel like shame, especially experienced by students, and the ability to control its manifestation. The respondents associated the given feeling with the social maturity of the personality and the result of the educational influence. According to future speech pathologists, the manifestation of such emotions as sadness and disappointment undoubtedly deserved sympathy and understanding. However, not all of them

showed a willingness to manage these experiences, giving them a more or less positive socially acceptable direction. Seven girls would prefer not to attend at all. And all the respondents found it undesirable to react to the manifestation of anger, shown both by children and adults.

Explaining their answers, the students said that they attached great importance to such a professionally significant quality of the personality of a defectologist teacher as emotional freedom from a communication partner. Indeed, what psychologists call "emotional contagion" can cause an erroneous decision, an impulsive act. However, constructions of an emotional barrier between oneself and a communication partner (a child or an adult) make it difficult to understand and give a shade of formalism to professional interaction. We think that such detached attitudes to emotional reactions displayed a low level of emotional intelligence and tolerance. But it quite definitely highlights the direction for self-development.

However, alongside a tolerant attitude to shortcomings and weaknesses, the necessary components of the success of the professional activity of a defectologist teacher include strict self-demand, the ability to manage their emotions, relationships, and states. According to the study, students believe that positive experiences are manageable and controllable much better than negative emotions. Although, in some situations, it will be appropriate to express such feelings. Partners in educational interaction should understand that a teacher-defectologist is a living person, not a robot, indifferently performing programmed functions. For example, you can and should openly rejoice at the success shown by students, admire the remarkable craft, demonstrate your satisfaction with the timely and selfless help assisted by parents in delivering any remedial and developmental projects.

Another thing is negative emotions, which can seriously complicate the mutual understanding and even annul the achievements already gained. The students said they were well aware of how important it was to keep such experiences under control when performing professional duties. But at the same time, they noted how difficult, sometimes impossible, this task was. In particular, there was an objective reason for negative emotions, not related to a professional area but a purely personal one.

Six students generally attributed unpleasant experiences to the category of undesirable phenomena, which people should try to avoid as much as possible to keep the emotional balance. Four girls expressed their opinion about how important it was to understand that experiences were not just a source of emotional discomfort. They can serve as a signal for a teacher-defectologist for the need to change the behaviour, help rethink a decision unsuccessfully made, or more realistically assess the existing claims.

7. Conclusion

Thus, scientists consider emotional intelligence among the most important factors ensuring the effectiveness of professional interaction of a teacher-defectologist with children with congenital or acquired developmental disorders and with other subjects of the educational process. As our research has shown, the students who have chosen the profession of a defectologist and are successfully mastering it still have to work hard on this component of professional skills. According to their assessment, all of our respondents showed emotional intelligence only at an average level during the experiment. Moreover, the most difficulties were associated not with understanding these emotions but with their management. The data obtained will be necessarily taken into account when carrying out further training of future defectologists,

during which necessary core competencies and professionally significant personality qualities are dynamically developing.

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