



APPROBARIION OF SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES IN THE TRAINING OF STUDENTS THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF GOOD INTERNATIONAL PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary academic education in Bulgaria is in the process of reformation designed to bring it closer to the most modern educational practices of today in order to enable it to prepare high-qualified specialists for the future. This mission requires in-depth scientific analysis and transformation of multiple factors influencing education, two of which are especially important: the implementation of new approaches to student training, which are based on the socio-psychological model and the enhancement of student motivation for cognitive achievement.

Key words: psychological approaches, modern practices, scientific collaboration

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This mission requires in-depth scientific analysis and transformation of multiple factors influencing education, two of which are especially important: the implementation of new approaches to student training, which are based on the socio-psychological model and the enhancement of student motivation for cognitive achievement.

This research has the goal of studying the influence of these two factors on the quality of academic education, thereby assisting the process of improving the relationship “educator- education- student -professional competence”.

Through the application of the socio-psychological approaches and international practices in the educational process, students are presented with the conditions that enable them to fully develop their intellectual potential and creative abilities. This allows for the intensification of the processes of studying, researching and manifesting the regularities in the sciences, for interactivity as well as for

direct feedback between the participants in the educational process. In this way, students develop a positive attitude, creative and original thinking is stimulated, team-working skills and the ability to transfer knowledge to other areas of science are developed. What is achieved through these new modern educational practices is a broader perspective on the content of the areas of study both in terms of the general education and the specialized modules. They also assist the referential, illustrative and research-related aspects of the content of the areas of study. Enriching the study content establishes the conditions for building a new information culture among the students and a professional worldview among the future specialists.

The socio-psychological approaches in student training through the application of good international practices build an effective teaching strategy, which stimulates the students' learning and cognitive activity and helps them make progress towards achieving the objectives of their academic training. The transformations in the information exchange between professors and students provide the conditions needed for the development of a higher level of independence, initiative and creativity among the future specialists with university education.

The socio-psychological approaches have been implemented in the student training at the Faculty of Education as part of the education process in psychology-related areas of study. Between the years 2007 and 2010 two student training complexes took place, featuring two prominent guest speakers: Prof. Dr. Paul Monnier from the University of Lyon in France, (1) whose lectures focused on the genetic psychology of Henri Wallon (2) and Dr. Francis Walton Ph.D. from the International Adlerian Institute in the United States. (3, 4)

The training complexes are based entirely on the principle of student training through experience. The primary methods used are lectures, presentation of case studies, group discussions, role playing and simulation games. As a result of this training, the participants develop the appropriate attitudes, values and competences in the area of diagnosing human behavior, psychological development and counseling. They also improve the students' motivation for learning.

A survey of the participants in this program was conducted, whose aim was to research the students' opinions with regard to achieving the predetermined goals in applying the socio-psychological approaches. In terms of its methods and idea, this research corresponds with the study by J. Stoykova and V. Hadjiliev, whose results prove that "diversifying and improving the content, organization and management of the educational process ... through purposeful and systematic organizing of the students' educational activity both in and outside the classroom... enhances their interests, attitudes and motivation for gaining new academic knowledge." (5, p.29)

Goal, tasks, hypothesis, object and subject of the research

This research has the goal of studying the effect of modern socio-psychological approaches on the quality of student training and motivation for cognitive achievement.

The tasks are focused on researching the students' views, assessments and recommendations regarding the efficacy of the approbated socio-psychological approaches in education.

On the basis of the scientific and theoretical analysis of the problem, it was hypothesized

that the utilization of socio-psychological approaches in the education process enhances the efficiency of the education process and the students' motivation for learning.

The object of the research is 167 students at the Faculty of Education, or more than two-thirds of the participants in the training complex. They are from six courses of bachelor's programs in social pedagogy, special pedagogy, preschool and elementary school pedagogy, elementary school pedagogy with English and a master's program in pedagogical and psychological counseling.

The subject of the study is the student opinion and assessment of the use of socio-psychological approaches in education as a focus of the latest achievements in science and practice.

Instruments. This research uses the survey method. The survey card contains nine questions directed at the quality of education and the assessment of the implemented socio-psychological methods.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The responses to the survey card questions given by the students can be summarized as follows:

Question 1. Have you had any previous exposure to information regarding the ideas of individual psychology and its creator Alfred Adler? (Fig. 1)

Question 2. Who presented this information to you?

On the basis of the answers to questions 1 and 2, it is clear that before the training complex, the majority of students had only superficial knowledge of the theory and practice of individual and genetic psychology and this knowledge comes primarily from the lectures of psychology, philosophy and sociology professors. (Fig. 1)

Question 3. Which are the main terms that you associate with the theory and practice of Alfred Adler's individual psychology?

The main terms, which the students have learned in the course of the student training complex are "feeling of inferiority", "striving for superiority", "social interest", "style of life".

Question 4. What impressed you about Prof. Francis Walton's lectures? (Fig. 2)

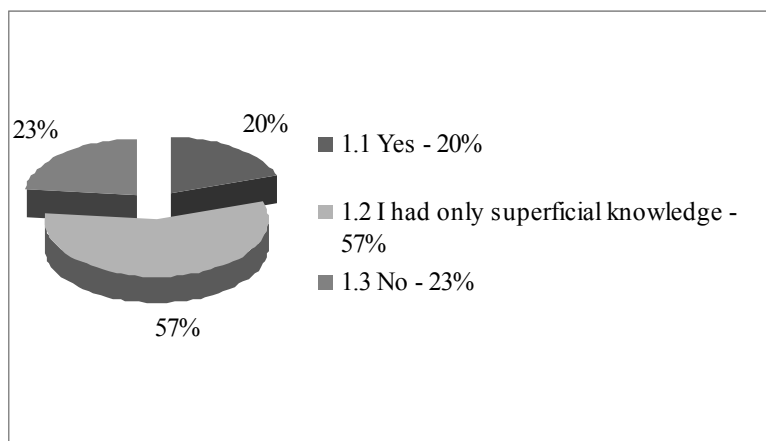


Fig. 1. Respondents' replies to Question 1

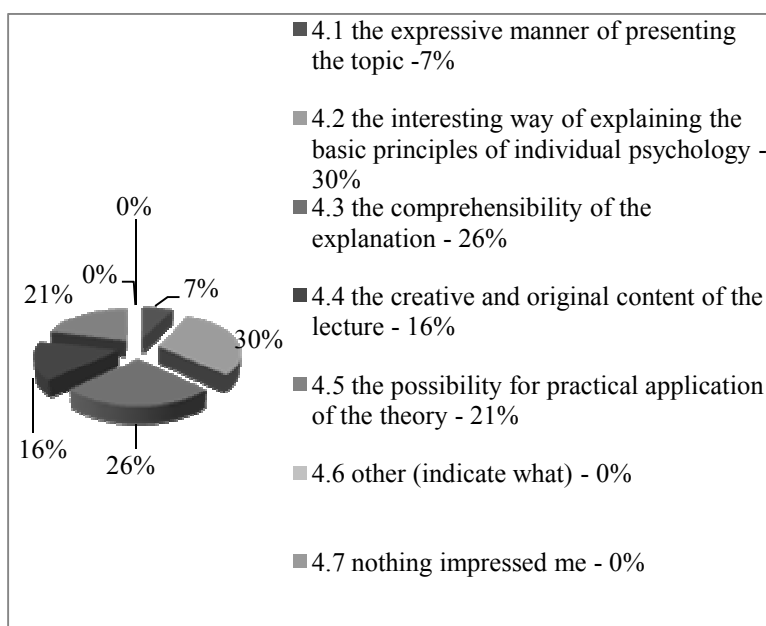


Fig. 2. Respondents' replies to Question 4

The answers to **Question № 4** show that the students are impressed with the socio-psychological approaches in education applied by Dr. Walton and expressed through: the interesting manner of presenting the basic principles of individual psychology, the comprehensible explanations, the creative and original content of the lectures, the opportunity for practical application of the information. (**Fig. 2**)

Question 5. What, for you, was the most memorable part of meeting Dr. Walton?

Some interesting responses:

“Dr. Walton is a very positive person, who loves his profession and wants to communicate these emotions to the students.”; “Dr. Walton has a very positive attitude and confident presence, which command respect.”; “I received a very thoughtful and friendly autograph”; “This is an exceptional man”.

1 I am impressed with the public counseling session, which demonstrates the use of the most memorable observation technique for understanding choice of parenting style.

Question 6. Would you like this first cycle of lecture to be continued next year?

Question 7. Would you like the Faculty of Education to organize more events like the lectures by guest speakers Dr. Francis Walton Ph.D. and Prof. Dr. Paul Monnier from the University of Lyon in France?

In response to **Questions 6 and 7 (Fig. 3)** students express the opinion that the implemented socio-psychological approaches in the student training complex are interesting and useful and that they would like this way of organizing the education process to be continued in the future.

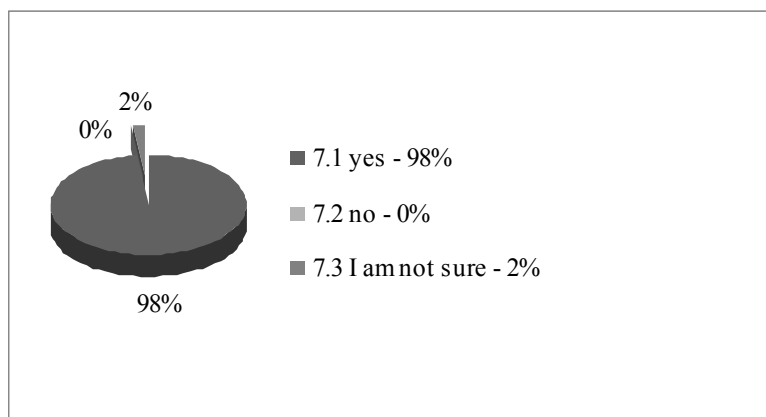


Fig. 3. Respondents' replies to Question 7

CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion that can be drawn on the basis of the analysis of the results of the survey is that the student training complex was useful for the theoretical and professional preparation of students and has enhanced their interest in the problems of genetic and individual psychology, thereby helping students to develop professionally significant competences.

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