

SELF-REALIZATION OF TEACHER: PERSONAL MEANING AND DIRECTION

Svetlana Sergejko

*Grodno State University of Yanka Kupala,
Republic of Belarus*

Abstract

On the basis of the study the problem of self-realization as a special type of activity taking into account the personal meaning of different types of teachers is revealed in the article. These results ascertained that the majority of modern Belarusian teachers do not possess the characteristics that contribute to their self-realization sufficiently. Relatively low rates were found in such important characteristics as internal locus of control, spontaneity, subjective well-being, positive temporal transpection, the value of development and self-realization, which makes it difficult to include teachers in self-realization activity. In the article also the typology of teachers according to the personal sense of self-realization, which can serve as a basis for finding ways to optimize self-realization of educators, to identify the necessary conditions for the development of their self-realization activity has been identified.

***Key words:** representation of the features of modern teacher; self-realization of teacher; personal sense*

Introduction

Exacerbated interest of a person in the independent search for answers to questions of the mission, of the sense of one's own life, of limits or boundlessness of the development, about borders or boundless possibilities of the manifestations, about an independent choice of spheres and means of the embodiment puts forward the research of a problem of self-realization of each person on the first place. The special relevance is given to the research of a problem of self-realization of the teacher for only that teacher for whom self-realization has deep personal meaning, can create conditions for optimization of the process of the formation of self-realization of pupils.

Object of research: self-realization of the teacher.

Research objective: identification of personal sense and orientation of self-realization of the teacher.

Research problems: to define the features of modern teachers in respect of the representation of the characteristics promoting their self-realization; to reveal the nature of

interrelation between the features of representation of self-realizational characteristics of teachers and an orientation of their self-realization (typology of teachers).

Research methods. The solution of problems was carried out by means of a complex of complementary methods: methods of the theoretical analysis, psychodiagnostic methods (testing, questioning, the content analysis, conversation, value orientations, a technique of the research of self-image “Who am I” (Kuhn, McPartland, 2006), “Test on self-actualization” (SUT) (Gozman, Kroz, Latinskaya, 1995), “Diagnostics of self-updating of the personality” (DSUP).

Subjects of research: In the article the data of the empirical researches executed by the author during 2011-2012 are generalized. Total number of respondents made 643 persons – teachers of schools of the Grodno area and Grodno (Republic of Belarus)

Relevance of the research. The concept of modernization of education, actively being carried out in modern Belarus, dictates new requirements to the identity of the teacher, as to a key figure of converting activity in education. Now significant innovations in the sphere of the organization, the contents and technology of pedagogical education do not provide that level of personal and professional readiness of the teacher for creativity, taking of non-standard decisions, interaction with pupils, manifestation of an initiative, active involvement in activity which would correspond to the process of updating of target, substantial and procedural characteristics of education.

Self-realization is proclaimed today as one of purposes of the Belarusian education and, respectively, one of the most relevant problems of pedagogics. At the same time in the conditions of the reform of comprehensive school and system of pedagogical education in many documents declaring self-realization of the teacher as the purpose of pedagogical education, as a factor of ensuring self-development of pupils, the essence and structure of self-realization of the teacher are not defined, the methodology, the theory and technology of development of self-realization of the teacher at various stages of professional education are not located.

As the literature analysis showed, now science has rather wide range of definitions of the concept “self-realization”. Consequently, for example, Slobodchikov (1995) understands an essential form of life of the person as self-realization. Derkach & Sayko (2010) define self-realization as a process constantly reproduced on all the distance of ontogeny, presented together with self-development as a binary position-opposition of two parties of complete process of development. Galazhinsky (2002) argues that self-realization is an immanent, invariant feature of a person as an open psychological system. However at distinctions in definition of an essence of self-realization by a number of authors some important common features are looked through. On the one hand, it is admitted that self-realization is a certain property appreciably inherent in the person, on the other hand, it is noted that self-realization is a prerogative of the adult person (Slobodchikov and Isayev, 2000). Thus (Egorycheva, 2005) in the present article *self-realization* is understood as the activity specially organized by the subject whose purpose is the embodiment of his/her subjectively felt mission.

As a whole it is possible to note that in a psychological-pedagogical science sufficient theoretical and empirical material concerning characteristics of the personality in the process of self-realization, levels, criteria, determinants of self-realization, conditions making it active has been accumulated. However, now the systematically presented picture of stage-by-stage expansion of self-realization and all the constructs forming it is absent in the development of the teacher. The most problematic question still is about how the life of an adult person should be organized for self-realization to turn from the potential possibility that everyone has to the reality for the maximum possible number of people, these questions extremely actualize the problem of personal sense and orientation of self-realization of the teacher.

Research methodology. Fundamental regulations on unity of consciousness and activity, on mentality development in activity (Vygotsky, 1987; Leontyev, 2004; Rubenstein, 2004; etc.), a subject approach (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, 1980; Ananyev, 2001; Rubenstein, 2004; etc.) served as the methodological basis. The great influence was rendered by fundamental regulations on self-development as internal activity of the person (Abulkhanova-Slavskaya, 1980; Slobodchikov, 2000; Rubenstein 2004), the theory of subject self-implementation (Derkach, Sayko, 2010).

Analysis of data of research. For the purpose of clarification of a level of development of the characteristics promoting self-realization of teachers, on the basis of schools of the Grodno area in 2011-2012 complex research was carried out. The research showed that the majority of modern Belarusian teachers do not possess sufficiently developed characteristics promoting self-realization (Figure 1). Only a third of the respondents are characterized by rather high orientation on development, aspiration to do something important for people, the lowest orientation to hedonism. For 16,7% of teachers it is complicated from the point of view of self-realization in activity, as activity itself is related to the assistance to other person, creation of the condition for his/her development. Moreover, only 20,8% of teachers have high level of the formation of purposefulness, i.e. in many respects the relation to oneself and to others of the majority of them is unstable, has a situational character that is critical for the position of a teacher. 50% of teachers – owners of a low level of development of a reflection, 25% out of them – of the level which was conditionally called by the author: “the reflection is rejected”. Only 58,3% revealed the mature type of reflection. Only 37,5% of the teachers possess high level of spontaneity. Readiness to assume responsibility for events of one’s own life, feeling of submission to control of events is minimal. 41,4% of teachers accept themselves and others, which makes them more self-assured, free from fear of committing a mistake, leads to the formation of readiness to assume responsibility for the acts. About 48,3% of the respondents are inclined to accuse circumstances and people round about for failures, and attribute successes to themselves. 12,9% of teachers because of insufficient value relation to themselves are ready to be guided by opinion of people around and, as a result, to transfer them responsibility for their life. Temporary transpection in many respects reflects these feelings: higher indicators were revealed in relation to the past, lower – to the present and very low – in relation to the future. Only 36,6% of the teachers have indicators of subjective wellbeing of high and very high level. Subjective wellbeing of 50% of the teachers is below average, 16,7% see their life as gloomy. Moreover, the owners of such level as depression – feeling of extreme trouble – are more than a quarter of the interrogated teachers. Probably, the need to rigidly prove their importance and value to people around, to whom the person does not feel sufficient respect, trust and acceptance and the position when the person, even at his/her own will, puts others mainly on the first place in comparison with himself/herself, causes feeling of one’s own trouble.

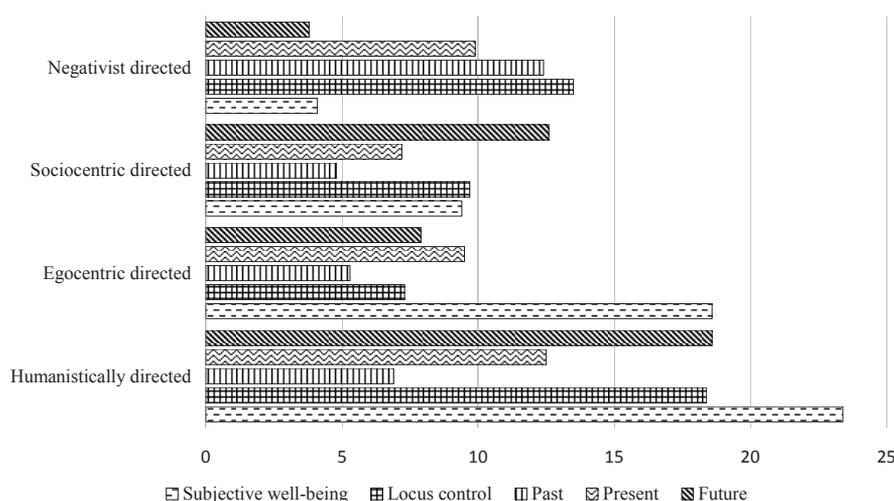


Figure 1. Interrelation of types of an orientation with separate characteristics of teachers in the process of self-realization of personality

Research showed that the majority of modern Belarusian teachers (58%) understand self-realization as the ability to realize oneself in something. In their opinion, self-realization is the most complete disclosure of abilities, talents, potentialities and possibilities of the person, carried out by a way of his/her inclusion to social structures. About one third of the interrogated teachers emphasized that self-realization is a result of education of the personality. In the center of this point of view there is the belief in individual experience of the person, in his/her ability to self-disclosure, in the possibility to reveal unique and inimitable essence in oneself, in the determination of the direction and means of personal growth. Other respondents relate self-realization to practical implementation of person's inclinations, abilities, talents and traits of character through one or another sphere of social activity with advantage for themselves, community and society as a whole.

Teachers know about self-realization, but understand it rather narrowly. The activity specially organized by the subject, the purpose of which is the embodiment of his/her subjectively felt mission, is reduced by them to appreciably inherent property of a person and the productive moment of its development. Self-realization cannot be connected only with property and result. Such understanding contradicts a social situation and the status of the teacher. One of the features of self-realization of the teacher is its deep personal meaning. Only such teacher can promote self-realization of pupils, creation of conditions for optimization of the process of its formation. Self-realization is a special type of activity. On the one hand, it has all general characteristics of activity, and on the other hand – the peculiar features characterizing its motivational, target, subject orientation on the performer himself/herself.

At the same time, the carried-out research allowed to allocate five conditional types in all the respondents (Figure 2).

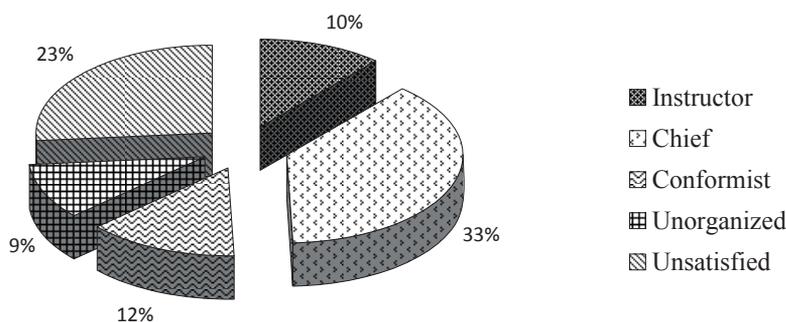


Figure 2. Typological features of self-realization of teachers

Type 1 – “**Instructor**”. The main value for such teachers is the personality: the specific person and the concrete society consisting from concrete “selves”, instead of from abstract “others”. The positive relation of the person to oneself and other people is expressed in acceptance oneself as a whole as a personality, in acceptance others as they are. Their main goal – to embody oneself in activity. The major quality – creativity. This type of teachers is characterized by high level of social wellbeing, orientation to the supreme values and examples, including self-realization as specially organized one’s own activity the purpose of which is the embodiment of the subjectively felt mission. “Instructor” is the initiative teacher offering new forms of work with school students, their parents, the public, experimenting. Motto of its activity: “Together we are force”. He/she considers specifics of different age categories of pupils and their needs. Quite often he/she makes the programs of training, in his/her own way builds a technique of teaching and out-of-class work. He/she is widely-read, sociable, and intelligent. He/she is interesting to audience as a source of new information and the interpreter of the important phenomena of science, technology, literature, public life. “Instructors” systematically and purposefully are engaged in self-education which is focused on professional and their personal development. According to “Instructor”, dominating influence on readiness for self-realization is rendered by work on oneself, knowledge of specifics of the profession and satisfaction with it (Figure 3).

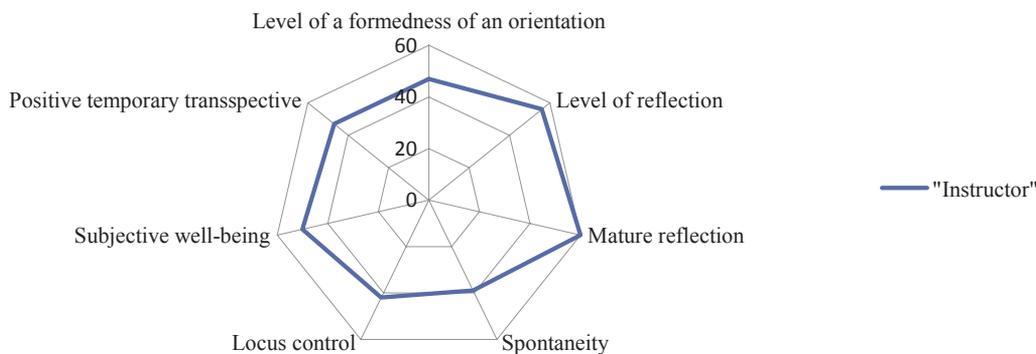


Figure 3. Self-realizational characteristic of teachers at an optimum level (the Instructor type; in %)

Type 2 – “**Chief**” is mainly focused on preservation and consolidation of his/her professional prestige. The main value for the teacher is he/she himself/herself, his/her thoughts, judgments, interests, activity, and results of his/her work. The teacher aspires to the recognition of his/her big rights, in comparison with others, his/her special value by the society. By the status in school community is the most “qualified” category of teachers “Chief” is the erudite teacher, involved in work, well knowing the subject. It is possible to imagine him/her both giving a lesson, and lecturing in any audience. This is the teacher focused on different types of organizational activity, related to training of the pupils, skillfully carrying out communication with parents of pupils, with the public. Concentration on the professional consolidation – very strong motivating justification of all activity of “Professional”. Focus on oneself defines a picture of their behavior as a whole. They try to reach results at any cost, are aimed only at the status. Pupils respect them and are afraid of them at the same time. Characteristic feature of “Chief” – high self-discipline. 37,4% out of them declare that they independently organize the activity on the embodiment of their mission.

Type 3 – “**Conformist**”. The main feature of teachers of this type is that they do not accept themselves. Positive attitude towards others is characteristic to them. However, it is specific: comparing oneself with other teachers, the representative of this type steadily finds something positive in them and lack of it or something negative in oneself; in relation to oneself it causes disappointment, irritation, in relation to others – envy, offense, piety. As a rule, such teacher either does not trust himself/herself, does not appreciate himself/herself, aspires to correspond to expectations of people around, or negative attitude towards oneself is so strong that the teacher often takes the position reflected in the name of an accentuation (in order not to be rejected he/she is ready for any acts and even humiliations). The main motto – to work by rules. It results in aiming of self-realization at compliance to external requirements. “Conformists” consider that material well-being renders crucial importance on self-realization. In this group of teachers situational influences of the circle of parents, friends, and neighbors are strong. Change of the relation to specially organized own activity directed on embodiment of their subjectively felt mission for representatives of this group is defined by change of the life situation itself.

“**Unorganized**” (type 4) – having exclusively positive attitude towards self-realization, realizing that in higher education institution they missed a lot of things for this purpose. However practical activities on the organization of this kind of activity in “Unorganized” are absent. They explain it as follows: 1/3 of them complain about inability to distribute time, on the personal disorganization, about 20% indicate load of family problems, 8% argue that they missed too many things in higher education institution. There is one more obstacle, it is named by almost of the one third of the “Unorganized” – unpreparedness for self-realization. It is possible to conclude that motives of self-realization of these teachers are not created as a result of their lowered resilience to difficulties arising earlier and existing now. The motto of the teacher of this type – “no matter where to work if only not to work”. They are inclined to profession change; consider that to teach in school is necessary only those who want to study. Training and education are considered by them as two independent processes. In the “Unorganized” orientation to self-realization in a profession weakens in the course of time. After this there is a narrowing of types of leisure: more and more time is given to the house, watching TV, simply resting, discussion with friends of everyday problems. It brings to intellectual as a whole and professional in particular impoverishment of the personality of the “Unorganized”.

The teacher accepts neither himself/herself, nor others; he/she does not see anything positive both in himself/herself, and in others. In case of negative attitude to oneself, others seem even more disgusting, than he/she is. It is the essence of “**Unsatisfied**” (type 5). There

were 23% of them among the interrogated teachers. Well-known self-isolation with colleagues because of lack of common interests is characteristic to them. For the majority of them fellow workers are people of little interest. They try to hide the conflicts arising with pupils from the management. “Unsatisfied” do not want to receive and do not wait for the help from school administration. They developed the attitude on basic absence of conflicts of the process of education. It means notorious capitulation against complex problems of the development of the identity of the pupils. The aspiration to protect oneself from the possible conflicts in relationship with school students leads to strict restriction of the sphere of their communication to a lesson framework only. Their motto – “nothing matters to me”. Teachers of the considered group are adjusted on change of the profession. They do not find in themselves forces for overcoming of arising difficulties. They are aimed at “rest”. At the same time they see sources of difficulties in the essence of the profession itself and school students and consequently do not blame themselves, are inclined to self-justification. They consider professional choice as the failure of life.

Conclusions

The complex research carried out by the author allows drawing some conclusions. *First*, studying of a level of development of the characteristics promoting self-realization of teachers showed that the majority of modern Belarusian teachers do not possess them sufficiently. In 1/3 of the teachers the types of an orientation complicating the process of self-realization were revealed, in more than 2/3 – low level of the formation of purposefulness, only 57% of the teachers are the owners of mature type of reflection, but only in 8,6% high level of its formation is revealed. Rather low indicators are revealed according to such important characteristics as an internal locus of control, spontaneity, subjective wellbeing, positive temporary transpection, value of development and self-realization that testifies about insufficient development of self-identification and makes the inclusion of teachers in self-realization activity inconvenient.

Secondly, the typology of teachers depending on a level of development of characteristics of the activity specially organized by them directed on the embodiment of their subjectively felt mission is revealed. The presented typology can become a basis for the search of ways of optimization of self-realization of teachers, the bases for identification of necessary conditions of development of their self-realization activity, because estimating actions of teachers and referring to “samples”, it is possible to create the criteria of self-realization of the teacher, their valuable relation to specially organized own activity directed on the embodiment of own mission.

Thirdly, the received results extremely exacerbate the question on the need of the creation of special conditions for optimization of self-realization as a special type of activity taking into account different personal sense of various types of teachers.

References

1. Abulkhanova-Slavsky, K. A. (1980). *Deyatel'nost' and personality psychology*. Moskva: Publishing house “Institute of psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences”.
2. Ananyev, B. (2001). *Of People as knowledge subject*. St. Petersburg: Piter.
3. Derkhach, A. A., Sayko, E. V. (2010). *Self-realization - the basis of akmeological development*. St. Petersburg, MPSI, MODEK.
4. Egorycheva, I. D. (2005). Self-relation, self-realization, self-updating as the phenomena defining ability of human growth development. *Psychology World*, 3, 11–32.
5. Galazhinsky, E. V. (2002). System determination of self-realization of personality. In *Summary of the thesis for the degree of Doctor of Psychological Science*. Barnaul: BGPU.

6. Gozman, L. Y., Kroz, M.V., Latinskaya, M.V. (1995). *Samoaktualizatsionny test*. M: Grew. ped. Agency.
7. Kuhn, M., McPartland, T. (2006). Kuhn's test. The test "Who am I?". In T.V. Rumyantseva (Ed.), *Psychological consultation: diagnostics of the relations in pair* (p. 82-103). St. Petersburg: Piter.
8. Leontyev, A. N. (2004). *Activity. Consciousness. Personality*. Moscow: Academy.
9. Rubenstein, S. L. (2004). *Osnovy of the general psychology*. St. Petersburg: Piter.
10. Slobodchikov, V. I. (1995). *Psychology of the person: introduction in psychology of subjectivity*. M: School Press.
11. Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *Problem of the general psychology*. Moscow: Pedagogics