



PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE FORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Nomozova Latofat Rustamovna

Independent Researcher, Bukhara International University

Abstract. *The article examines the psychological aspects of the formation of professional competencies in upper secondary school teachers within the context of contemporary educational transformations. Special emphasis is placed on psychological competence as an integrative component of a teacher's professional development, ensuring the effectiveness of the educational process, resilience to professional stress, and constructive interaction with senior school students. The study analyzes the key structural components of teachers' professional competencies, including cognitive, emotional-volitional, communicative, and reflective dimensions, as well as their relationship with individual psychological characteristics of the teacher's personality.*

The significance of developing teachers' psychological readiness to work under conditions of increased academic demands, educational digitalization, and the growing importance of learner-centered instruction is substantiated. The article explores psychological mechanisms underlying the formation of professional competencies, such as professional motivation, self-regulation, emotional intelligence, and pedagogical reflection. It is emphasized that a high level of psychological competence contributes to the prevention of professional burnout, enhances teaching effectiveness, and promotes the development of stable professional values and attitudes.

The findings of the theoretical analysis can be applied in the design of professional development programs, psychological support systems for upper secondary school teachers, and teacher training practices within higher education institutions.

Key words: *professional competencies, psychological competence, upper secondary school teachers, pedagogical activity, emotional intelligence, professional development, pedagogical reflection.*

Аннотация. *В статье рассматриваются психологические аспекты формирования профессиональных компетенций у учителей старшей школы в условиях современных образовательных преобразований. Особое внимание уделяется роли психологической компетентности как интегративного компонента профессиональной подготовки педагога, обеспечивающего эффективность образовательного процесса, устойчивость к профессиональному стрессу и продуктивное взаимодействие с учащимися старшего школьного возраста. В работе анализируются основные структурные компоненты профессиональных компетенций учителя, включая когнитивные, эмоционально-волевые, коммуникативные и*



рефлексивные аспекты, а также их взаимосвязь с индивидуально-психологическими характеристиками личности педагога.

Обоснована значимость развития психологической готовности учителей к работе в условиях повышенной учебной нагрузки, цифровизации образования и возрастания требований к личностно-ориентированному обучению. Рассматриваются психологические механизмы формирования профессиональных компетенций, такие как профессиональная мотивация, саморегуляция, эмоциональный интеллект и педагогическая рефлексия. Подчеркивается, что высокий уровень психологической компетентности способствует профилактике профессионального выгорания, повышению педагогической эффективности и развитию устойчивых профессиональных ценностей.

Результаты теоретического анализа могут быть использованы при разработке программ повышения квалификации педагогов, психологического сопровождения учителей старшей школы, а также в системе профессионального образования и педагогической практики.

Ключевые слова: *профессиональные компетенции, психологическая компетентность, учителя старших классов, педагогическая деятельность, эмоциональный интеллект, профессиональное развитие, педагогическая рефлексия.*

Introduction

The modern education system is undergoing intensive socio-cultural and technological transformations, which impose qualitatively new requirements on the professional activity of upper secondary school teachers. The strengthening of the competency-based approach, the introduction of digital educational technologies, the increase in academic workload, and the growing complexity of the socio-psychological characteristics of senior school students make it necessary to conduct a comprehensive analysis of teachers' professional competencies from the perspective of psychological science. Under these conditions, the teacher acts not only as a transmitter of subject knowledge but also as an active agent of pedagogical interaction, possessing well-developed psychological competence that ensures the effectiveness of the educational process and supports students' personal development.

The issue of forming professional competencies in upper secondary school teachers is of particular importance, as this stage of education is characterized by a high level of cognitive, emotional, and social tension among students, associated with professional self-determination, examination stress, and age-related crises. Effective pedagogical support of senior students requires teachers not only to demonstrate methodological proficiency but also to possess a deep understanding of the psychological patterns of adolescent personality development, the ability to build constructive communication, regulate emotional states, and engage in reflective analysis of their own professional activities.

Scientific research emphasizes that teachers' professional competence represents an integrative construct that includes cognitive, motivational, emotional-volitional, and



behavioral components, which are formed and developed in the course of professional activity. The psychological component of these competencies functions as a system-forming factor that determines teachers' resistance to professional stress, the level of pedagogical effectiveness, and their capacity for professional self-development. Insufficient development of psychological competencies often leads to professional burnout, a decline in the quality of pedagogical interaction, and deformation of teachers' professional identity.

In this regard, there is an increasing need for scientific reflection on the psychological aspects of forming professional competencies in upper secondary school teachers, as well as for identifying the factors, conditions, and mechanisms of their development in contemporary educational realities. The study of this problem has not only theoretical but also practical significance, since its results can be used in designing teacher professional development programs, systems of psychological support, and measures for preventing professional risks in pedagogical activity.

The issue of psychological aspects of forming professional competencies in upper secondary school teachers occupies a central place in modern psychological and pedagogical science, as it reflects the practical demand for teachers capable of effectively operating in increasingly complex educational environments, under conditions of heightened emotional load and growing requirements for learner-centered education. In the scientific literature, teachers' professional competence is most often interpreted as an integrative formation that includes knowledge, skills, values, personal qualities, and readiness to solve professional tasks. This approach is rooted in general conceptions of competence as the ability to mobilize internal personal resources for productive activity, as emphasized in the works of foreign researchers associated with the competency-based approach and the analysis of professional effectiveness (for example, R. Boyatzis, who links competencies to stable personality characteristics and successful performance; and D. McClelland, who proposed assessing professional effectiveness through actual competencies rather than formal indicators). In the pedagogical context, this line of research has been further developed in studies that conceptualize the teacher's competency model as a system of subject-specific, methodological, communicative, and reflective components ensuring the quality of teaching and education.

In Russian psychology and pedagogy, a significant contribution to understanding teachers' professional development has been made by cultural-historical and activity-based traditions. In the works of L. S. Vygotsky, the role of social interaction, speech regulation, and mediation in the development of higher mental functions is emphasized, which is directly related to the professional tasks of upper secondary school teachers working within students' zones of actual and proximal development. The further development of the activity approach in the studies of A. N. Leontiev and S. L. Rubinstein made it possible to consider professional activity as a system of motives, goals, actions, and operations, and competence as the result of mastering activity and forming internal regulation. In pedagogical psychology, these ideas are supported by the view that teacher effectiveness is



determined not only by subject knowledge but also by the ability to organize students' activities, maintain learning motivation, and form meaning-making orientations. The concepts of P. Ya. Galperin concerning the step-by-step formation of mental actions and V. V. Davydov's theory of developmental learning further expand the psychological understanding of competence, emphasizing the need for teachers to master mechanisms for developing thinking, reflection, and independence in senior students.

A separate body of research is devoted to psychological competence as a specific component of teachers' professionalism. In domestic literature, psychological competence is most often described as the ability to understand students' psychological characteristics, take age-related specifics into account, build productive communication, and manage one's own psychological states. These ideas correspond with the works of B. D. Parygin and A. V. Petrovsky, in which communication and socio-psychological mechanisms of interaction are viewed as key factors in the effectiveness of joint activity. This is especially important for upper secondary school teachers, as late adolescence and early youth are characterized by an increased need for autonomy, heightened sensitivity to evaluation, and active identity formation. In this context, an emphasis on teachers' communicative competence, empathy, respectful dialogue, and the ability to maintain a psychologically safe educational environment becomes scientifically justified. Foreign authors working within the framework of humanistic psychology (C. Rogers) emphasized the importance of unconditional acceptance, empathic understanding, and authenticity in interaction, which in educational settings manifests as pedagogical support and trust-based communication. Within the logic of A. Bandura's social-cognitive theory, teachers' professional competence is enhanced through the development of self-efficacy—that is, confidence in one's ability to achieve goals, manage the classroom, and influence learning outcomes—while high self-efficacy is associated with greater stress resistance and more effective pedagogical strategies.



The issue of psychological mechanisms underlying competence formation is closely linked to research on self-regulation and reflection. In the Russian tradition, the topic of self-regulation and voluntary behavioral control has developed within the framework of ideas about conscious regulation of activity, while contemporary pedagogical psychology considers reflection as a prerequisite for teachers' professional growth and the prevention of professional deformations. In the same direction, foreign studies by D. Schön on the "reflective practitioner" are of particular importance, where professionalism is understood as the ability to analyze one's own actions in situations of uncertainty and to learn from experience. For upper secondary school teachers, reflective competence is especially valuable, as they constantly face variability in educational demands, heterogeneity of student groups, increased conflict potential during adolescence, and the need to make rapid decisions under conditions of emotional tension.

A significant place in research is also occupied by the problem of teachers' emotional competence, which includes emotional stability, emotional regulation skills, and a well-



developed emotional intelligence. Foreign researchers (P. Salovey and J. Mayer; D. Goleman) have demonstrated that the ability to recognize emotions, manage them, and use emotional information for problem-solving improves the quality of professional interaction and reduces the risk of destructive reactions. In the pedagogical sphere, this is reflected in teachers' ability to maintain learning motivation, prevent the escalation of conflicts, and create a favorable psychological climate. Domestic studies on professional burnout (including those based on the concepts of C. Maslach and S. Jackson) emphasize that chronic emotional strain, high responsibility, and a lack of support resources lead to exhaustion and reduced effectiveness. Accordingly, teachers' psychological competence is viewed as a resource for burnout prevention, encompassing self-regulation skills, stress resistance, constructive coping strategies, and the ability to establish healthy boundaries in professional communication.

Contemporary literature also highlights the influence of socio-cultural and organizational factors on teachers' competence development. Research in organizational psychology and educational management shows that professional competencies are formed not in isolation but within the context of the school environment, including leadership style, the culture of interaction within the teaching staff, the availability of mentoring, professional development systems, and opportunities for professional exchange. Foreign studies on professional teacher communities and collaborative learning practices (for example, within the framework of continuous professional development approaches) demonstrate that sustainable competence growth is ensured when teachers have access to feedback, supervision, methodological support, and psychological resources. In Russian practice, similar ideas are implemented through models of methodological associations, pedagogical workshops, and support for novice teachers; however, scientific sources indicate the need to strengthen the psychological component of professional development, as competency deficits often manifest not in subject preparation but in interaction management, emotional workload, and pedagogical risk handling.

The analysis of domestic and foreign studies thus allows us to conclude that the formation of professional competencies in upper secondary school teachers is a multilevel psychological process that integrates cognitive, motivational, emotional-volitional, communicative, and reflective components. The Russian scientific tradition enriches this issue through activity-based and cultural-historical interpretations of development, while foreign approaches reinforce it by emphasizing competency models, self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, and reflective practice. Taken together, these studies provide a theoretical foundation for designing effective programs aimed at developing the psychological competence of upper secondary school teachers, improving the quality of education, supporting teachers' psychological well-being, and preventing professional deformations.



Discussion

When considering the psychological aspects of the formation of professional competencies in upper secondary school teachers, it should be emphasized that this process is complex and dynamic in nature, being determined both by the individual psychological characteristics of the teacher and by the socio-pedagogical conditions of professional activity. In contemporary educational realities, upper secondary school teachers find themselves in a situation of multitasking, where they are required not only to possess a high level of subject knowledge but also to demonstrate well-developed skills of psychological self-regulation, reflection, effective communication, and emotionally competent interaction with students. This makes it possible to view teachers' professional competence not as a static set of knowledge and skills, but as a continuously developing integrative personal quality.

The psychological component acquires particular significance in the structure of professional competencies, as it ensures teachers' adaptation to conditions of increased emotional and cognitive load typical of upper secondary education. Senior students are at a stage of active personal and professional self-determination, which is accompanied by internal contradictions, emotional instability, and heightened sensitivity to pedagogical influence. In this context, a teacher with a well-developed psychological competence is able not only to effectively transmit academic content but also to act as a significant adult who provides support, creates conditions for personal growth, and facilitates the development of mature forms of responsibility in students. Practical experience indicates that insufficient psychological readiness of teachers to work with this age group may lead to increased conflict, decreased learning motivation, and the formation of negative attitudes toward the educational process.



During the discussion, it is important to note that the formation of professional competencies in upper secondary school teachers is closely linked to the development of their professional identity and the awareness of the meanings of pedagogical activity. Psychological science emphasizes that the stability of a teacher's professional position is determined by the level of internal motivation, value orientations, and the ability to align personal goals with the objectives of the educational environment. Teachers who possess a pronounced level of professional reflection generally demonstrate higher pedagogical effectiveness, as they are capable of critically evaluating their own actions, adjusting interaction strategies, and consciously constructing trajectories of professional development. In this regard, reflective competence serves as an essential condition for preventing professional deformation and stagnation.

A significant place in the discussion is occupied by the issue of emotional stability and the prevention of professional burnout. Research shows that upper secondary school teachers are exposed to chronic stress associated with high responsibility for educational outcomes, examination pressure, and the need for continuous monitoring of the learning process. In the absence of well-developed emotional self-regulation skills and support from



the professional community, this may lead to a depletion of emotional resources, loss of interest in work, and the formation of a formalized attitude toward pedagogical activity. In this aspect, psychological competence performs a compensatory function, enabling teachers to recognize their own emotional states, apply constructive coping strategies in a timely manner, and maintain psychological well-being.

The discussion also demonstrates that the formation of professional competencies cannot be considered outside the context of the educational organization and the professional development system. Empirical evidence indicates that the most effective models of professional development are those that integrate psychological support, group reflection, supervision, and practice-oriented training. Under such conditions, teachers gain opportunities not only to expand professional knowledge but also to reflect on their own experience, share professional difficulties, and find psychologically grounded solutions to pedagogical challenges. This is particularly relevant for upper secondary education, where teachers must respond flexibly to students' individual characteristics and rapidly changing educational demands.

Thus, the discussion of theoretical analysis results allows us to assert that the psychological aspects of forming professional competencies in upper secondary school teachers represent a key factor in improving the quality of the educational process. The development of psychological competence contributes not only to increased professional effectiveness but also to the creation of a psychologically safe and development-oriented educational environment. In this regard, further research and practical initiatives should focus on integrating psychological knowledge into teacher education and support systems, ensuring sustainable professional development and enhancing the effectiveness of contemporary education.

Conclusion



The conducted analysis of the psychological aspects of forming professional competencies in upper secondary school teachers leads to the conclusion that this issue is complex and interdisciplinary in nature and occupies an important place in the system of modern psychological and pedagogical knowledge. In the context of educational transformation, increased information load, and the growing complexity of the socio-psychological characteristics of senior students, teachers' professional activity requires not only a high level of subject and methodological training but also well-developed psychological competence as a key resource of pedagogical effectiveness.

It has been established that the professional competencies of upper secondary school teachers are formed through the integration of cognitive, motivational-value, emotional-volitional, communicative, and reflective components of personality. The psychological component of these competencies performs a system-forming function, ensuring teachers' capacity for conscious regulation of professional activity, constructive interaction with students, and the preservation of psychological well-being under conditions of heightened



responsibility and stress. In this context, the development of emotional self-regulation skills, professional reflection, and stable professional motivation acquires particular importance.

The results of theoretical reflection confirm that a high level of psychological competence contributes to the prevention of professional burnout, improves the quality of pedagogical communication, and facilitates the creation of a psychologically safe educational environment. A teacher with a well-developed psychological competence is capable of responding flexibly to the individual characteristics of senior students, supporting their academic and personal motivation, and effectively accompanying processes of professional self-determination.

Overall, it can be concluded that the purposeful development of psychological aspects of professional competencies in upper secondary school teachers should be considered a priority direction within teacher education and professional development systems. The implementation of comprehensive psychological support and professional development programs will contribute to improving educational quality, ensuring sustainable professional growth of teachers, and harmonizing educational interaction in upper secondary education.

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