

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF MODERN PSYCHOLOGY

PROGRAMME FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPETENCE OF THE EMPLOYEES OF HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES OF THE CENTRAL EXECUTIVE BODIES

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Abstract. *The article reveals peculiarities of the development of psychological competence of the employees of human resources services of central executive bodies under the conditions of changes and transformations. Considering the fact that success of reform is heavily influenced by quality of human resources management in government bodies, it is necessary to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of human resources services, in particular, by developing psychological competence of such employees. Based on previous ascertaining study of peculiarities of the development of psychological competence, an in-person and remote programme "Psychological Competence of Successful HR" has been established, which consists of four modules. The objective of the programme is development of psychological competence of the employees of human resources services to respond to modern challenges in a constructive way and to work effectively under the conditions of changes. The programme length is seventy two academic hours and it includes theoretical, in-person and remote parts. The programme was tested by conducting a forming experiment. To analyse the results of testing, two groups of criteria as to dynamics of personality development and dynamics of successful professional activities were applied. Statistically significant changes as to certain characteristics of psychological competence were revealed using Wilcoxon criterion. Thus, it has been proved that the use of in-person and remote programme of the development of psychological competence of the employees of human resources services of central executive bodies contributes to a formation of positive self-attitude, development of communicative and emotional competence and stimulates professional self-realization.*

Keywords: *professional development, psychological competence, public officer, vocational training, programme testing, mixed form of study, human resources services, public service.*

JEL Classification: H10, I0, Y8

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Introduction. Competence management and its development are an integral part of reforms, organizational and cultural changes in public service. Modern challenges require improvement and competence development of public officers, in particular, employees of human resources services of government bodies. Psychological competence plays a meaningful role in effective work of such employees and their professional self-realization. The level of development of psychological competence of the employees should comply with the requirements and tasks performed by the employee, help him to achieve set goals, handle new challenges constructively and overcome difficulties.

Thus, the programme of development of psychological competence of the employees of human resources services requires the development and testing, which will correspond to the current problems, will be based on modern research, will take

into account the peculiarities of activities of public service employees and will be easy to use.

Literature review. Peculiarities of the formation and development of psychological competence are revealed in the works of such scientists as O. Ageiko [3], N. Aliushyna [4], L. Volnova [7], N. Kuzyk [16], K. Kraiger [18], E. Matuska [19], I. Ogorodnichuk [13], N. Proskurka [14], I. Syngaivska [15], A. Fradynska [16] and others.

Psychological competence of the employee can be formed both spontaneously and during special training. An important condition for the formation of psychological competence is creating a special social environment in the training system which triggers the relevant social and psychological mechanisms which internalize and ensure psychological safety of the personality [12].

Many member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development use competence management in their training and development programmes, including Australia, South Korea, Netherlands, Belgium and USA. The Australian Public Service Commission has developed a separate HR Capabilities Development Program, which focuses on developing skills that will help to effectively implement strategic personnel management [20].

Professional competence of public officers in Ukraine is improved by means of vocational training. According to the Law of Ukraine “On Public Service”, vocational training is acquisition of knowledge, abilities and skills ensuring the appropriate level of professional qualification of the public officer for his professional activities [1].

Advanced training is carried out according to the programmes, which by education content are divided into general and special. Expected learning outcomes by general and special competence development programmes should cover professional knowledge and professional competences, required for the participants of vocational training to properly perform their tasks and duties [2]. At the same time, there is no currently comprehensive programme for the development of psychological competence of the employees of human resources services that would meet modern challenges.

Aims. The aim of the article is to cover the structure and results of testing the programme for the development of psychological competence of the employees of human resources services of central executive bodies.

Methods. To achieve this goal, a formative experiment was conducted in February 2020 with employees of personnel management services of central executive bodies.

To conduct a formative experiment, 2 groups out of 12 people were formed – control and experimental. Two people were elected from each unit of personnel management services of six state bodies, which have approximately the same socio-demographic characteristics (Table 1).

In the experimental group, special training of staff was conducted in order to develop psychological competence.

Table 1. Comparison of experimental and control groups by socio-demographic characteristics

Socio-demographic characteristics	Experimental		Control	
Sex				
Men	25%		33.3%	
Women	75%		66.7%	
Age				
26-35 years	33.3%		50%	
36-45 years	50%		33.3%	
46-55 years	16.7%		16.7%	
Position category				
B	33.3%		33.3%	
C	66.7%		66.7%	
Work experience:	in the civil service	in the personnel management service	in the civil service	in the personnel management service
up to 1 year	0%	16.7%	16.7%	25%
2-3 years	16.7%	25%	16.7%	16.7%
4-5 years	8.3%	33.3%	8.3%	16.7%
6-10 years	8.3%	8.3%	8.3%	33.3%
more than 11 years	66.7%	16.7%	50%	8.3%

To study the effectiveness of the implemented program, the first and the second diagnostic sections were performed and quantitative and qualitative analysis was performed based on two groups of criteria.

The first group of criteria included the dynamics of personality development, in particular, such components of psychological competence of employees as professional self-esteem, communicative competence and emotional intelligence. The following psychodiagnostic methods were used for this purpose:

- adapted modified questionnaire A. Borisyuk (modification by K. Ushakova) [5];
- "Diagnosis of communication features" (V. Nedashkivsky) [8];
- "Diagnosis of "emotional intelligence" (N. Hall) [17].

The second group of criteria included the dynamics of professional success, in particular the development of professional self-realization and employee involvement. The following psychodiagnostic methods were used for this purpose:

- Questionnaire of professional self-realization of O. Kokun [10];
- Utrecht scale of involvement in the work of W. Schaufeli and A. Becker [9].

In order to assess the impact of the program on the characteristics of psychological competence and success of professional activities of the subjects, the Wilcoxon Criterion was used.

Statistical data processing was performed using the statistical data processing package SPSS, version 21.0.

Results. Based on the obtained preliminary empirical results of the study of 228 employees of human resources services of 68 central executives bodies, the programme for the development of psychological competence has been created and tested.

During the programme development, the results of ascertaining stage of the research were taken into account, during which:

- causal links between the level of psychological competence of the employees of human resources services and the level of psychological indicators of performance are established, as a result of which the components of psychological competence of the employee affecting performance are identified by correlation and regression analysis;

- a framework of psychological competence of the employees of human resources services of central executive bodies is built, which includes five competencies as a part of psychological competence: communicative, emotional, social, value-motivational and autopsychological;

- peculiarities and types of perception of the employees of their professional activity are investigated;

- factors of psychological competence of the employees are identified.

While developing the programme, general scientific and methodological approaches and principles the preparation and holding trainings are taken into account.

In particular, the programme is based on the following principles:

- 1) activity - encouraging participants to actively express their position, involving them in active implementation of training tasks;

- 2) reflexivity - providing feedback, focusing on the process of cognition and self-analysis;

- 3) voluntariness and responsibility - everyone participates in training voluntarily and is partly responsible for the result of work, which certainly depends on the degree of his involvement in process;

- 4) creativity - a manifestation of creative approach to solving problems;

- 5) openness and trust - taking into account interests, feelings and emotions of the participants of interaction, creating an atmosphere of security and trust in the group;

- 6) confidentiality - personal information is confidential [6].

During the development of the program, L. Mitina's model of constructive behaviour change was taken into consideration, which includes the stages and processes that occur at each phase of training: preparation, awareness, reassessment, action [11].

The programme "Psychological Competence of Successful HR" is designed to develop psychological competence of the employees of human resources services for a constructive response to modern challenges and effective work under the conditions of changes.

Based on the aims, the following programme targets are determined:

- 1) mastering knowledge about the content and role of psychological competence in professional activities;

- 2) research and analysis of the level and factors of development of one's own psychological competence;

- 3) mastering practical skills, in particular, communication and interaction, resolving conflict situations, methods of emotion regulation, emotion recognition and

influence, defining coping strategies against stress, self-organization, use of personal and time resources;

4) mastering the psychological tools that can be used in professional activities.

The training program is developed in the following stages:

1) analysis of the results of the study of psychological competence of employees of personnel management services;

2) determination of the purpose and tasks of the training program;

3) determination of the form and methods of increasing psychological competence;

4) development of the structure and content of the training program;

5) determination of time costs;

6) preparation of materials for the remote part of the program and independent work, placing them on the training platform;

7) preparation of face-to-face training classes;

8) identification of tools for assessing the effectiveness of program implementation.

The form of the program is mixed (in-person part and remote).

The scope of the program “Psychological Competence of Successful HR” was 72 academic hours, of which 16 hours - remote theoretical part, 32 - in-person part, 24 - remote practical part. However, depending on the needs, each training session can be held as an independent training.

The general structure of the program “Psychological Competence of Successful HR” is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. The structure of the program
“Psychological Competence of Successful HR”**

Modules	Number of academic hours
Module 1. “The work of HR in government: challenges and prospects for development”	18
In-person part part	8
Remote theoretical part	4
Remote practical part	6
Module 2. “Psychological competence of HR: communication and interaction”	18
Remote theoretical part	4
In-person part part	8
Remote practical part	6
Module 3. “Psychological competence of HR: emotional intelligence”	18
Remote theoretical part	4
In-person part part	8
Remote practical part	6
Module 4. “Resources, goal setting and focus on self-development”	18
Remote theoretical part	4
In-person part part	8
Remote practical part	6
Total	72

The remote part of the program was conducted on the basis of the online platform “Community of Practices: Sustainable Development” <https://udl.despro.org.ua/>, which opened an online course “Psychological Competence of Successful HR”.

The in-person part included training exercises to acquire necessary practical skills and experience. During the training, information and problem-searching methods, training psychological exercises and other practical tasks were used.

In the period between in-person sessions the participants of training worked remotely and performed the tasks envisaged for individual studying.

The analysis of the results of the programme testing on control and experimental groups revealed statistically valid changes on certain characteristics of psychological competence by certain criteria.

To determine dynamics of the development of psychological competence of personality, analysis of indicators of **professional self-attitude, communicative and emotional competence** was made in the control and experimental groups before and after the programme implementation.

Presence and absence of changes as to certain indicators of professional self-attitude were determined using Wilcoxon criterion in the experimental and control groups (Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of professional self-attitude before and after the experiment

№	Indicator	Experimental		Control	
		The value of T-test Wilcoxon	Significance level	The value of T-test Wilcoxon	Significance level
1	Integral indicator of professional self-attitude	-3.084	0.002	-1.190	0.234
2	Expected attitude from others as a professional	0	1	0	1
3	Self-liking for oneself as a professional	-3.017	0.003	-0,138	0.890
4	Self-respect as a professional	-3.217	0.001	-0.491	0.623
5	Self-consistency as a professional	-0.632	0.527	-1.342	0.180
6	Self-understanding as a professional	-3.207	0.001	-0.577	0.564
7	Self-acceptance as a professional	-3.317	0.001	-0.791	0.429
8	Self-esteem as a professional	0	1	-0.541	0.589
9	Self-doubt as a professional	-0.577	0.564	-1.633	0.102
10	Self-control	-1.414	0.157	-0.073	0.942
11	Negative self-esteem as a professional	-2.810	0.005	-1.732	0.083
12	Self-blame as a professional	-0.087	0.931	-0.812	0.417

Obtained results show the difference between the control and experimental groups as to integral indicator of self-attitude and such its characteristics as self-

liking for oneself as a professional, self-respect as a professional, self-understanding as a professional, self-acceptance as a professional, negative self-esteem as a professional.

It was determined that the results of influence in the experimental group improved self-attitude of employees as a professional ($p < 0.05$), in particular, increased self-liking, self-respect, self-understanding, self-acceptance and self-esteem as a professional towards the positive pole has changed.

The indicators of **communicative competence** in the control and experimental groups before and after the programme implementation have been established (Table 4).

Table 4. Comparison of communicative competence indicators before and after the experiment

№	Indicator	Experimental		Control	
		The value of T-test Wilcoxon	Significance level	The value of T-test Wilcoxon	Significance level
1	Ability to understand the interlocutor	-2.823	0.005	-1.725	0.084
2	Ability to perceive and understand oneself (tendency to reflection)	-3.064	0.002	-0.205	0.838
3	Ability to build interpersonal boundaries	-2.731	0.006	0	1
4	Peculiarities of messages in communication	-2.820	0.005	-1.015	0.310
5	Manifestation of general reflection in communication	-2.951	0.003	-0.351	0.725
6	Manifestation of the process of empathy in communication	-1.737	0.082	-1.807	0.071
7	“Targeting” in communication	-2.514	0.012	-0.863	0.388
8	adequate understanding	-2.288	0.022	-1.222	0.222
9	Ccreation of interpersonal boundaries in communication	-2.031	0.042	0	1
10	Manifestation of openness in communication	-2.438	0.015	-0.431	0.666
11	The process of attention allocation to all participants of communication	-2.456	0.014	-0.359	0.719
12	Reflection of thinking in the moment of communication	-1.179	0.238	-0.302	0.763
13	Reflection of the sphere of desires at the time of communication	-0.711	0.477	-0.707	0.480
14	Reflection of the sphere of feelings	-3.017	0.003	-1.459	0.145
15	Reflection of bodily sensations	-2.751	0.006	-0.216	0.829

According to the results of influence in the experimental group, the level of development of such indicators as ability to understand the interlocutor, ability to perceive and understand oneself (tendency to reflection), ability to build interpersonal boundaries, peculiarities of messages in communication, manifestation of general reflection in communication, “targeting” in communication, adequate understanding, creation of interpersonal boundaries in communication, manifestation of openness in communication, the process of attention allocation to all participants of communication, reflection of the sphere of feelings, reflection of bodily sensations ($p < 0.05$).

The indicators of **emotional competence** in the control and experimental groups before and after the programme implementation have been established (Table 5).

Table 5. Comparison of indicators of emotional competence before and after the experiment

№	Indicator	Experimental		Control	
		The value of T-test Wilcoxon	Significance level	The value of T-test Wilcoxon	Significance level
1	Emotional intelligence	-3.065	0.002	-0.659	0.510
2	Emotional awareness	-3.083	0.002	-0.284	0.776
3	Management of your emotions	-3.066	0.002	-0.415	0.679
4	Self-motivation	-2.425	0.015	-0.085	0.932
5	Empathy	-2.206	0.027	-0.256	0.798
6	Management of emotions of other people	-2.209	0.027	-0.535	0.593

By the results of influence in the experimental group the level of emotional intelligence and its components has increased: emotional awareness, management of your emotions, self-motivation, empathy, management of emotions of other people ($p < 0.05$).

In the control group, no statistically significant changes in professional self-attitude, communicative and emotional competence have been revealed.

As to the second group of criteria, statistically significant changes in the development of **psychological indicators of successful professional activities** have been established in the control and experimental group before and after the programme.

The development of signs of **professional self-realization** has been established. The Wilcoxon Criterion was used to determine presence and absence of changes in individual indicators of emotional competence in the experimental and control groups (Table 6).

According to the results of influence in the experimental group, the development of general level of professional self-realization, internal and external professional types of self-realization and their features such as satisfaction with own professional achievements, formation of own “life-professional space”, use of professional experience and achievements by other specialists, disclosure of personal potential and abilities in the profession, manifestation of high level of creativity in professional activities are observed ($p < 0.05$).

Table 6. Comparison of the level of signs of professional self-realization before and after the experiment

№	Indicator	Experimental		Control	
		The value of T-test Wilcoxon	Significance level	The value of T-test Wilcoxon	Significance level
1	<i>Professional self-realization</i>	-3.076	0.002	-0.419	0.675
2	<i>Intra-professional form of self-realization</i>	-2.961	0.003	-0.250	0.803
3	The need for professional development	-2.829	0.005	-0.073	0.942
4	Existence of the project of own professional development	-0.740	0.459	-0.216	0.829
5	Predominant satisfaction with own professional achievements	-2.963	0.003	-0.087	0.931
6	Constant setting of new professional goals	-0.333	0.739	-0.973	0.330
7	Formation of own “life-professional space”	-3,065	0.002	-0.171	0.865
8	<i>External professional form of self-realization</i>	-1.502	0.133	-1.311	0.190
9	Achieving professional goals	-1.845	0.065	-0.284	0.776
10	Recognition of the achievements of the specialist by the professional community	-1.025	0.305	-0.787	0.431
11	Use of professional experience and achievements by other specialists	-2.989	0.003	-2.156	0.031
12	Disclosure of personal potential and abilities in the profession	-2.816	0.005	-0.181	0.856
13	Manifestation of high level of creativity in professional activities are observed	-3.062	0.002	-0.597	0.551

Statistically significant change in the development of such a feature of professional self-realization as the usage of professional experience and achievements of other specialists was also found in the control group ($p < 0.05$). Thus, we can assume that the development of this feature was influenced by other external factors but not the programme applied during the experiment.

No statistically significant differences were found in the control group with regard to other signs.

The development of employee **engagement** characteristics has been established (Table 7).

Table 7. Comparison of the level of involvement before and after the experiment

№	Indicator	Experimental		Control	
		The value of T-test Wilcoxon	Significance level	The value of T-test Wilcoxon	Significance level
1	Energy	-2.324	0.020	-1.823	0.068
2	Devotion	-2.814	0.005	0	1
3	Absorption	-2.670	0.005	-0.933	0.351

According to the results of influence in the experimental group, the level of energy, devotion and absorption has increased ($p < 0.05$). There were no statistically significant changes in the indicators of employee involvement in the control group.

Discussion. In modern conditions of professional activity of public officers it is important to effectively organize the process of improving professional competence, in particular, implementation of the most meaningful and practical programme by minimal time. In addition, in connection with the coronavirus COVID-19, quarantine has been established throughout Ukraine. A significant number of public officers have switched to remote or combined work. That is why today distance and mixed (full-time and distance using special Internet platforms, websites, etc.) forms of training of public officers are of special importance.

The programme testing proves that development of psychological competence of the employees of human resources services is possible when using a mixed in-person and remote form. Remote part of the program allows employees to acquire new knowledge, independently perform diagnostic and practical exercises. In-person part in the form of training provides an opportunity to gain new social experience, master practical skills and implement them in a specially created safe training environment, as well as further analyse the independent tasks of employees.

Taking into consideration mentioned above, the programme for the development of psychological competence contributes to:

- formation of positive self-attitude, in particular, increase of self-liking as a professional, self-respect, self-understanding and self-acceptance as a professional, as well as shifting one's self-assessment as a professional towards the positive pole;
- development of communicative skills of the employee, in particular such indicators as ability to understand the interlocutor, ability to perceive and understand oneself (tendency to reflection), ability to build interpersonal boundaries, "targeting" in communication, adequate understanding, manifestation of openness in communication, attention distribution to all participants of communication;
- development of emotional intelligence.

It has been established that the development of professional competence stimulates professional self-realization of the employee and increases his involvement in work, in particular, increases energy, dedication and absorption.

Conclusion. Thus, testing of the program "Psychological Competence of Successful HR" indicates the possibility of its dissemination for use during the professional training of the employees of human resources services of government bodies. The established programme provides development of communicative and

emotional competence of the employees of human resources services, promotes formation of positive self-attitude and self-perception as a professional, stimulates professional self-realization and increases the level of involvement.

Such a programme can be used in professional training of the employees of human resources services of government bodies and integrated into other programmes of professional development of public officers.

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