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Creativity as a Factor in the Psychological Well-being of Teachers of Higher Educational Institutions

DOI: 10.15804/tner.2020.60.2.15

Abstract

The article reveals the importance of creativity in achieving psychological well-being in teachers of higher educational institutions and substantiates the feasibility of its study. Psychological well-being is considered as an important indicator in people's lives, their desire for the development of personal potential, the formation of positive relationships, and productive creative activity for the benefit of society. The role of creativity in achieving the psychological well-being of a person as a unique creative ability, an important condition for human life, is substantiated. It affects self-acceptance, personal growth, creativity, among others. Creativity indicators (curiosity, creative opportunities, self-confidence, stability and persuasiveness, the desire to be an independent person, the ability to cope, etc.), affecting the psychological well-being of teachers of higher educational institutions, their satisfaction with life, work and themselves are investigated. It was established that the level of creativity is insufficient and that teachers for training specialists in social work have lower indicators than teachers of a foreign language. It is shown that creativity is a factor in psychological well-being and affects the formation of relationships with others, the purposefulness and meaningfulness of life, self-acceptance, personal growth, and the like. Statistically significant differences were found in terms of creativity and psychological well-being of the teachers who were studied depending on gender.

Key words: *creativity, creativity, psychological well-being, teacher of a higher educational institution*

Introduction

Higher education institutions in the current crisis are undergoing reform, as a result of the impact of social, economic, psychological challenges and more. This requires teachers to respond quickly, successfully solve problems, innovate, take action, and implement non-standard, innovative ideas and solutions, objectives and tasks in their professional activity (Oldham & Baer, 2012), which undoubtedly affects the effectiveness of their activities and psychological well-being as a whole. Well-being testifies to a state of overall mental and physical comfort, energy, strength and wellness (Diener, 2009). Well-being may result from either positive emotions or feelings which promote personal prosperity throughout life, or may occur as a result of positive feelings and emotions that are associated with personal prosperity (Seligman, 2011, p.13).

Psychological well-being is an important indicator of people's life (six-factor model of psychological well-being by Ryff (2014)), is connected with their desire to develop their personal potential, to form positive relationships, and to produce creative activity for the benefit of society. This is because psychologically prosperous people work better and have a greater desire to work. As noted Ryan and Deci (2001), well-being affects all processes in society (education, socio-economic development, education, activities, etc.) and is aimed at positive changes in people's lives.

Studying psychological well-being, scientists have viewed it in terms of: the concept of positive psychology in the concepts of personal happiness (Seligman, 2006); subjective well-being, which is a cognitive-evaluation process and determines life satisfaction (a cognitive-judgmental process which determines satisfaction with life) (Diener, Kahneman & Schwarz, 1999); an indicator of substantive freedom, which determines people's ability to live a life they themselves value (Sen, 2005; Graham, 2010); something which characterizes the temporary states of experience of the person of the present, past and future (Durayappah, 2011); a significant indicator of personal and psychological health (Ryff, 2016); subjective emotional evaluation of one's personality and one's own life, which determines peculiarities in the realization of self in a profession and self-realization of one's potential (Kossewska, Monika, 2015; Serdiuk, Danyliuk, & Chaika, 2018, etc.).

A special role in achieving psychological well-being is played by creativity which can be seen as a unique creative ability, the ability to abandon stereotypical ways of thinking (Gilford, 1968); a survival skill that should be shaped in a variety of contexts (Alencar & Oliveira, 2016, 555–560); novelty, efficiency and ethics (Cropley, 2001) etc. As noted by Weston (2007) and Weisberg (2006), all people

are capable of creative thinking, because creative people, whether they are geniuses or ordinary people, are characterized by critical thinking, ingenuity, imagination, discipline, and perseverance. In addition, Weston (2007) believes that creativity can be developed through exotic associations, diversification and development of ideas (p.21), comparison and juxtaposition of historical and intercultural facts, hyperbolization, and the combination of incompatible things and phenomena. Scientists Sawyer (2012), Schmid (2005) and others believe that creative processes contribute to the growth of health and well-being of people, and in the absence of the opportunity to realize creativity, the state of health and the level of well-being of people are reduced. Creativity is an essential condition for the survival of humanity (Sawyer, 2012; Schmid 2005) and directly influences self-acceptance (positive assessment of oneself and one's past life), personal growth (sense of further growth and development as a person), positive relationships with others (successful relationships), the meaningfulness of life (beliefs about purposefulness and the importance of human life), mastery of the environment of others (the ability to confidently and competently manage day-to-day affairs, effectively use and create life circumstances that meet personal needs and values), autonomy (not feeling dependent). These components collectively form the multi-component model of psychological well-being developed by C. Ryff (Ryff, & Keyes, 1995, p. 720).

Creativity is especially important for educators, as the growth of a nation, and the education of young people as responsible citizens is the primary goal of educators. It leads to optimal functioning through awareness of one's own strength and self-esteem, as each individual, society and nation must thrive in prosperity (Zaki, 2016, 27–29). A. Maslow explains creativity as a creative orientation that is inherent in everyone, but points to the likelihood of loss by the majority under the influence of the created system of education, upbringing and society. He argues that the way this concept is outlined by scientists demonstrates a vision of creative ideas as radical thoughts, statements and conclusions, which testify to the result of human activity and are realized in the form of innovations and future commercialization of the product (Maslow, 1943; 1968; 1971). Therefore, teachers should develop creativity, passion, faith, and strive for satisfaction through their own actions. Otherwise, when a teacher or other person does not get positive results from his or her work, then this can cause irreparable paralysis of one's well-being, inner death, repression of the most vivid aspirations of life (Lane, 2006).

Despite the number of works, the problem of creativity as a factor in the psychological well-being of teachers of higher educational institutions needs attention. After all, the desire for well-being and positive functioning is one of the

main driving forces of the human community, subjective emotional experience, which is an important condition for a full life of the individual (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Creativity is especially important for the fulfilment of teachers' functional responsibilities which require thinking creatively, reasonably reflecting in the decision-making process on vital issues and personal matters. Creative individuals are always confident, flexible and able to work towards achieving goals. They generate alternative ways to solve problems and implement them in different ways.

The problem of the research is to find indicators of creativity that affect the psychological well-being of teachers of higher educational institutions, their satisfaction with life, work and themselves in general.

Methodology of Research

The theoretical basis of our study was the multifaceted theory of C. Ryff, according to which psychological well-being as a complex, integral phenomenon is characterized by positive functioning of the individual and is manifested in the subjective experience of satisfaction with life, the realization of one's personal potential, and depends on the peculiarities of interaction of the individual and environment. In order to find indicators of psychological well-being and select indicators for psychologically prosperous and disadvantaged specialists, the Ukrainian-language version of the questionnaire "Scales of psychological well-being" by C. Ryff was used in adaptation by S. Karaskanova (2011).

Also, with the help of a "Creativity" test, we studied: the level of creativity and indicators of creative potential (curiosity and creative possibilities, self-confidence, stability and persuasiveness, ambitiousness, "auditory" and visual memory, the desire to be an independent person, the ability to think abstractly).

Statistical data processing and graphic presentation of the results were carried out using the package of statistical programs SPSS (version 23.0).

The main research group consisted of 164 teachers from the State Higher Educational Institution "University of Management of Education" of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine and Yuriy Fedkovych Chernivtsi National University. For a better understanding of the problem, the study was conducted comparing the impact of creativity on the attainment of psychological well-being of teachers in the training of specialists in two specialties "Social work" (94 persons, including 77 women and 17 men) and "Philology (English)" (70 teachers, of them 58 - women and 12 - men)

Research Results

According to the results of the study of creativity as a factor in the psychological well-being of teachers of higher educational institutions, it was established that the level of creativity is insufficient. As you can see from Table 1, most teachers in the field of social work and nearly a tenth of the philologists studied are characterized by low levels of creativity (79.1% and 9.2%, respectively), which indicates a limited potential. This may be due to the fact that teachers underestimate themselves, or they cannot create opportunities for themselves because they do not believe in their own strength. In most philologists, the figures are higher and indicate an average level of creativity as the most characteristic for them (85.7%). This indicates that they have the necessary skills to help them come up with new ideas and solutions to various problems, but in some situations they may also have some difficulties.

Table 1. The distribution of the studied experts by levels of creativity

Levels of creativity	Teachers in the field of specialists in the specialty "Social work", % (n=94)	Teachers in the training of specialists in the specialty "Philology (English)"% (n=70)
low	79.1	9.2
average	18.8	85.7
high	2.1	5.1

A high level of creative potential is revealed in only a small number of the respondents (2.1% and 5.1% respectively). This contributes to the realization of their personal and professional abilities and abilities in various forms of creative activity in the educational process.

Table 2. Groups of the respondents according to indicators of creative potential

Indicators of creative potential	Teachers in the training of specialists in the specialty "Social work" (n=94)		Teachers in the training of specialists in the specialty "Philology (English)" (n=70)	
	Average value	Standard deviation	Average value	Standard deviation
curiosity	9.5	1.8	10.0	1.2
self-confidence	7.5	1.6	7.9	1.3
ability to think abstractly	4.3	1.2	4.2	0.9

Indicators of creative potential	Teachers in the training of specialists in the specialty "Social work" (n=94)		Teachers in the training of specialists in the specialty "Philology (English)" (n=70)	
	Average value	Standard deviation	Average value	Standard deviation
stability and persuasiveness	3.9	1.0	4.7	1.3
"Auditory memory"	3.5	1.3	3.5	1.2
ambitiousness	2.4	0.9	2.5	0.8
visual memory	2.4	0.9	2.4	0.8
the desire to be an independent person	1.9	0.9	2.4	0.7
focus on affairs	1.9	0.9	2.0	1.2
Overall score	37.5	4.8	39.8	3.8

(P(value) < 0.01).

From the data in Table 2 it can be seen that among the components of creative potential, the most developed among teachers were curiosity (average 10.0 and 9.5 points) and self-confidence (average 7.9, 7.5 points).

The data obtained regarding the ability to think abstractly (on average 4.2, 4.3 points, respectively), stability and persuasiveness of teachers (on average 4.7, and 3.9 points, respectively) were found to be significantly lower. This indicates a not very well developed ability to carry out abstract thinking. Identical value were found for the indicators "auditory memory", and visual memory (average 3.5, 2.4 points, respectively), and ambitiousness (average 2.5 and 2.4 points), which suggest poorly developed ambition, ability to self-discipline, self-improve, poor determination, diligence, desire to grow, etc. Teachers of both specialties were found to have low rates of aspiration to be an independent person (on average 2.4 and 1.9 points), which indicates the lack of desire to learn, develop, and strive for self-affirmation and self-realization ($p < 0.01$).

As part of the study, it was suggested that creativity is a factor in psychological well-being and affects the formation of relationships with people around us, the purposefulness and meaningfulness of life, self-acceptance, personal growth, and the like. Indeed, it has been established that the indicators of psychological well-being of teachers with different levels of creative potential vary significantly (Table 3).

From the data in Table 3 it follows that all indicators of psychological well-being of teacher training specialists in the specialty "Philology (English)" are more positive and constructive when compared with teacher training specialists in

Table 3. Groups of the respondents according to psychological well-being

Indicators of psychological well-being	Teachers in the training of specialists in the specialty “Social work”, at %			Teachers in the training of specialists in the specialty “Philology (English)”, %		
	low	medium	high	low	medium	high
positive relations with others	78.4	14.9	6.7	34.3	17.1	48.6
purpose in life	74.2	18.6	7.2	38.6	12.9	48.6
personal growth	68.0	22.7	9.3	34.3	17.1	48.6
self-acceptance	67.0	25.3	7.7	28.6	34.3	37.1
environmental mastery	68.0	26.8	5.2	35.7	25.7	38.6
autonomy	69.1	25.8	5.2	51.4	22.9	25.7
Overall score	86.6	8.2	5.2	40.0	11.4	48.6

“Social Work”. Almost half of the foreign language teachers studied were found to have a relatively high level of positive relationships with others, purpose in life, and personal growth (48.6%). At the same time, a low level was found in “positive relationships” (34.3% of respondents), and purpose in life (38.6% of respondents), which indicates difficulties in establishing trusting relationships, openness with other people, uncertainty, lack of goals, focus, perspectives, and the like. In addition, a low level was found for the indicator of “personal growth” (34.3%) among a third of the philology respondents, indicating a lack of desire for self-realization, interest in life, inability to enter into relationships, interaction, showing people who are dissatisfied, frustrated with life (28.6%). Regarding the “autonomy” scale, more than half of the philologists studied (51.4%) showed a low level and a high level was revealed in only 25.7% of respondents, which indicates the regulation of their behaviour in a standardized way, moreover, there is a dependence on the opinions and assessments of others.

An analysis of the results of environmental mastery showed that 35.7% of teachers of a foreign language scored low, which indicates weakness in mastery of their environment; 38.6% by contrast scored high, indicating that these teachers are confident in their abilities, competent in solving and regulating teaching activities, and are able to create conditions to satisfy their own needs; the remainder (25.7%) – showed an average level of manifestation. The general indicator of the psychological well-being of teachers of philologists shows that about half of the

philologists studied scored high, indicating satisfaction with their own lives and professional activities. However, 40.0% of them scored low.

Teachers specializing in “Social Work”, were found to be less psychologically prosperous when compared to philologists, and for all the indicators, a low level was noted in most of the participants (Table 3). This indicates difficulties in establishing trusting relationships, caring for other people (78.4%); uncertainty, that these teachers do not have goals, orientation, prospects, etc. (74.2%). There is a low desire for personal growth, or purpose in life (68.0%), and a low degree of self-acceptance (67.0%) indicating they may be dissatisfied, or disappointed with life. At the same time, only one fourth of those studied, displayed an average level of self-acceptance (25.3%), environmental mastery (26.8%) and desire for autonomy (25.8%), which indicates the regulation of their behaviour in a standardized way, that they feel powerless in mastery of their environment, and are dependent on the opinions and assessments of others. The general indicator of the psychological well-being of teacher training specialists in the specialty “Social Work” was low for 86.6% of the teachers, indicating dissatisfaction with their own activities and life in general. The results of the analysis of indicators of psychological well-being turned out to be as low among teacher training specialists in social work as the results for creative potential and its indicators, which probably confirm the opinion that there are no original approaches to solving problems and creative activity. But the statement about creativity as a factor contributing to the formation of psychological well-being of a person is rather ambiguous.

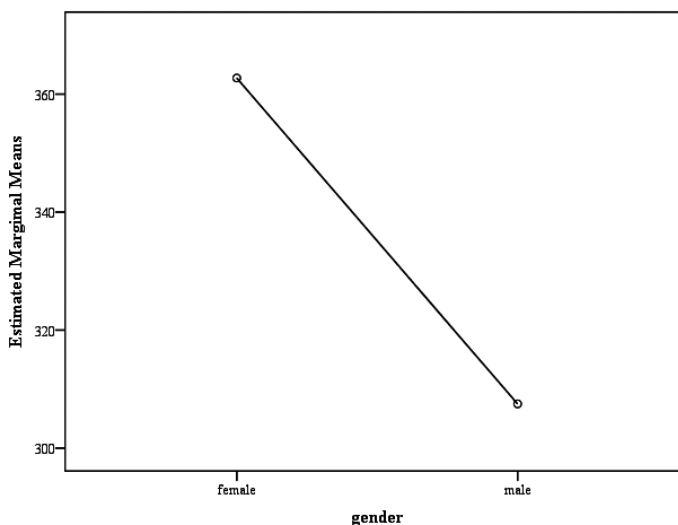


Figure 1. Features of the psychological well-being of teachers of philologists, according to gender

In addition, statistically significant differences were found in terms of creativity and psychological well-being of the studied teachers according to gender (Figure 1.).

Teachers of a foreign language with a higher level of psychological well-being are more inclined than teachers training social workers to work creatively, generate and implement innovative ideas in professional activities, and contribute to the development of their creative potential ($p < 0.01$) and psychological well-being, with women being more psychologically successful than men (362.7 points and 307.5 points on average in psychologically prosperous philologists versus 308.7 in women and 297.0 points on average for teachers of social work and with a low level of psychological well-being (PBW)).

Discussion

Our findings are consistent with those of other scholars in the study of creativity as a factor in the psychological well-being (PWB) of higher education teachers. In particular, teachers in Pakistan are found to lack socio-cultural conditions, creative approaches to learning and working conditions, which causes a lower PWB level when compared to Turkey and the USA. In the US and Turkey, more developed countries than Pakistan, teaching and learning are more positive (Zepeda, Ilgan, Jimenez, Ata & Akram, 2017).

A study conducted by the Warkey Germs Foundation in 21 countries with more or less 1000 people for each country (Dolton & Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2011) found that the highest levels of psychological well-being and social status for teachers was achieved in Turkey followed by China and Greece. And according to Ciftcioglu, (2013), the well-being of Turkish teachers is higher than teachers in Pakistan.

In particular, psychological well-being is positively correlated with personal development indicating the individual has sufficient personal resources for autonomous life purposes, while burnout is highly predicted by self-efficacy, not surprisingly. Healthy teaching staff has peer support, shared leadership, and high team spirit and creative activities that prevent professional burnout, stress, and increase teacher satisfaction (Wong & Zhang, 2014). Barker and Martin (2005) showed that happy teachers are able to create a positive social and psychological climate in a team, contribute to students and teach them well.

Conclusions

In conclusion, teachers should achieve psychological well-being, be happy, and strive to develop their personal potential, to create positive relationships, to engage in productive and creative activity, to use their creative abilities to generate innovative ideas, improve their well-being and satisfaction with life, work and themselves. Therefore, it is worth focusing on the development of creative personality traits (curiosity, self-confidence, stability and persuasiveness, ambitiousness, the desire to be an independent person, etc.), in order to improve teachers' working conditions, since working conditions affect both the well-being and the level of effectiveness of activities. This study also revealed that teachers' creativity is significantly related both to the specificity and prestige of the activity, and their well-being. The high level of well-being is associated with a high level of creative and effective activity. In addition, it is worth paying more attention in the field of education to the professional well-being and psychological well-being of teachers, reducing the load, improving financial incentives and making efforts to create a fair working environment. This suggests that the development of reflective thinking of teachers should be encouraged and that they should be stimulated to engage in creative activity. This can help them to have a positive influence on students, and in their shaping as future citizens of our state.

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