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## THE STUDY OF THE FEATURES OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN SOCIAL WORK FOR EDUCATIONAL AND ADVISORY ASSISTANCE

### EL ESTUDIO DE LAS CARACTERÍSTICAS DE LA COMPETENCIA COMUNICATIVA EN EL TRABAJO SOCIAL PARA LA ASISTENCIA EDUCATIVA Y DE CONSULTORÍA

Alexandra Shcheglova<sup>1</sup>

E-mail: [Shas\\_rgsu@mail.ru](mailto:Shas_rgsu@mail.ru)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8193-2066>

Anna Rybakova<sup>2</sup>

E-mail: [anna.i.rybakova@mail.ru](mailto:anna.i.rybakova@mail.ru)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7816-8407>

Ludmila Senkevich<sup>1</sup>

E-mail: [lvsenkevich@mail.ru](mailto:lvsenkevich@mail.ru)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8147-7692>

Vera Makeeva<sup>3</sup>

E-mail: [vera\\_191@mail.ru](mailto:vera_191@mail.ru)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5969-4324>

Svetlana Artemyeva<sup>4</sup>

E-mail: [vet-7@mail.ru](mailto:vet-7@mail.ru)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4959-0617>

<sup>1</sup>Russian State Social University. Russian Federation.

<sup>2</sup>Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology. Russian Federation.

<sup>3</sup>Russian State University of Physical Culture, Sports, Youth and Tourism. Russian Federation.

<sup>4</sup>K.G. Razumovsky Moscow State University of technologies and management (the First Cossack University). Russian Federation.

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#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article is to study ways to improve the communicative competence of specialists in the social sphere, aimed at the formation of professional and personal qualities, communicative skills and skills of a specialist, the development of interest in the chosen profession and success in professional activity. The methodology of this article is presented by theoretical and practical developments in the field of communicative competence in social work. Within the framework of this study, the practical activity of the "Center for Medical and Sociological Research" of Saratov is determined. The main results of the study showed that the modern practice of successful organization of social services requires a thoughtful approach. The head, together with a full-time psychologist, should monitor the communicative competence of the specialists of this service and organize timely work to overcome the manifestations of professional burnout of specialists and prevent their professional deformation.

#### Keywords:

Communicative competence, interpersonal communication, psychological culture, emotional overload, professional burnout.

#### RESUMEN

El propósito del artículo es estudiar formas de mejorar la competencia comunicativa de los especialistas en la esfera social, dirigida a la formación de cualidades profesionales y personales, habilidades comunicativas y habilidades de un especialista, el desarrollo de interés en la profesión elegida y el éxito en actividad profesional. La metodología de este artículo se presenta mediante desarrollos teóricos y prácticos en el campo de la competencia comunicativa en trabajo social. En el marco de este estudio, se determina la actividad práctica del "Centro de Investigación Médica y Sociológica" de Saratov. Los principales resultados del estudio mostraron que la práctica moderna de la organización exitosa de los servicios sociales requiere un enfoque reflexivo. El jefe, junto con un psicólogo de tiempo completo, debe monitorear la competencia comunicativa de los especialistas de este servicio y organizar el trabajo oportuno para superar las manifestaciones de desgaste profesional de los especialistas y prevenir su deformación profesional.

#### Palabras clave:

Competencia comunicativa, comunicación interpersonal, cultura psicológica, sobrecarga emocional, desgaste profesional.

## INTRODUCTION

One of the main components of a specialist's professional competence in social work is his success in professional and universal communication. As a rule, the clients of social workers are citizens who are in an unstable social situation. As a result, they are not always emotionally balanced and can hardly maintain and establish positive social contacts. Therefore, the specialist takes on both their emotional burden and responsibility for building positive social contacts with the client himself and with his immediate environment. This style of behavior inevitably leads to emotional burnout and professional deformation of specialists.

Therefore, the study of the features of the communicative competence of social sphere specialists is an important goal of organizing their successful social communication (Milanovic, 2017; Penkova et al., 2018; Maleeva et al., 2018; Gorlova et al., 2019). In the modern practice of socio-psychological training of professional competence of social sphere specialists, the developments of domestic psychologists should be actively used.

The problems of studying the peculiarities of the communicative competence of social sphere specialists lie in a related field of scientific knowledge, including the problems of the psychology of communication, conflicts and methods of active socio-psychological training, as well as the competence of a social work specialist (Van den Heuvel, 2015; Rybakova, 2015). These studies are of a complex, interdisciplinary nature, so scientific research in this area is currently being conducted in a wide range of directions (Penkova et al., 2017). From the point of view of the development of the theory of social work and the competence of social work specialists, it is necessary to note the research of the following scientists: P.D. Pavlenok, E.G. Studenova, M.V. Firsov, E.I. Kholostova, etc.

Pavlenok (2017), pointed out that *“theoretical systematization and comprehension are very important in understanding the process of managing social work, training social workers, in determining their professional and spiritual and moral qualities, which ultimately affects the effectiveness of social work.”* Firsov & Studenova (2016), determine that *“the classification of social work technologies is carried out based on the concepts of the relationship between a person and the environment, in which environmental circumstances and personal bio-psycho-social factors affect human behavior in society and its social activity, which can lead to the emergence of an objective “difficult life situation” that complicates the bio-psycho-social functioning of a person.”*

Holostova (2007), noted that “the structure of social work as a science is caused not only by the attitude of people to each other, but also the attitude of people to ideas, knowledge, the interrelations of knowledge of different areas and social work technologies (Lamb & McKee, 2005; Milanovic, 2017). Problems of management of social work and social management are reflected in the works of Komarov & Voitenko (2001). They defined the functions, structure and methods of social work management, social projects, planning and regional models, as well as the management culture and the effectiveness of social work. Topchy (2015); Medvedeva (2018), were engaged in the study and development of professional and personal qualities of a social worker.

Topchy (2015), noted that *“the theory of social work is the “magic glass” through which a professional social worker constantly learns the essence of social processes and problems, first of all the person himself, the characteristics of his client, the degree of adaptation of the client to social changes in society and the immediate environment, determines the potential of people in difficult life situations, finds the right solutions, predicts the effectiveness of various methods and private methods of social work.”*

Medvedeva (2018), in her textbook on the Philosophy of Social Work showed that: “a person is the main element of social work, its object and subject, goal and result. At the same time, human research within the framework of various scientific disciplines of social work is limited only to the study of a person as an object and subject in the system of professional social work. The fact that a person is simultaneously a member of society, various groups and communities is practically not taken into account, just as the role of a person who does not take part in professional social work is not taken into account”.

Zamaraeva & Starovoitova (2019) noted that “socially-oriented professional subjectivity plays a great role in the formation of professional competence. Its content and technological support presuppose, on the one hand, purposeful professional activity with social protection objects having different levels of resource potentials (low, medium, high) to restore lost, partially lost or not acquired during socialization skills and abilities to perform social functions and roles in modern society, on the other hand – updating of special knowledge, skills and abilities in order to conduct a level assessment of resource potentials and the selection of adequate resource technologies, the formation of necessary conditions for their implementation”.

The specificity of social work, according to Kholostova & Kononova (2019), is that *“when solving the problems facing it, it directly or indirectly affects all forms and types of*

*social relations and people's activities, all sides of society. Identification and solution of these problems is carried out, first of all, by establishing and maintaining contacts with representatives of public services, public organizations and associations, citizens and social groups (clients) in need of assistance, protection, support, which in turn requires high development of social workers' communicative abilities".*

Akhryan (2018), emphasizes the following aspect of the interaction of modern people: "The modern world is in continuous innovative development, which covers all spheres of society, including socio-cultural. The study of personality typology in this context is becoming increasingly relevant due to the possibility of predicting the formation of innovative thinking thanks to it. Every modern person interacts repeatedly with both individuals and groups of people every day, inevitably encountering various types of human character and behavior. There is an obvious jump in interest in the problems of social interactions considered in the field of studying personality typology". The analysis of scientific literature has shown that the study of the features of the communicative competence of social sphere specialists is an important and actively researched area of modern science.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology of this article is presented by theoretical and practical developments in the field of communicative competence in social work. Within the framework of this study, the practical activity of the "Center for Medical and Sociological Research" of Saratov is determined. This center consists of three departments: psychological department that provides advisory and educational assistance to citizens of different ages and social status; correctional and developmental work with children with developmental disabilities; correctional department, which carries out correctional and rehabilitation work with various categories of citizens; medical department that implements medical support of educational, correctional and rehabilitation work of the center.

Each of whom participated in the study. At the first stage, psychological testing was conducted in order to identify employees who are dissatisfied with their relationships with people and experiencing certain difficulties in communication. At the second stage, based on the test results, a group of employees experiencing communication difficulties in their professional activities was selected to participate in a socio-psychological training (SPT).

At the third stage, the effectiveness of the SPT program was evaluated. The purpose of the article is to study ways

to improve the communicative competence of specialists in the social sphere, aimed at the formation of professional and personal qualities, communicative skills and skills of a specialist, the development of interest in the chosen profession and success in professional activity. This study reveals the possibilities of improving the communicative competence of social service specialists in modern conditions of systematic emotional overload in the performance of their professional duties. Timely organization of diagnostics and correction of emotional and mental attitude of specialists gives a positive result, increases the success of professional tasks and brings satisfaction from the work performed.

Defining the main objectives of this study, it is necessary to note a number of them: to analyze theoretical approaches to the study of communication as a professionally significant quality of a social worker; to find out the essence of social work as a professional activity; to study the socio-psychological characteristics of the personality of a social worker; to investigate the socio-psychological features of the communicative activity of social workers; to develop a program of the SPT to improve the communicative activities of social workers, which allows improving the quality of social services for citizens; analyze the results obtained after the SPT.

Theoretical and empirical research methods were used to solve the tasks set:

analysis of philosophical, psychological and pedagogical, acmeological, sociological, social work, methodological literature, normative documentation on the research topic; diagnostic methods: questionnaires, testing, conversations; experimental methods: ascertaining, forming and control stages of the experiment; methods of statistical processing of research results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Communicative competence is one of the basic characteristics of professional competence and professional training of specialists in social work. Given the complex current socio-economic situation in the country, the specifics of the functioning of the domestic system of social protection and remuneration, the desire of service recipients to quickly and effectively solve their problems, it should be noted, as a consequence, the increasing emotional burden on the specialist. In this regard, one of the main tasks of the heads of social services is to monitor the socio-psychological state of employees of these services. By regularly carrying out systematic work to protect the socio-psychological state of its employees, a successful

professional solution of all production tasks of this service is ensured.

In this regard, the experience of studying ways to improve the professional competence of employees of the Center for Medical and Sociological Research in Saratov in November 2018 is very interesting. It should be noted that the staff includes 30 people, including 26 women and 4 men aged 32 to 51 years. All employees, with the exception of the head of the center and employees of security and accounting, were involved in the study. In order to study the socio-psychological features of the communicative activity of social workers, as well as ways to improve the effectiveness of its quality in the “Center for Medical and Sociological Research”, work was carried out to study the socio-psychological features of the communicative activity of employees of this center.

At the first stage, psychological testing was conducted in order to identify employees who are dissatisfied with their relationships with people and experiencing certain difficulties in communication. For these purposes, the following methods were used:

1. Standardized self-report on the features of interpersonal communication by Strelkova (1967). The self-report contains 16 questions.

The technique reveals the following parameters of interpersonal communication: satisfaction-dissatisfaction with your relationships with others; with what categories of persons and to what extent does this satisfaction manifest itself; the presence of difficulties of a procedural and dynamic nature in the process of communication; compliance of existing relationships with people in relation to others; the ability to effectively build their relationships with other people; the attitude of others according to the criterion of understanding misunderstanding; confidence – uncertainty in relationships with people; subjective assessment of the causes of difficult communication (in yourself – in a partner).

2. The methodology of “Communicative and organizational inclinations”.

According to the results of this technique, it becomes possible to identify the qualitative features of the communicative and organizational inclinations of the subjects. Communicative and organizational skills in professions, which in their content are associated with the active interaction of a person with other people, act as the core, without which success in work cannot be ensured. The main content of the activities of employees of such professions is the management of collectives, training,

education, cultural, educational and consumer services for people, etc.

3. The study of the level of empathic tendencies. The work used a popular method of studying the level of empathic tendencies developed by Kazan psychologist I.M. Yusupov to study such a personal property as empathy (empathy), i.e. the ability to arbitrary emotional responsiveness to the experiences of other people, the ability to put yourself in the place of another person (Sidorenko, 2008).

Empathy makes a person’s behavior socially conditioned, contributing to the balance of interpersonal relationships. A person’s ability to empathize is a key success factor in those activities that require getting used to the world of a communication partner. This is especially important when it comes to social work. This technique allows you to determine the level of empathy development (very high, high, normal, low, very low). At the second stage, based on the test results, a group of employees experiencing communication difficulties in their professional activities was selected to participate in a socio-psychological training (SPT). At the third stage, the effectiveness of the SPT program was evaluated.

The first stage of our study was the diagnosis of the level of development of empathic tendencies in the center’s employees (Table 1).

Table 1. The level of development of empathic tendencies among the center’s employees the employees of the center.

no. / code	Scores	Level
1	74	High
2	12	Low
3	60	Normal
4	62	Normal
5	56	Normal
6	65	High
7	58	Normal
8	60	Normal
9	21	Low
10	44	Normal
11	58	Normal
12	68	High
13	74	High
14	40	Normal
15	69	High
16	47	Normal
17	30	Low

18	60	Normal
19	60	Normal
20	56	Normal
21	51	Normal
22	72	High
23	28	Low
24	61	Normal
25	46	Normal
26	44	Normal
27	50	Normal
28	43	Normal
29	79	High
30	55	Normal

Table 1 shows that no employee has a very high and very low level of empathy, that is, there are only three levels in our sample: high, medium and low. Moreover, 63% of employees have a normal (average) level of empathy. The distribution of employees by levels of empathy development is shown below in Figure 1.

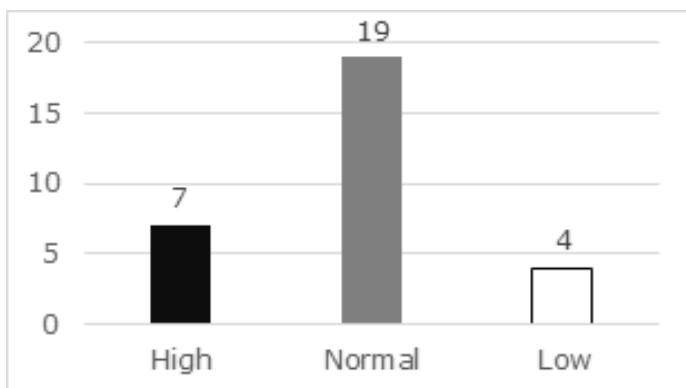


Figure 1. Distribution of employees by levels of empathy development.

Thus, it can be concluded that the staff of the center in interpersonal relationships try to show attention and delicacy, tend to judge others by their actions, emotional manifestations are mostly under control.

Table 2 presents the diagnostic results obtained by the CBS method. As can be seen from the presented results, most employees have a fairly high level of communication skills, but only 6 people have organizational skills.

Table 2. The level of development of communication and organizational skills of the center's employees.

Nº	Communication skills	Level	Organizational skills	Level
1	0,47	Below average	0,36	Low
2	0,29	Low	0,24	Low
3	0,69	High	0,58	Below average
4	0,62	Medium	0,47	Low
5	0,61	Medium	0,35	Low
6	0,68	High	0,69	Medium
7	0,58	Medium	0,41	Low
8	0,69	High	0,58	Below average
9	0,32	Low	0,59	Below average
10	0,74	High	0,49	Low
11	0,73	High	0,79	High
12	0,31	Low	0,31	Low
13	0,74	High	0,56	Below average
14	0,29	Below average	0,39	Low
15	0,79	High	0,58	Below average
16	0,57	Medium	0,69	Below average
17	0,37	Low	0,36	Low
18	0,65	Medium	0,84	Very high
19	0,74	High	0,57	Below average
20	0,56	Medium	0,48	Low
21	0,59	Medium	0,67	Medium
22	0,73	High	0,71	High
23	0,81	Very high	0,79	High
24	0,71	High	0,88	Very high
25	0,36	Low	0,41	Low
26	0,84	Very high	0,74	High
27	0,45	Below average	0,46	Low
28	0,81	Very high	0,69	Below average
29	0,79	Very high	0,56	Below average
30	0,62	Medium	0,59	Below average



The data obtained within the framework of the conducted research clearly show the working capacity of this team. With competent management and rational distribution of work responsibilities, he is ready to successfully solve the tasks set. Let's pay attention to Figure 2.

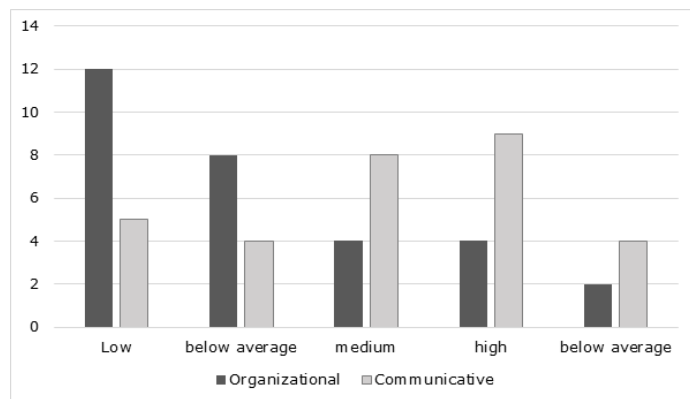


Figure 2. Distribution of employees by levels of development of communicative and organizational abilities.

This figure reveals an interesting pattern showing the dependence of the level of development of organizational skills and the level of communication. It is difficult to imagine a labor collective consisting entirely of active organizers. This type of person does not always have the proper patience and scrupulousness in performing his duties. Therefore, a skillful combination of activity and sociability of some with patience and inner concentration, aimed at gradualness in the execution of orders of others, gives success in teamwork.

The next stage of the research is aimed at studying the parameters of interpersonal communication. Let's turn to the results obtained from a Standardized self-report on the features of interpersonal communication (Table 3).

Table 3. Average parameters of interpersonal communication.

Parameters of interpersonal communication	Average indicator (from 0 to 10)
satisfaction - dissatisfaction with your relationships with others	12
with which categories of persons and to what extent does this satisfaction manifest itself	Colleagues -11
	Customers -8
	Friends -13
the presence of difficulties of a procedural and dynamic nature in the process of communication	9
the correspondence of existing relationships with people in relation to others	8
having the ability to effectively build your relationships with other people	11

the attitude of others according to the criterion of understanding – misunderstanding	10
confidence – uncertainty in relationships with people	9
subjective assessment of the causes of difficult communication (in yourself – in a partner)	In myself -11
	In a partner – 12

After analyzing the test results, typical difficulties of interpersonal communication were identified and 12 people were selected. Of these, 4 employees have a low level of empathy, 8 employees have a level of development of communication abilities below average. All selected employees have low organizational skills. All of them note dissatisfaction with their relationships with others, uncertainty in relationships, inability to effectively build their relationships with other people.

Based on the results of the study, a socio-psychological training was organized aimed at improving the communicative activities of social workers experiencing difficulties in interpersonal and professional contacts. Classes with a group of employees in accordance with the psychological specifics of the difficulties of their interpersonal interaction pursued the following goals: development of the attitude to socio-psychological activity; correction and formation of some socio-psychological communicative skills; development of participants' ability to empathy; increasing sensitivity to nonverbal forms of contact, decoding non-verbal ways of communicating people.

As evidenced by the data of diagnostic procedures conducted after the end of the training, and data from self-reports characterizing changes in the subjects' self-attitude, the level of awareness of their problems in the process of interacting with others, mastering some behavioral tactics, communication training organized according to the developed program, gave a positive result.

Summing up the work done, it should be noted that the identification of problems related to the communicative competence of the service staff, which is an integral component of activities in the social sphere. The main vector of successful work of social services is carrying out preventive work on establishing communication links within the team and smoothing the consequences of communication with recipients of social services by means of trainings aimed at improving the culture of mutual communication.

Within the framework of this work, classes conducted according to the planned program gave a psychological and practical effect on the personality of the subjects and their real behavior. The main effect of the impact was expressed in an increase in the general psychological culture in relations with others, in the focus on others, the desire to productively build their relationships with people, in the

desire to change themselves. Specifically, this manifested itself in increasing the level of self-knowledge, awareness of one's own shortcomings in interacting with others, increasing the adequacy of perception and understanding of another person, developing the level of empathy, increasing sensitivity to nonverbal means of communication, in the formation of new communicative skills.

It is necessary to note the practical orientation of this study, which showed the importance of the influence of active teaching methods on interpersonal communication, allowed us to develop and test a number of practically effective methodological techniques that increase the effectiveness of interaction with others in their professional activities. It should be noted that socio-psychological training and its results do not fit into the time frame even with a long training session. This is a long process, the effectiveness of which is revealed in the course of real life activities of people. By itself, the laboratory cycle of active learning is only a trigger mechanism that reveals the potential of a person's socio-psychological learning ability, which is further tested by the practice of his actual actions.

## CONCLUSIONS

The complex solution of the listed tasks acts as an orienting goal of socio-psychological training. At the same time, the variety of active group methods used at the laboratory stage expands the perceptual field of the student in his subsequent contacts with real-life events, increases the resources of his interpersonal ingenuity, communicative competence and professional success in general. This program will contribute to the formation of professional and personal qualities, communicative skills and skills of a specialist, and also thanks to the program there will be awareness of one's own values that contribute to the development of interest in the chosen profession and success in professional activity.

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