

The Study of Personality Factors in the Formation of University Lecturers Emotional Burnout

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Abstract: The study is dedicated to the investigation of the burn-out syndrome in the university lectures. There is a consensus of opinion among most of researchers that the syndrome is a consequence of the professional activity. The present study suggests that the emotional burn-out is primarily the result of action of personal factors. The objective of this study was the investigation of the fundamental professional features of the university lecturers determining development of the emotional burn-out syndrome. The data obtained as the result of the procedures used show that the determining personal features in terms of formation of the emotional burn-out syndrome in the university lecturers are inadequate self-esteem, low, poorly developed communicative skills, high level of anxiety and the external locus of control. This approach is promising for explanation of the emotional burn-out syndrome and prevention thereof.

Key words: Emotional burn-out, factors of emotional burn-out, personal features of university lecturers

INTRODUCTION

In the modern psychological-pedagogical science the significance of investigation of the emotional burn-out issue and finding the methods of its solution is emphasized. The presence of the positive mental state and absence of the emotional burn-out in a university lecturer is relevant as he not only acts as the carrier of the subject-related knowledge but also forms conditions for realization of potential of each student.

According to Boyko (1996), emotional burn-out is the mechanism of psychological defense developed by a person in the form of the complete or partial exclusion of emotions in response to the selected stressful actions. The significant issue in the analysis of factors promoting to formation of the emotional burn-out syndrome as well as their consequences having an adverse effect on the performance of the professional activity and relationships with the partners.

In the Foreign literature, the emotional burnout syndrome is most frequently considered as the result of the lasting professional stress (Cox and Griffiths, 1998). The conditions of performance of the lecturer's professional activity promote to formation of this syndrome. The wish to meet high requirements by solving the professional tasks often causes negative consequences in the form of emotional exhaustion, problems in the interpersonal

interaction with other subjects of the educational process, the absence of need for self-actualization. Maslach and Jackson (1981) propose the three basic symptoms in which the emotional burnout syndrome is expressed: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduction of personal achievements.

Formanyuk (1994) distinguishes the presence of the role (specifics of work within the social sphere and issues of interaction in the situations of separated responsibility) and organizational (labor conditions, age, marital status, length of employment) factors promoting to development of the emotional burn-out. He also believes that the personal factor acts as one of those determining the emotional burn-out syndrome.

In terms of consideration of the personal factor of emotional burn-out there is no single opinion among researchers as to distinguishing the components thereof. Boyko (1996) distinguishes tending to emotional coldness, tending to intensive feeling of negative circumstances of activity, poor motivation of emotional investment in the professional activity. Oryol (2005) believes that the main indicator is the level of intensity of the neuroticism factor. Freudenberg (1983) refers to the category of personal factors the idealistic attitudes, the locus of control. According to Langle (2003) along with Pines and Aronson (1988) the main factor is the lack of the true existential sense in the activity performed by a human. Loonstra *et al.* (2009) counts the following as

the personal factors of emotional burnout: individual-typological features, constructive thinking and perceptible performance of the own personality, involvement in the activity, however, the presence of existential sense is fundamental.

Upon existence of different models considering the factors of the emotional burnout there are no comprehensive studies of the personal features of university lecturers that promote to formation of the emotional burnout syndrome to a greater extent. The issue of the correlation and the degree of impact of particular personal traits of lecturers on the hand determining the emotional exhaustion on the other hand preventing the development of the emotional burnout symptoms still remains underinvestigated. The subject matter of this study consists in identification of the personal features that are leading in terms of occurrence and development of emotional burnout syndrome in the university lecturers. Procedure. In order to solve this issue, we used a set of methods: method of diagnostics of the degree of emotional burnout (V.V. Boyko); the method of multi-factor personality inventory by Raydogorsky (1998) statistical methods of the data processing (arithmetic average, Student's t-test). The study was performed on the basis of the National Research University "BelGU", the study involved 254 university lecturers.

Main part: In order to define the level of emotional burnout in the university lecturers participating in the

study, we used the method 'Diagnostics of the level of emotional burnout' by V.V. Boyko (the results obtained are presented in Table 1). The analysis of results allows drawing the conclusions that the established emotional burnout syndrome was detected in 22% of the respondents, at the stage of formation of the emotional burnout syndrome in 54% of respondents, the emotional burnout syndrome was absent in 24%.

The data obtained show that the issue of the emotional burnout in the professional activity of university lecturers is topical.

For the purpose of further solving of the specified problem, namely, analysis of the personal features determining formation of the emotional burnout we distinguished the two groups of respondents with the formed (22% from the total number of respondents) and unformed emotional burnout symptoms (24% from the total number of respondents).

For analysis of the lecturers' personal features the method of the multi-factor examination of personality by R. Cattell was used (Table 2) which showed that this group of respondents is characterized by the increased anxiety (high values by the factor O = 8.8), high level of empathy and compassion to other people (high values by the factor I = 8.6), standard behavior and the external locus of control (high values by the factor G = 8). Thus, the above-mentioned features of the emotional-volitional sphere of a person may promote to formation of the

Table 1: The level of formedness of emotional burnout in university lecturers (%)

Intensity of the emotional burnout symptoms	Tension	Resistance	Exhaustion	Burnout
Unformed symptom	20	17	29	24
Symptom at the stage of formation	58	41	53	54
Formed symptom	22	42	18	22

Table 2: Comparison of the personality profiles of pedagogues with the formed symptoms of emotional burnout and without emotional burnout symptoms

Factors	Mean values of intensity of personal factors in lecturers with the emotional burnout symptoms	Mean values of intensity of personal factors in lecturers without emotional burnout symptoms	Student's test
MD (adequate self-esteem)	5.4	7.4	2.39
A (unsociability sociability)	5.8	7.9	2.13
B (intelligence)	4.2	4.3	0.18
C (emotional stability-emotional instability)	7.0	7.5	1.22
E (subordination-dominance)	5.8	5.3	0.40
F (restraint-expressivity)	5.2	4.9	0.23
G (susceptibility to emotions-high standardization of behavior)	8.0	7.9	0.18
H (cowardice-courage)	5.0	6.6	1.20
I (hardness-sensitivity)	8.6	7.8	0.95
L (credulity-suspicion)	5.2	4.4	0.85
M (pragmatism, developed imagination)	6.8	6.5	0.25
N (straightforwardness-diplomacy)	6.4	6.1	0.27
O (self-confidence-anxiety)	8.8	6.8	2.50
Q1 (conservatism-radicalism)	6.1	5.1	1.80
Q2 (conformism-non-conformism)	5.8	4.7	0.63
Q3 (low self-control-high self-control)	6.8	8.8	2.22
Q4 (relaxation-tension)	7.2	5.6	1.95

emotional burnout symptoms in teachers both within the professional activity and beyond it. However, based on this analysis only we cannot state that these personal traits of pedagogues experiencing the formed emotional burnout syndrome are determining in terms of formation thereof.

Analysis of the personality profile of the pedagogues without the emotional burnout symptoms (Table 2) showed that they also feature empathy (high values by the factor I = 7.8) and standard behavior (high values by the factor G = 7.9), anxiety is expressed to a lesser degree (figures by the factor I = 6.8). However, along with these qualities the personality profile of respondents from this group differs through sociability, naturality and ease of behavior (high values by the factor A = 7.9). The pedagogues without emotional burnout work with people gladly are active by settlement of conflicts, actively react to any events. The pedagogues of this group feature the self-control of their emotions and behavior (high values by the factor Q3 = 8.8), i.e., the internal locus of control is more typical to them than the external one. It may be assumed that sociability and the internal locus of control in pedagogues may act as the compensatory mechanism and prevent formation of the emotional burn out symptoms.

For the purposes of clarification of the above mentioned results we performed the comparative analysis of the personality profiles of pedagogues with the formed symptoms of emotional burnout and without emotional burnout with the use of the Student's t-test (Table 2).

Based on the data presented in Table 2, it may be established that respondents with different degree of intensity of emotional burnout feature the statistically significant differences in values by the scales MD, A, O and Q₃ ($t_{\text{эм}} > t_{\text{кр}}$ at $p = 0.05$). Hence, it appears that the figures by the factor MD in respondents with emotional burnout (5.4) are underestimated as compared to the respondents without emotional burnout (7.4). Pedagogues with the formed emotional burnout symptoms tend to underestimate their capabilities and strength. It is also statistically significant that the figures in pedagogues with the emotional burnout by the factor A are lower which speaks of the less developed communication skills in this group of pedagogues as compared to pedagogues without emotional burnout. As to the factor O then in pedagogues with the formed burnout symptoms the figures are higher than in their colleagues which are indicative of a higher level of anxiety as compared to another group of respondents. Statistically significant differences in values by the factor Q₃ mean that external locus of control is peculiar to

lectures with the emotional burnout syndrome and the internal locus of control to the lecturers without this syndrome.

SUMMARY

As the result of analysis of the fundamental personal features of the university lecturers the conclusion may be drawn that the personal qualities play an important role in origination and development of emotional burnout syndrome. At that the factors determining formation of this syndrome are inadequate self-esteem, low sociability, increased anxiety and external locus of control.

CONCLUSION

The presence of emotional burnout in pedagogues has a negative effect both on the quality of pedagogical activity and life in whole and on the personal and professional development of students that tend to imitate the pedagogues' behavior patterns.

The factors determining formation of the emotional burnout syndrome in university lecturers are: low self-esteem, absence of motivation of communication, increased anxiety and external locus of control. The high level of development of the communication culture and the internal locus of control act as the compensatory mechanism preventing formation of the emotional burnout.

Solution of the issue concerning the hierarchy of personal qualities determining the emotional burnout syndrome is relevant in terms of development of measures aimed at correction and prevention thereof. Based on the obtained results the integrated program of the psychological-pedagogical support of pedagogues may be designed that is aimed at harmonization of both the internal resources and relationships with other participants of the educational process.

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