Monitoring of Education Environment according to the Social-Psychological Safety Criterion

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Abstract

The aim of this work is to reveal psychological indices for the monitoring of education environment according to the students' social-psychological safety criterion and to specify their interrelation. The article presents theoretical and methodological bases of the monitoring of students' social-psychological safety criterion in a higher educational establishment. The article presents the review of approaches to the definition of key features of education environment including psychosocial well-being, informational security, non-violent interaction, social ecology. Basing on the analysis of theoretic and methodological material, we defined personal qualities of students, which determine the character of interaction of educational subjects and their psychosocial well-being. These indices are as follows: communication skills, social tolerance, and creativity. Social tolerance is defined as sincere respect and acknowledgement of the other person, active moral position and psychological readiness to the positive interaction in the society and education environment. Communication skills as an index of social-psychological safety include the ability to person-oriented trustful interaction, kindness, skills of business democratic communication, ability to keep emotional well-being, ability to work out strategy, tactics and technique of active interaction with people. Creativity if defined by the student's ability to self-actualize, to learn his/her own abilities and skills, self-fulfilment while creating social-psychological environment of his/her own life. Psychosocial well-being in the whole is characterized by the state of education environment which is free of expression of physical and mental violence. The conducted investigation allowed us to reveal positive correlation connections between the level of subjective well-being and formedness of personal qualities which define the social-psychological safety of education environment.

Keywords: psychological monitoring, education environment, social-psychological safety, psychosocial well-being of students

1. Introduction

The relations between humans can be based on the mutual tolerance and collaboration, operation superiority, suppression, submission or care and support. For all these cases a personality is in different social environment with different degree of his/her social-psychological safety, and the process of personality's development will be different.

The skill of self-protection from possible threats for the personality and skill of creating sfe environment (safe relations with the environment) speak for the optimal level of human interaction with the social environment. The surrounding social environment which tries to provide safety, can and must provide working out of adaptive forms of human behaviour in the society, provide possibilities and models of safe behaviour based on the experience of relations. In this case both the priority of the inner essence of the personality and environmental conditioning of human organization will be preserved. One of such social environments which provide safety in the process of human's growing-up, is an educational establishment within which the process of development and socialization of a child takes place (Rubtsov & Baeva, 2008).

The following scientists study the philosophy of the environment in the process of education and upbringing: V. G. Vorontsova, V. A. Kozyrev, Yu. S. Manuilov, V. I. Slobodchikov, Yu. S. Pesotskiy, V. A. Yasvin, Barker R.G., Gump P.V. and others. The authors presents the necessity of projecting new educational environments, which could both reflect the changing character of the relations of a human and social environment and provide

the involvement of a human in the process of education, as the most important condition for transformation of the educational process of the high school in the society. I. A. Baeva, V.V. Rubtsov (2008) develop the "psychology of education environment safety" concept, according to which the psychological safety provide a developing character for the educational environment, and the state of psychological guard to the students; E. A. Alisov (2011) has developed a theory of ecological safety of educational environment; B. N. Boyarov (2012) has developed a theory of information safety of education environment. V. A. Sitarov and V. G. Maralov (2012) within the framework of the concept of pedagogic of non-violence point out the necessity of creation non-violent developing social-pedagogic environment in the educational establishment, which is built on the basis of positive relations that exclude coercion, mutual mistrust, conflicts. In the middle of XX century in Europe within the framework of the environmental approach the theory of social environment ecology has been already developed (Barker, 1968; Gump, 1964).

The characteristics of the education environment can be considered as environmental factors that define psychosocial well-being of all the subjects of the educational process. As A. Maslow points out (1970): "... it is the good environment that is one of the first factors of self-actualization and health for the average organism. By giving the opportunity of self-actualization to the organism it recedes into the background, just as a kind master, in order to allow him choosing on his own in accordance with his own wishes and demands (but preserving the right to see after his considering wishes and demands of other people)".

The healthy feeling of safety (well-being) is one of the fundamental feelings of a normal human being. The children study better if they have psychological well-being. Some authors point out the fact that the psychological well-being of the students should become a conceptual basis for reforming education (Noddings, 2003). Gilman R. and Huebner E. (2006) relate psychological well-being of students to their satisfaction with life and ability to control stress; Suldo S. and co-authors (2008) relate it to the emotional regulation and academic abilities.

The subjective feeling of the psychological well-being and safety which is necessary for the preservation of "psychological health and integrity of a personality" is important not only for students but also for a teacher. Only in this case a teacher will be able to practice individual approach to every student and create a space for subject-subject interaction (Antonova, 2013).

Today along with the problem of humanization of education environment and its projecting as psychologically safe (developing, creative, health-saving, tolerant, non-violent etc.) there appears a task of revealing and systematizing criteria and indices which are the bases of its system monitoring. The Russian and American psychology has a range of methods for defining well-being (psychological safety) of students (Baeva, 2002; Gilman et al., 2006; Suldo et al., 2008).

The monitoring of education environment is supported by the use of a package of psycho-diagnostic methods which is addressed to the participants of the educational process, and allows speaking about the environment conditions (defining the meanings of environment, its elements and variables of lifestyle) and personality in it (type, lifestyle, health conditions etc.).

Thus, the programme of education environment diagnostic, developed by S. D. Deryabo (1997), includes three indices: physical health conditions of the students, the level of their cognitive and personal spheres development. V. R. Zarubin and co-authors (1998) consider social comfort as a criterion of education environment effectiveness. It includes such indices as self-assessment of membership in school life, assessment of relationships of students and teachers as well as relationships of students with each other. I. A. Baeva (2006) includes the following factors to the number of diagnostic indices of psychological safety of education environment: the level of attitude to the environment (positive, neutral, negative), level of satisfaction with the characteristics of education environment; level of security from psychological violence in interaction E. B. Laktionova (2013) includes the diagnostic of the following personal characteristics of education subjects into the psychological expertise of education environment: tolerance, subjectiveness, person's orientation in communication, life-purpose orientations, willpower potential and creativity, strategies of coping behaviour with difficult situations (the last index can be applied only for the students). O. I. Leonova (2013) in the course of practical study defined two integral characteristics which determine the state of psychological safety of education environment: tension and hostility of education environment which in their turn are expressed with the help of the following parameters of emotional-affective sphere of students' personality: fear of self-expression, anxiety, anger, personal deconditioning, fear of non-conformance with the demands of the others etc. (direct correlation); cognitive activity, motivation of success, self-confidence (reverse correlation). V. N. Bartsevich (2012) has stated that the psychological safety of students is significantly influenced by the complex of integral

characteristics of teacher's personality (emotional flexibility, communication orientation, communication competence) which can also be considered as environmental factors of safety of education subjects.

In the course of factor analysis of emperic material and analysis of systematized theoretical and methodological material concerning the problem of social-psychological safety of a personality we have stated that the psychosocial well-being of (psychological safety) of students is characterised by such personal qualities as creativity, social tolerance, communication skills. The level of psychosocial well-being is directly relevant to the assessment of the social environment; the other indices indirectly speak for the existence of psychologically safe environment in a higher educational establishment as it is, from our viewpoint, a necessary basis for development of these personal characteristics (Kisliakov, 2014).

These provisions condition the necessity of including social-psychological safety indices of students into the system of education quality monitoring in a higher educational establishment. There is a necessity for the organisation of constant monitoring of education environment state in a higher education establishment aimed at revealing socially dangerous phenomena, as well as organisation of monitoring of development of personally and professionally important qualities of students which define the degree of their psychosocial well-being.

2. Materials and Methods

In order to evaluate the above mentioned indices of social-psychological safety of students within the framework of psychological monitoring of education environment in higher educational establishment we have developed a set of diagnostic tools which includes standardised methods.

To diagnose creativity we have used a modified test "Creativity", developed by N. F. Vishniakova (1999). The test allows revealing the level of creative skills of a personality and making a psychological creative profile. While evaluating creativity the students were asked to evaluate their personal qualities: originality, curiosity, imagination, intuition, creative thinking, emotionality and empathy, sense of humour, creative attitude to the profession.

To diagnose the general level of social tolerance of students we used express-checklist "Tolerance index", developed by the group of psychologists under the leadership of G. U. Soldatova (2008). Three sub-scales of the checklist were aimed at diagnostic of such aspects of tolerance as ethnic tolerance (attitude to the people of another race and ethnic group), social tolerance (attitude to the minorities, the poor, mentally handicapped people), tolerance as the feature of a personality (readiness to the constructive solving of conflicts and productive cooperation).

In order to diagnose communication skills and abilities we have used Section "Communication abilities" of the checklist "Diagnostic of communication and organisational abilities" (KOS-2) (Fetiskin and others, 2002). The checklist measures communication skills (ability to establish business and friendly contacts with people clearly and quickly, intention of bradening contacts, participation in group events, ability to influence people, intention to show the initiative etc.).

The investigation of the degree of students' subjective well-being was conducted using the "Scale of subjective well-being" method, created by French psychologists Perrudet-Badoux, Mendelsohn and Chiche (1988). The scale consists of 17 items which are divided into 6 clusters: tension and sensibility; qualities which accompany main mental semiology are such as depression, drowsiness, short span of attention etc.; change of mood; significance of social environment; self-estimation of health; degree of satisfaction by the everyday activity. The test allows revealing existence and depth of emotional discomfort of a personality, and the answers to certain questions can help to reveal areas of a significant tension or conflict.

The conducted investigation in the Shuiskiy department of the Ivanovo State University (total number of respondents was approximately 700 people) allowed us to evaluate the degree of students' formedness of personally important qualities, which are necessary for providing social-psychological safety and which define the level of psychosocial well-being. These data spoke for the necessity of developing and implementation of programmes of psychological-pedagogic support of formation of social-psychological safety of education subjects in higher educational establishments (Kisliakov, 2014).

3. Results

The implementation of the complex psychological-pedagogic support of psychologically safe environment projecting in a higher educational establishment, which includes a complex of trainings on communication skills formation, development of tolerant interrelations and creative potential allowed every fourth student to increase his/her degree of subjective well-being (level of significance 0.05). As the result 88% of students have a suficient

degree of subjective well-being. The continuous dynamics can be observed in all clusters with the transfer of two of them ("significance of social environment "and"satisfaction with everyday activity") to the high level (Fig. 1).
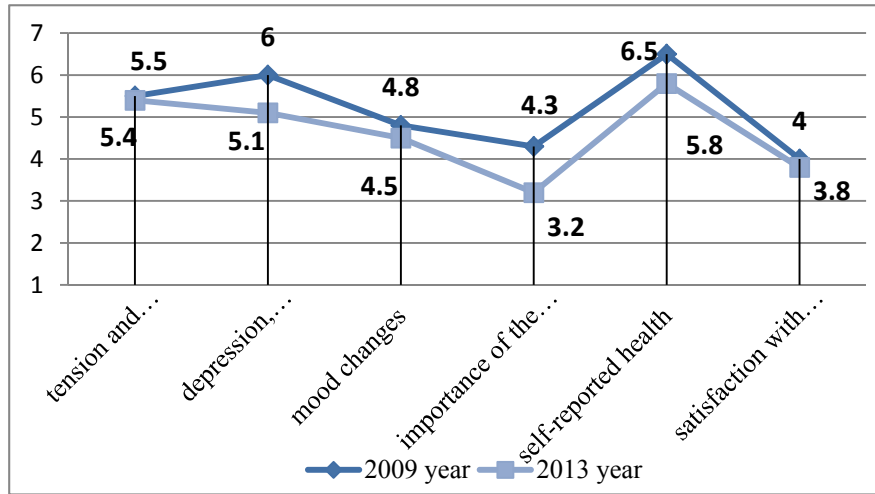

Figure 1. Dynamics of level of students' subjective well-being clusters

Generally all the personal indices which determine the state of education environment of a higher educational establishment have positive dynamics (Fig. 2). This speaks for the fact that the higher educational establishment has safe environment built on the principles of tolerance, creativity, interpersonal communication and provides a student the feeling of psychosocial well-being.
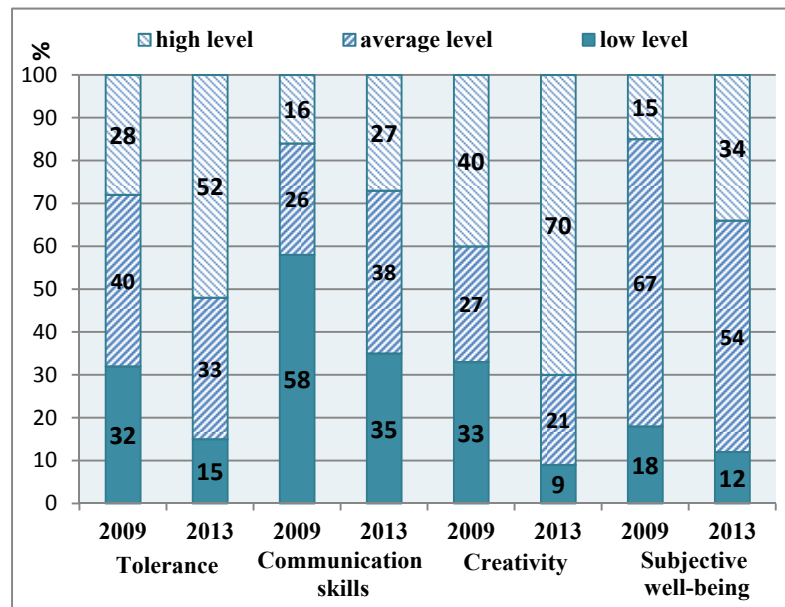

Figure 2. Dynamics of personal indices which define the state of education environment of a higher educational establishment

The correlative analysis conducted with the help of Pirson correlations showed strong ($p \leq 0.01$) straight correlation connections between the level of subjective well-being and formedness of personal qualities which define psychological safety of education subjects (Table 1).

Table 1. Correlation between the indicators of psychological safety of a personality

Indicators	Subjective well-being	Social tolerance	Communication skills	Creativity
Correlations				
Subjective well-being	1	0.625	0.714	0.608
Social tolerance	0.625	1	0,454	0.294
Communication skills	0.714	0,454	1	0.531
Creativity	0.608	0.294	0.531	1
Correlation is significant on the level 0.01 (2-sided)				

4. Discussion

Socially safe environment of a higher educational establishment which provide a student a sense of psychosocial well-being is characterised by the atmosphere of on-violence, as the basis of non-violent interaction and pro-social behaviour in general. The tasks of non-violence pedagogic, pointed out by V. A. Sitarov and V. G. Maralov (2012) fully corresponds to the tasks of providing social-psychological safety of the education subject. Let us list them: teaching young people peaceableness, spirit of non-violence (formation of negative attitude to war, negation of violent methods of social conflicts solving, humane attitude to each other and to oneself, ability to solve conflicts with non-violence methods etc.); humanization of educational process, formation of students' personal qualities and special skills which allow further implementation of social interaction in non-violent way and without coercion. The USA has accumulated huge experience of education and upbringing in the spirit of non-violence. As the example we can take the experience of a non-governmental agency: "Educators for Social Responsibility, 2014".

Socially safe ad functioning education environment defines the success of formedness of students' professional competences that relate to the life in multi-cultural society, harmonization of inter-ethnic and cultural relationships, prevention of xenophobia, strengthening of tolerance in education environment. Social tolerance as well as sincere respect and acknowledgement of other person, active moral position and psychological readiness to the positive interaction between people is a professionally important quality in the structure of personality of a future specialist of social-humanitarian sphere (Soldatova, 2008). The peculiarity of a teacher's activity for tolerant education environment formation is in implementation of tolerant interactions and democratic style of administration, subjects' acceptance of each other regardless of differences (age, race, nation, ethnic group, language, property, religion, individual and personal qualities) (Pogodina, 2006).

One of the urgent tasks of social-psychological safety is the providing of safety on the level of personal communication. On the micro-level the potential threats to the social safety of people appear in the process of direct communication with other people. Such threats are abuse, manipulation, unstable social links. Social safety of a human is provided by the development of communication skills while implementing in the course of communication. Thus, we can speak about social-psychological safety of education subjects in different interpersonal Communication situations. I. A. Baeva (2006), while defining safe state of education environment, points out the necessity of projecting such a system of interpersonal relations of education subjects, which could satisfy the demands of personal-trustful communication within the framework of which the education subjects interact on the interpersonal level. that creates conditions for students' acceptance of moral, cultural values, acquisition of "personal sense". But not only a teacher's speech influence a student, but the communication among students, their speech culture can negatively influence their health, first of all mental one. In this regard a higher educational establishment have to work on the projecting of positive verbal space, aimed at speech purity as well as upgrading speech culture of a personality. The following is included in the content of the formed Communication skills: ability of personality-oriented, trustful interaction in the course of education process, including kindness, politeness; skills of business democratic communication including the ability to listen, understand, assure, explain, polemize etc.; ability to keep emotional balance, prevent and solve conflicts in a constructive way including ability of collaboration, achieving compromises; skill of working out strategy, tactic

and technique of active interaction with people, organize their joint cooperation for achieving certain socially significant goals; ability of objective evaluation of a situation of interaction of subjects of educational process.

It is very important that a student not only know psychological-pedagogic essence of social-psychological safety, but can use the methods of its providing in praxis, can creatively apply them in any situations and in the conditions of an educational establishment. Cognition of oneself, one's own abilities and skills, self-realization, creation of social-psychological environment of one's own living is always a creative process which takes place in the creative environment contributing to the development of creative potential and creativity. The creative environment is characterised by V. A. Yasvin (2000) as the environment that is notable for a high inner motivation activity, emotional lift, positive optimistic attitude, respect of the human thought. Such an environment influences the activity of learning and transforming the surrounding world, openness, freedom of thoughts and actions, personal orientation to the self-development and self-realization. But not the specific skills as an active position of the subject of education determine the possibility of creative success (Vishniakova, 1999). In this regard the creative environment, which defines the character of education subjects' interaction, is a necessary element of psychological safety of the higher educational establishment environment.

5. Conclusion

Thus, the education environment monitoring is to answer the following questions: What personal and professional qualities are formed by the education environment of a higher educational establishment? What environment is created by the higher educational establishment for the students, how comfortable is it for them?

The conducted monitoring of the education environment of a higher educational establishment in accordance with the criterion of social-psychological safety of students contributes to the deep full-bodied study of an object under investigation and allows to fix the transfer of students from one psychological state into the other for the account of students' formation and development such personally and professionally important qualities as social tolerance, communication skills and creativity. The information, acquired with the help of the monitoring, allows the administrative staff, teachers and students to make decisions which comply with the interests of all subjects of education environment with the aim of their development and providing psychosocial well-being.

Application of the investigation results, presented in this article, is the system of general education, secondary and higher professional education. What determines the restrictions of usage of methods and investigations, presented in the article.

The promising course of psychological monitoring of the education environment is the revealing and analysing negative social phenomena in the education environment of a higher educational establishment which are the factors of social risk with the following grounding of conditions necessary for projecting psychologically safe environment of a higher educational establishment.

Acknowledgement

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