

The importance of applicants' personal qualities in selection and training psychologists

Zoriana Lipiets

General and Applied Psychology Department,
Lviv Polytechnic National University, UKRAINE, Lviv,
S. Bandery street 12, E-mail: zoriana.lipiets@mail.ru

Abstract – The article contains some requirements for the psychologist as an individual and characteristics of the selection process for students to study psychology. There are many requirements for a person to become a psychologist, which include physical condition, mental health, intelligence, etc., but there is no a University that makes any researches to ensure those criteria in students that is educating. Obviously, nothing can be investigated or evaluated completely, but it would be more responsible and ecological to select applicants carefully for specialties that are socially significant. Ukraine does not have any systems of evaluating the candidates for education that take into consideration their individual features; this topic requires deep analysis and further study.

Key words – applicant, psychologist, personality, empathy, competence, counselors, characteristics.

I. Introduction

Nowadays, the profession of a psychologist becomes more popular in Ukraine. Since the image of a psychologist is not clearly formed, the youth chooses this profession not for the criteria of eligibility, but mostly are guided by myths. That is why the question of how effective the system of selection of applicants for specialty psychology arises. It is obviously, that the future expert needs to follow a number of requirements, and these requirements are related not only to knowledge that is given by a University, but also to the personal qualities and traits. Unfortunately, the process of academic education ignores them. It turns out, that after 4 or 5 years of University education, a specialist who will continue to work with people gets a great responsibility for the work done. One of the main rules of a psychologist - "Do not make any harm!". The young specialist often may not notice the influence on his client. The question arises- who is responsible for his incompetent behavior? Perhaps, it would be logical if universities are. Again the question arises- in which experts universities would be responsible if they select students on the criterion of knowledge, without considering personal characteristics.

II. Theoretical analysis of a task

The number of requirements is given to a psychologist in Ukraine include two components: professional competence and requirements to an individual. The requirements to the professional competence are very often made by the employer or the skills and competencies that graduate should have are prescribed by the University. According to law, there are no special criteria to the qualification of a psychologist, except university diploma.

Currently, the requirements for individual psychologist are found in various textbooks, but none of them are declared at conventional requirements. Actually, the selection of students for education in Ukraine are made only considering the results of External Independent Tests. There are countries instead, that came to the selection process more carefully. For example, Mid-Atlantic state university in America traditionally included five elements for consideration: undergraduate academic record, standardized test performance (GRE), professional references, personal interview, and structured essay. Such method of selecting is used in some Universities of England and Germany [5].

Also, there is a National Councils in America that gives accreditation to psychologists in the sphere of education, which helps to make the selection of candidates for the occupation of psychologist.

The occupation of psychologist is completely different from other professions because the personality of a psychologist is the main tool of his or her work. Thus, any tool must meet some specific requirements.

In particular, D.B.Bohoyavlenska believes that a psychologist should be highly adaptable [1].

The most complete system of requirements to a personality of psychologist in Ukraine nowadays are created by N.Chepelyeva and V.Panok. According to their opinion, the determination of personal proficiency of a psychologist, are made by following criteria:

1. Physical condition.

The psychologist should develop his or her own strategy of recovery, needs to know his or her own resources, either way he or she might have a harmful effect on his health condition. Secondly, there are a number of physical defects that are incompatible with the occupation of a practicing psychologist. These defects include strong disability, big cosmetical defects or defects of speech, etc;

2. Mental health is also a critical requirement, because the psychological professions often are occupied by people with different types of personal disorders, who might carry out their own problems onto their work. Their activities will be ineffective, or, very likely, harmful and dangerous;

3. Intelligence.

The results of numerous studies show that psychologists with the level of IQ below average have many difficulties in their work. Particularly intelligence provides an effective analysis of features and personal traits and allows to overcome stereotypes (both personal and professional), is the central mechanism of understanding the behavior of another person. It is especially important for the psychologist to have a verbal component of intelligence together with a social one.

4. The system of self-regulation mechanisms and emotional endurance;

5. Sphere of motivation.

According to the authors, the occupation of psychologist is motivated by the interest to other people and by the desire to assist them in resolving their problems. The psychological mechanism of such interest, according V.H.Panok and

L.Umanets, is understanding and overcoming their own problems with similar nature [1].

Generally, the basis of the motivational sphere should consist of humanistic orientation. This is primarily altruistic positions, roles, attitudes in interpersonal communication, a high level of motivation to the profession, the prevalence of cognitive, altruistic, empathic motivation while working with clients, readiness to work with customers and focus on the positive results.

As for the vision of Western psychology on personal qualities that are necessary for the successful psychologist, the first one to define them was psychologist Carl Rogers, who identified features such as empathy, congruence and lack of estimation (1975).

Pope and Kline (1999) during the reaserches of qualities of a psychologist, that influence on the successful work, have identified 22 characteristics. They are acceptance, emotional stability, open-mindedness, empathy, genuineness, flexibility, interest in people, confidence, sensitivity, fairness, warmth, friendliness, resourcefulness, sympathy, nonthreatening, tolerance for ambiguity, awareness of limitations, capability, patience, sincerity, cooperative, and sociability [2].

Ackerman and Hilsenroth's (2003) came up with 11 characteristics of psychologist —flexible, experienced, honest, respectful, trustworthy, confident, interested, alert, friendly, warm, and open [2].

Together with the characteristics that need to be present, during the researches there were discovered those that are undesirable for a psychologist. They include exhibiting irritability, defensiveness, lack of empathy, being judgmental, poor interpersonal skills, pervasive interpersonal and intrapersonal problems, and mental health diagnoses such as depressive symptoms and personality disorders [6].

Unfortunately, regarding to this issue in Ukraine, there is not enough researches published, especially about personal readiness of students to study psychology and subsequent professional realization. So our future empirical research will concern precisely this aspect of the problem. Examining students of first and fourth years, we will try to determine their personal level of preparedness required for the profession of psychologist. Also, it will be offered one of the mechanisms of enrolling students to study Psychology.

Conclusion

It is clear, that the profession of psychologist requires not only the existence of specialized knowledge and skills, but also the development of certain personal qualities of a person. The abovementioned researches generally agree that these qualities should be: respect of interpersonal relations, motivation to help others, developed emotional intelligence and reflexivity. Nowadays, National Universities have a tradition to select students for this specialty only by criteria of their school success and the results of External Independent Testing. On the contrary, our future empirical study will show that the proportion of students who are willing to study Psychology by such selection do not meet the necessary personal requirements, moreover have certain features that are contradicted the specialist of that sphere. Therefore, we aim to inquire about the necessity of implementation additional criteria of the selection process, particularly by motivation and personal qualities.

References

- [1] Dutkevich T. V., Savicka O.V. *Praktichna psixologiya: vstup do specialnosti. 2-ge vid. navch. posib. - k.: centr uchbovoi literaturi, 2010. - 256 s.*
- [2] Hutchinson Tracy S. Predicting client outcomes using counselor trainee levels of ego development and altruistic caring. Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy in counselor education at the university of central florida, spring term, 2011- 148 s.
- [3] National association of school psychologists Principles for professional ethics 2010
- [4] Redekop, Wlazelek. Counselor Dispositions: An Added Dimension for Admissions, Decisions Paper based on a program presented at the 2010 ACA conference, Pittsburgh, PA, March 20. VISTAS 2012, Volume 1
- [5] Robert A. Roe, What Makes a Competent Psychologist?, *European Psychologist*, Vol. 7, No. 3, September 2002, pp. 192–202
- [6] What personality traits are essential to be a great psychologist? [Online]. Available: <http://www.bestmastersinpsychology.com/faq/what-personality-traits-are-essential-to-be-a-great-psychologist/>