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Social Competence and Emotional Intelligence of Students of Education Studies and Teaching Specialties

Kompetencje społeczne i inteligencja emocjonalna studentów kierunków pedagogicznych i dydaktycznych

Key words: social competencies, diagnostics, teachers, emotional inteligence.

Słowa kluczowe: kompetencje społeczne, diagnosytka, nauczyiele, emocje.

Abstract: Nationwide statistics provide a general answer to questions about social competence training but do not provide specific guidance for individual institutions, and that is what is needed when one strives for a positive change. The article presents psychological research conducted at Polsih University showing the level of social competences and emotional inteligence of students (future teacher).

Due to the research conducted so far regarding the shortcomings in the development of specific competences, there is a need to diagnose the state of affairs and the level of social competence and emotional intelligence of students of the last years of education studies and teaching specialties. Research will allow one to verify the hypotheses that have been put forward and to take action to improve the quality of university education. As Polish researcher M. Dziemianowicz (2012) points out, "the starting point for defining tasks for higher education in the context of shaping social competence is social diagnosis. Diagnosed in the social sciences, the problems (omissions) in the area of functioning of institutions, structures and social relations can be the starting point for building programs for shaping social competence within the NQF in higher education. " By identifying myself with this opinion, I believe that in order to be able to point to deficiencies and differences, it must first be pointed out that such things exist at all. In this case, the research included the students of the Nicolaus Copernicus University, which, on one hand, is close to me as my workplace, on the other hand, I believe that the diagnosis of all universities and teacher training institutions giving statistical results for the whole of Poland is not necessary as opposed to the diagnosis of Individual, specific facilities, combined with the analysis of the teacher education program and

subject contents. The change in the direction of education and its improvement is to be addressed and concern the deficiencies of a particular institution. Nationwide statistics provide a general answer to questions about social competence training but do not provide specific guidance for individual institutions, and that is what is needed when one strives for a positive change. Such analysis should imply a broader context and take into account the location of the institution, the labour market, as well as geographic and cultural location. Education is the kind of social practice that must meet both local and national as well as global needs. Cultural and social aspects are also indicated by M. Dziemianowicz (2012), who mentions the need to follow both practices in other countries as well as the socio-cultural diagnosis of threats and problems that can be addressed through and thanks to education. Therefore, the practical results of the study is of great importance because they are not just dry facts and statistics but specific guidelines showing what needs to be changed to improve the quality of teacher education. Further application areas will be discussed.

Methodological assumptions of own research. The Subject of the research is the level of social competence of students of teaching specialties and a control group – students of non-teacher specialties.

The aim of the research is to determine the level of social competence of students of teacher specialties completing the speciality courses at the third year of undergraduate programme and second year of master studies and compare them with the control group.

Theoretical foundations of the research

The theoretical basis for the research is Michael Argyle's (1991) social competence concept, who, by formulating his own definition of social competence, drew attention to the fact that there are many social situations that require the activation of various social skills. A person who effectively functions in social exposure situations and is effectively dealing with public speaking does not necessarily have to deal equally well in interpersonal situations requiring close relationships with other people. On the basis of the categorization of the situations requiring the aforementioned competence, the diagnostic items of the Social Competence Questionnaire (SCQ) were established (A. Matczak 2007).

Main research questions:

1. What is the level of social competence and emotional intelligence among students completing the teaching specialty at the undergraduate and graduate level?
2. Is the level of social competence and emotional intelligence among students completing the teaching specialty higher than the level of competence and emotional intelligence of students of other specialties?
3. What are the correlations between volunteering activities and social competence and emotional intelligence?
4. Do people who see the benefits of social competence workshops have a higher level of competence than people who do not see the need of such workshops?

Main hypothesis:
There is a link between the level of social competence of students of teaching specialty and other specialties.

Variables

Dependent variable – social competence, emotional intelligence
Independent variable – teaching specialty, other specialties, degree, volunteering.

Research methods and tools

The research study used the method of quantitative research; to measure social competence a self-examination test- Social Competence Questionnaire (SCQ), A. Matczak (2007), was used. To analyse emotional intelligence, the self-examination Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ), A. Matczak (2008), was used.

The SCQ questionnaire consists of a list of 90 items of which 60 are diagnostic items. Most diagnostic items consist of three factor scales:
I: Competences that determine the effectiveness of intimate behavior
ES: Competences that determine the effectiveness of behavior in social exposure situations
A: Competences that determine the effectiveness in situations requiring assertiveness.

The SCQ questionnaire is reliable and has got high internal consistency coefficients. The relevance of the questionnaire was mainly confirmed by factor analysis and intergroup comparisons. Sten scores are developed for high school students (15–19 years old), university students and working adults. [1] SCQ can be used both for research purposes and – as an auxiliary tool – in diagnostic practice (clinical counseling, career counseling) and for selective purposes. For this reason, it is an ideal tool for examining the social competence of future teachers.

EIQ questionnaire "serves to measure emotional intelligence, understood as the ability to recognize, understand and control one's own and others' emotions, and the ability to effectively use emotions in managing oneself and others" (Matczak 2008, p. 34).

It consists of 33 items, which are statements that the respondent must evaluate on a scale of 1–5, from "I strongly disagree" to "I strongly agree". A significant number of statements can be categorized as abilities or skills, constituting emotional intelligence consistent with Salovey's and Mayer's concept (Matczak 2008, p. 34).

The questionnaire is reliable, has got satisfactory internal consistency and absolute stability. Accuracy was demonstrated by the analysis of intergroup differences and the correlation between EIQ and other tools for measuring intelligence, personality and social competence. Standards: for junior high school and secondary school students, university students and adults aged 15–19 and 20–54 (national trials). The questionnaire is used primarily for research purposes.

To sum up, the social competences that will be explored, are complex skills that determine the effectiveness of coping with specific types of social situations, acquired by an individual in social training. In particular, these are: competences determining

the effectiveness of intimate behavior, close interpersonal relations (I), competences determining the effectiveness of behaviors in social exposures (E), and competences determining the behavior in situations requiring assertiveness (A) (Matczak, 2001).

Research area and organization. The research conducted among the students of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń; all students of teaching specialties, and randomly selected students of other specialties as a comparable number of respondents.

The research was carried out in the academic years of 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 at the Nicolaus Copernicus University; 300 people of different majors were analysed, including 147 education studies students, 64 people from teaching specialties and 81 students majoring in disciplines other that education studies and teaching specialty. The primary application area is self-assessment. Students at Nicolaus Copernicus University were given a diagnostic instrument that helped them to question their own social competencies with regard to the teaching profession. In the study I rely on self-descpriptions of students. I'm aware that this kind of research has some methodological limitations. It is obvious that self-description of competencies or self-perceptions of behavior and professional success are not identical to actual behavior. This is general problem in this field of research.

Quantitative analysis of data. Quantitative analysis of data was performed by r-Pearson correlation, variance analysis and regression analysis methods. The correlation between the results obtained in the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (EIQ), the Social Competence Questionnaire (SCQ), the year of study and the age of the respondents was verified by the r-Pearson correlation method. The analysis showed no significant correlation between the age of the respondents and the results of both questionnaires. The only statistically significant correlation occurred between the study year and the exposure scale of the social competence questionnaire: $r(293) = 0.142$; $P = 0.015$. It turned out that the higher the year of study, the higher were the exposure skills and ability of dealing with the evaluation of other people of the analysed students.

The analysis of variance verified differences in the level of results obtained in the EIQ and SCQ questionnaires by men and women and in relation to variables concerning workshops and volunteering. Table 1 presents the results of comparisons for emotional intelligence. The analysis makes it possible to conclude that the variable discriminating in a statistically significant way the level of emotional intelligence in the respondents was the answer to the question whether the workshop should be included in the study program. Respondents who saw the need to include the workshops in the study program obtained higher scores in the emotional intelligence questionnaire than those who did not see that need.

For the other analysed variables, no significant differences were found. In the case of volunteering workshops, however, the effect was at the trend level. It turned out that those who continuously worked as volunteers had a higher level of emotional intelligence than those who undertook only one-off volunteering. Similar analyzes were

Table 1. Differences in the level of emotional intelligence among the respondents

Emotional Intelligence	N	M*	F*	p
Total	248			
Gender				
Female	219	121.42	2.689	0.102
Male	29	116.93		
Participation in workshops				
Participated	111	122.54	2.223	0.137
did not participate	141	119.9		
Were the workshops included in the study program?				
Yes	78	122.5	0.002	0.962
No	33	122.64		
Should workshops be included in the study program?				
Yes	219	121.54	8.655	0.004
No	28	113.43		
Does the respondent participate in volunteering activities?				
Yes	156	122.01	2.391	0.123
No	97	119.23		
Volunteer workshops				
Continuous	87	124.28	2.891	0.092
One-off	37	119.68		

*M – mean, F – the result of one-way analysis of variance. Own research and elaboration, Malgorzata Banasiak.

made for the scale I of the Social Competence Questionnaire. The analysis of variance showed that participation neither in workshops or nor in volunteering differentiated the respondents in terms of social competence in close contact situations. The only statistically significant difference occurred in the gender of the respondents. It turned out that the analysed women are better in coping with intimate situations, compared to the analysed men.

Table 2 shows the analysis according to which those who participated in the workshops were coping better in social exposure situations compared to those who did not participate in the workshops . The same was the direction of differences for volunteers. Those who participated in volunteering activities were characterized by higher competencies measured by the ES scale of the SCQ questionnaire compared to those who did not. Analyzes were also made for the A scale of the SCQ questionnaire. It turned out that only gender in a statistically significant way differentiated the examined respondents in terms of their assertiveness in situations that require it. Men had a higher level of social competence as measured by A scale of the SCQ questionnaire compared to the analysed women.

The analysis showed that the analysed respondents did not differ in the level of social competence depending on gender, participation in workshops or volunteering activities. There was only one effect at the trend level. It turned out that participants in

Table 2. Differences in the level of social competence in social exposures in the respondents

Social competence – scale E	N	M*	F*	p
Total	257			
Gender				
Female	257	52.22	0.007	0.933
Male	31	52.35		
Participation in workshops				
Participated	126	53.44	4.497	0.035
did not participate	166	51.3		
Were the workshops included in the study program?				
Yes	88	52.93	1.160	0.284
No	37	54.86		
Should workshops be included in the study program?				
Yes	252	52.4	0.940	0.333
No	33	50.85		
Does the respondent participate in volunteering activities?				
Yes	181	53.22	5.636	0.018
No	112	50.79		
Volunteering				
Continuous	103	53.94	719	0.398
One-off	40	52.6		

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volunteering activities had a slightly higher level of social competence than those who did not volunteer.

Further analyzes were conducted to determine whether students of different majors differ in terms of emotional intelligence and social competence. Since only one respondent was majoring in exact science, which was physics, the analysis was omitted for the type of study: exact and for the major: physics. Firstly, differences in the level of emotional intelligence in the studied groups were examined. The results are shown in Table 3 below.

Bonferroni's post-hoc analysis showed that statistically significant differences in the emotional intelligence are found between those who study different subjects, those who chose education studies and those who have a teaching specialty. Both students of teaching specialty and education studies were characterized by higher emotional intelligence than the rest of the respondents. However, there were no statistically significant differences between the students of teaching specialty and education studies.

One-way analysis of variance showed the existence of an effect at the level of statistical trend for the type of studies. It turned out that the students of social studies as education studies or psychology have a slightly higher level of emotional intelligence than students of the humanities. Differences in the level of emotional intelligence between students of different majors were statistically significant. Bonferroni's post-hoc

Table 3. Major and emotional intelligence

Emotional Intelligence	N	M*	F*	p
Kind of studies:				
Education studies	132	122.47	7.356	0.001
Teaching specialty	52	124.23		
Other	70	115.79		
Type of studies				
Humanities: philology, history, journalism, political science, philosophy, sociology	121	119.36	3.138	0.078
Social: education studies, psychology	132	122.47		
Major				
Special education studies	58	123.93	3.055	0.007
Education studies	9	123.67		
Social work	65	121		
Philology	51	124.27		
Administration	17	112.29		
Political Science / Journalism	30	118.3		
Law	23	115.09		

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analysis makes it clear that the administration students have a significantly lower level of emotional intelligence than students of education studies or philology. The same comparison was made for the social competence variable – coping in intimate situations. Results are shown in Table 4 below. The analysis showed that there are no statistically significant differences in the social competence in intimate situations among students of different majors. The results of comparisons in social competence in social exposure situations are presented in the following table. The analyzes indicated that the students of different majors had statistically significant differences in the level of social competence in social exposure situations. Bonferroni's post-hoc tests showed that the biggest differences concerned the administration students who had a much lower level of social competence as measured by the ES scale than students of special education and political science / journalism.

The analysis revealed the existence of differences at the level of statistical trend in the level of assertiveness in students of education studies and a teaching specialty. Students of education studies had a higher level of assertiveness than students of a teaching specialty. It also turned out that students of social studies had a higher level of assertiveness than students of the faculties of the humanities. One-way analysis of variance also showed the existence of statistically significant differences in the level of assertiveness between students of the particular majors. Bonferroni's post-hoc tests showed that students of special education had a much higher degree of assertiveness than law students. There were also analyzes comparing the general level of social competence in students of different majors.

Table 4. Major and social competence – scale I.

Social competence – scale I	N	M*	F*	p
Kind of studies:				
Education studies	146	45.01	0.949	0.388
Teaching specialty	62	44.21		
Other	80	43.84		
Type of studies				
Humanities: philology, history, journalism, political science, philosophy, sociology	141	43.96	1.931	0.166
social, education studies, psychology	146	45		
Major				
Special education studies	69	45.9	0.778	0.588
Education studies	10	44.5		
Social work	67	44.16		
Philology	61	44.11		
Administration	19	43.89		
Political Science / Journalism	29	44.14		
Law	32	43.53		

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Summary. Answering the research questions, the analyzes showed differences at the level of statistical trend in the overall level of social competences in students of different majors. According to Bonferroni's post-hoc analysis, significant differences in the level of social competence exist between students of special education and social work, with the students of theformer showing a higher level of social competence than students of the latter. WHY? It may be a matter of different curriculum and programmes or just different experience and practice that help to gain higher level of social competences. Students from comparative group, not involved in any pedagogical course (administration, political sciences) have lower level of social competences, emotional intelligence and do not see the need for volunteer work or the benefits of it. Very interesting is that responders with high level of emotional inteligences understood the importnace of volunteer work in raising the level of social competences much more that those with smaller level of EI.

What is most optimistic, is that students of all programmes and sepcialities which could be involved in teaching proffession in the future have high level of social skills after finnishing their courses at Nicolaus Copernicus University. No matter if it is educational course for future teachers or educational studies in social sciences, special education or pedagogy.

Since teachers spend several hours a day in interactions with other people, it seems plausible to assume that their social competencies are a vital foundation for their professional success. Competencies is a common basis for all national and European educational change initiatives, and for all, contributing to the development of education – students, employers, education providers. General competencies necessity is expressed in their different actions (Whiddett S., Hollyforde S., 2003).

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