

CONFLICT TOLERANCE OF A TEACHER: DIAGNOSIS AND DEVELOPMENT

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***Abstract.** In today's rapidly developing society conflict tolerance is an important quality of professionals in different areas. The question of the teacher's tolerance to conflict has not been studied well enough. The results of this research disclose relationships between indicators of general adaptability and components of conflict tolerance of future teachers, which is important in the formation and development of conflict tolerance of a teacher.*

***Keywords:** conflict tolerance, adaptability, conflict competence, professional competence, teacher.*

Introduction

Due to modernization of education and dynamic changes in society today teachers face the need to learn new professional and general cultural competence. So the teacher's ability to communicate constructively in a conflict situation is especially important in conditions of conflict-educational space.

The conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in the educational process, as it is characterized by personal and professional communication of different groups: students and their parents, teachers and administration (Yuferova & Koryakovtseva, 2015). Differences in age, experience, attitudes, values of participants of educational relations make this communication extremely tense and require timely prevention of its destructive forms, positive solutions of such problems. The need to master the skills of positive conflict resolution is even more urgent as underage students are often participants, witnesses and even "hostages" of conflict relations. If compared with adults, they have fewer resources for the optimal way out of the crisis or conflict situation. Therefore, first of all, the teacher should be responsible for the conflict resolution and transferring it into a meaningful activity.

At the same time we can state the fact that modern teachers have a very limited set of methods of conflict resolution and it often involves an authoritarian intervention, which leads to unstable, short-term results and doesn't solve the problem (Yuferova & Koryakovtseva, 2015). Professional changes, emotional burnout of the teacher can also become barriers to a positive dialogue in the conflict process. Laws and regulations do not always bring the desired effect. All this can contribute to an escalation of tension, widening of the conflict zone beyond the scope of the institution, and reduces the possibility of the optimal resolution.

Russia's integration into the international legal and educational field requires a mandatory switch to international norms and standards, methods and technologies of working with children and young people, including the field of conflict resolution.

The problem of studying and research resources of conflict tolerance is relevant in the context of increased tension and conflict in all spheres of dynamic public life. An important component of professional and general cultural competence of the modern professional is the ability to constructively resolve arising conflicts, to be tolerant to conflict factors and adaptive to changing demands of the environment.

Materials and methods

Conflict tolerance is a person's ability to optimally organize his/her behavior in difficult situations of social interaction, to solve arising contradictions without conflicts in relationships with other people. A. Antsupov and I. Shipilov define the conflict tolerance of a person as a specific manifestation of psychological stability (Antsupov & Shipilov, 2000). A person who is conflict stable is able to control his/her behavior in a conflict situation, as well as to resolve conflicts positively. Adaptability in most scientific concepts is regarded as a property of organic and inorganic systems, it determines the success of their existence in a changing surrounding reality.

We assumed that the overall adaptability of an individual affects the conflict tolerance, and such components of general adaptability as adaptive abilities, neuro-psychological stability, communication features and moral normativity can have significant relations with components of conflict tolerance. To prove this hypothesis we have conducted an empirical study at the University in the framework of the service of conflict counseling and mediation. We have chosen techniques to assess each component based on A. Antsupov and I. Shipilov concept of the structure of conflict tolerance, which was provided by emotional, volitional, cognitive, motivational and psychomotor components.

In order to assess the stability of the emotional component of conflict tolerance we used H. Eysenck “Scale of emotional stability - instability (neuroticism)” (Yuferova, 2014). Lower values on the scale of emotional stability indicate a high level of emotional stability. To evaluate the conflict volitional component of tolerance, that is the individual's ability to consciously mobilize his/her forces in a conflict situation, to show tolerance to opinions of others, deliberate self-control we used N. Obozov technique “Self-evaluation of will power” (Obozov, 1997), which gives the general characteristic of will power. In order to assess the cognitive component of the conflict tolerance we applied R. Harrison and R. Bramson questionnaire “Thinking styles” (Harrison & Bramson, 1998). The authors describe the following thinking styles: synthetic, idealistic, pragmatic, analytical and realistic. The cognitive component of conflict tolerance is characteristic of synthetic and analytical thinking styles. Consequently, if a person has a high level of expression of these styles, it means the cognitive component of conflict tolerance prevails. To evaluate the motivational component of conflict tolerance we used Yu. Orlov technique “Need for achievement” (Orlov, 1980). It became obvious that the motivation to achieve goals in the conflict, to successfully resolve the conflict is reflected in the motivational component of conflict tolerance.

In order to assess the psychomotor component of conflict tolerance we applied E. Ilin and P. Kovalev technique “Aggressive behavior” (Ilin, 2014). High values on the scale of “direct physical aggression”, “indirect physical aggression” and “direct verbal aggression” might indicate a low level of self-restraint in person’s behavior and the tendency to express aggression in a conflict situation. Also we used the technique “Level of conflict tolerance” (Koryakovtseva, 2012) aimed to identify the level of person’s tolerance to conflicts and behavioral strategies in conflict situations. The estimation of overall adaptability and its components was carried out using A. Maklakov and S. Chermyanin technique “Multilevel personality questionnaire “Adaptability” (Maklakov & Chermyanin, 2001).

40 students of pedagogical University of 19-21 years took part in the study of the impact of general adaptability to the conflict tolerance. The interest to this age group is due to the fact that according to research young people are the most vulnerable to negative socio-economic phenomena. It may provoke strong intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts and conflicts among the youth. Besides, conflict tolerance is an important pedagogical ability of a teacher (Yuferova & Koryakovtseva, 2015).

Mathematical and statistical processing of the results was performed using the statistical package SPSS 17.0. The check of the normality of distribution by Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the distribution of the sample is close to the standard.

Results and discussion

The correlation analysis using the Pearson correlation coefficient revealed a significant positive relationship between the components of adaptability: the better a person adapts to new conditions or situations, the more effective he/she can regulate his/her behavior in a particular situation. It will be easier to follow the existing rules, to respect rules, his/her communication abilities are developed better.

Furthermore, we found out significant relationship between the level of conflict tolerance and will power ($r=0,391$ if $p\leq 0,05$ correlation analysis using the Pearson correlation coefficient). So, the quicker and more accurate a person can consciously mobilize his/her forces and “pull himself together” in a conflict situation, the more appropriate he/she will take the situation and find right decisions.

We stated a statistically significant negative relationship between a person’s conflict tolerance and direct physical aggression ($r= -0,614$ if $p\leq 0,01$ the Pearson correlation coefficient), indirect physical aggression ($r= -0,470$ if $p\leq 0,01$), direct verbal aggression ($r= 0,659$ if $p\leq 0,01$ the Pearson correlation coefficient). The higher the level of person’s tolerance to conflicts, the less likely he/she aggressively react at the opponent.

A statistically significant negative relationship between conflict tolerance and pragmatic style of thinking is also stated. The correlation coefficient is ($r= -0,392$ if $p\leq 0,05$ the Pearson correlation coefficient). People, having a dominant pragmatic style of thinking, determine the behavior of other people with their own personal experience, which is the criterion of the correctness or incorrectness of other people's actions. They use usual knowledge and skills, therefore, in a conflict they can be difficult to overcome their own stereotypes about the opponent. It can aggravate the development of the conflict and reduce the individual conflict tolerance. At the same time we determined a statistically significant positive relationship between conflict tolerance and analytical style of thinking ($r= 0,529$ if $p\leq 0,01$). So, conflict-resistant people tend to analyze the situation and the information received, they carefully choose best options for the development and resolution of specific situations.

We underline the fact that correlations between measures of adaptability and structural elements of conflict tolerance have been proven. The relationship between moral norms and conflicts tolerance ($r = 0,480$ if $p\leq 0,01$) confirms that the conflict-resistant people generally tend to comply with existing standards and, therefore, they are less likely to get into conflict situations.

The negative correlation between the level of adaptive capacity and neuroticism ($r = -0,527$ if $p\leq 0,01$) indicates that if a person has the developed ability to adapt he/she can control expression of emotions according to the specific

situation. A significant negative correlation of behavioral regulation and personality neuroticism ($r = -0,665$ if $p \leq 0,01$) proves that a person, who is able to control his/her behavior, better controls the display of emotions. Adaptive abilities have negative correlations with the level of expression of the direct physical aggression ($r = -0,340$ if $p \leq 0,05$), behavioral regulation and indirect physical aggression ($r = -0,320$ if $p \leq 0,05$). Moral normativity is also negatively correlated with the direct physical aggression ($r = -0,467$ if $p \leq 0,01$). Therefore, if a person has a high level of formation of adaptive abilities, expression of moral norms, he/she is less inclined to use force in resolving conflict situations.

Data on the evidence of relationship between communicative potential and such thinking styles as “analytical” ($r = 0,317$ if $p \leq 0,05$) and “synthetic” ($r = 0,391$ if $p \leq 0,05$) are quite interesting. A person with good communication skills gets much more information that he/she can analyze. “Synthesizers” never miss an opportunity to “show off”, to learn something new and develop their radically new solutions to problems.

At the same time, we found out a negative relationship between communicative potential and “realistic” style of thinking ($r = -0,421$ if $p \leq 0,01$). The better developed person’s communication skills, the less likely the fact that his dominant style of thinking will be “realistic”. “Realists” base on facts they know and can deftly handle them, trying to correct any inaccuracies. But they have problems in communicating with other people, because the weak point of “realists” is their ability to abstractly percept any information.

The significant positive relationship between moral norms and the analytical style of thinking ($r = 0,383$ at $p \leq 0,05$ the Pearson correlation coefficient) is stated.

Analysts hate uncertainty, disorder, thus, rules and regulations is the source of the necessary order in certain areas of life, situations, relationships.

So, as a result of statistical processing of the data we revealed both direct and indirect relationship between adaptability in general, its elements and individual components of the conflict tolerance.

In order to determine the impact of the adaptability of the individual on the conflict tolerance we subjected a correlation matrix was to analysis by the method of procedure of principal components. 6 factors were extracted with distinct eigenvalues greater than 1. These factors were subjected to varimax rotation.

The first factor can be interpreted as “psychomotor maladaptability”. Variables connected with this phenomenon have the highest load. The variables for this factor are the direct physical aggression (factor loadings is equal to 0.355), indirect physical aggression (0.280) and direct verbal aggression (0.292). These variables in our study describe the psychomotor component of conflict tolerance. The first factor gives a negative load to conflict tolerance in general. Thus, personality adaptability affects both the person’s conflict tolerance in general and

his/her psychomotor component heavily. It becomes obvious: the higher the load factor of this factor, the worse the formation of conflict tolerance and its psychomotor component in particular. Incontinence behavior indicates a high risk of conflict, as well as the inability to control actions in a difficult situation.

The second factor was interpreted by us as “adaptive emotionality” as the variables connected with this phenomenon have the highest load. Such variables for this factor are adaptive abilities (factor loadings is equal to 0.362), behavioral regulation (0.370) and neuroticism (-0.327). Thus, this factor has a positive effect on the maturity of the emotional component of conflict tolerance: the higher the load on this factor, the better the person express emotional stability in difficult situations and conflicts in particular, which in turn helps to regulate his/her individual behavior.

We interpret the third factor as “adaptive mobilization of cognitive processes” as the variables connected with this phenomenon have the highest loads. Such variables for this factor are the will power (factor loadings is equal to 0.477), analytical (0.380) and idealistic thinking styles (-0.477). A negative factor loadings influences the last style. The third factor is manifested in the successful formation of the volitional component of conflict tolerance and individual elements of the cognitive component, in our case in the analytical style of thinking. This factor has the negative impact on the formation of the human idealistic style of thinking as the dominant one.

The fourth factor, which we have identified, is interpreted as “adaptability of thinking” as the variables connected with this phenomenon have the highest load. Such variables are the communicative potential (factor loadings is equal to 0.288), synthetic (0.267) and idealistic (0.240), thinking styles. This factor has a negative load on the formation of realistic style of thinking (-0.595) as the dominant one. This factor leads to a greater likelihood of a high level of formation of communicative abilities, as well as synthetic or idealistic style of thinking as the dominant ones. Also under the influence of this factor the likelihood of dominance of realistic thinking style decreases. It is clear that this factor affects the development of the cognitive component of the conflict tolerance through communicative potential. It means that the external adaptability of thinking affects the cognitive component of the conflict tolerance.

The fifth factor can be interpreted as “normativity of cognitive processes” as the variables connected with this phenomenon have the highest loads. These variables are moral normativity (factor loadings is equal to 0.312), synthetic (0.277) and pragmatic (-0.607) thinking styles. Thus, we can note the great role of normative and moral component of adaptability in the formation of thinking styles, which representing the cognitive component of the conflict tolerance in our research.

The sixth factor is interpreted as “adaptive motivation” as the variables connected with this phenomenon have the highest load. Such variables for this factor are motivation and synthetic thinking style. Factor loadings are 0.574 and -0.261 respectively. We assume that this factor affects the motivational component of conflict tolerance. Specific motives of human behavior and actions may be adequate to the external conditions in which he finds himself.

Conclusions

Thus, we have found that there are direct and indirect correlations between indicators of general adaptability of the individual and components of conflict tolerance. It is evident that the better the person adapts to new conditions or situations, the more effective he/she can regulate his/her behavior in a particular conflict situation, the better developed his/her communication skills are, the easier to follow the existing rules, to respect norms. The higher the level of formation of person’s will power, the higher his/her tolerance to the conflict. So, the faster and better a person can consciously mobilize his/her forces and “pull himself together” in a conflict situation, the more appropriate he/she takes the situation. If a person has well-developed ability to adapt, he/she can control emotions and behavior according to the specific situation and he/she is less prone to use direct and indirect physical aggression and is likely to use the appropriate way to react.

On the basis of factor analysis, we have identified six factors that affect the structure of conflict tolerance. In particular, the influence of such factors as “adaptability of thinking”, “normativity of cognitive processes” and “adaptive mobilization of cognitive processes” on the cognitive component of the structure of conflict tolerance and the influence of such factor as “psychomotor maladaptability” on the individual psychomotor component respectively. The factor “adaptive emotionality” influences the emotional component of conflict tolerance. The factor “adaptive motivation” affects the motivational component of the structure. Thus, based on these results, we can conclude that our hypothesis that the overall adaptability affects components of the structure of conflict tolerance has been proved.

From all the above it follows that the teacher needs to develop a conflict competence through the development of general adaptability of a person.

Formation of a conflict competence is associated with overcoming various kinds of difficulties, both internal and external. According to M. M. Kashapov, the formation of a conflict competence of the individual is possible: firstly, with the help of special reflective technology to actualize the “hidden” experience of best conflict resolution; secondly, by including specially controlled socio-cultural conflicts of productive orientation in the educational processes; thirdly, to

determine the vector of self-improvement qualities which are necessary for success in a conflict interaction (Kashapov, 2010).

If a teacher has subjective barriers, for example professional deformation elements, it can also be a problem of formation of teachers' conflict competence. So, in M. A. Yuferova research she found out that high levels of teacher's emotional burnout becomes an obstacle to thoroughly assess the conflict situation. It leads to the situation when a teacher chooses strategies of unilaterally win: authoritarian behavior, suppression, or, on the contrary, using tools that do not meet the interests of one side of the conflict and can be considered as a temporary measure. Therefore, prevention and correction of the signs of teacher' emotional burnout can contribute to the preservation and expansion of the teacher behavioral strategies in conflict, especially the democratic and creative styles and collaborative strategies which will optimize the interaction between participants of the educational process (Yuferova, 2014)

Psychological education plays an important role in the development of teacher's conflict competence. We suggest to include (by doses, carefully selected content) psychological education within the competence-based approach in the current activities of educational associations, teachers' meetings, psychological and pedagogical consultation, etc.

Psychological education is aimed to create an environment where teachers can get professionally and personally meaningful knowledge. First of all, we are talking about psychological knowledge and skills that allow teachers to build relationships with all participants in the educational process.

M. R. Bityanova in her model of organization of psychological services has formulated the basic principle of teachers' education – organic entanglement of situations of transferring knowledge in the practical process (i.e., knowledge as a response to real-life teacher's request).

The psychologist can act as an assistant teacher, a facilitator who gives self-confidence, an educator who relies on specific psychological knowledge, an interlocutor who is able to see the educational situation from some different position than the teacher, but to understand and accept the teacher's position, a game technician who creates a situation of reflexive analysis with the teacher of his experience, a methodist – a bringer of “mentalizing” didactics culture, a partner in pedagogical activity who works out programs or lessons (Bityanova, 1998).

Mutual understanding, mutual learning, convergence of teachers and psychologist, effective psychological education of teachers, especially in matters related to their conflict competence is possible only in such dialogue or polylogue where people respect each other, but differ in points of professional views.

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