

# Psychological Assessment of Professional Competence of Employees of the Educational Department of the Penitentiary System

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**Abstract:** The article provides a comparative analysis of the concept of professional competence, reveals the content of professional competencies. Professional competence is not a set of knowledge, it is the ability to solve the established problems in a professional activity. Professional competence contains several interdependent qualities: gnostic or cognitive, reflecting the presence of the required professional knowledge; Professional competence contains several interdependent qualities: (a) regulatory, allowing to apply existing professional knowledge in order to resolve professional issues; (b) reflexive–status, providing the opportunity to act in a concrete way by recognizing authority; (c) the normative characteristic, reflecting the area of opportunity, the scope of professional vision, the level of communication skills, since the expansion of knowledge or work activity is constantly performed during interaction and communication with people. The article presents the results of an empirical study assessing the professional competence of employees of the department for the educational work of the penitentiary system (PS). Professional competence consists of high general intellectual abilities, mental stability, low fatigue, flexibility of mental activity, instrumental motivation, developed professional motivation, a minimized degree of impulsive behavior, no tendency to violate generally accepted standards of behavior.

## 1. Introduction

At present, the issue of professional competence of employees is being investigated both in Russia and abroad by many scientific figures who invest in this concept a different meaning. Many scientists dealt with the problem of competence: T. Yu. Bazarov, B. S. Gershunsky, M. A. Dmitriev, S. A. Druzhilov, E. F. Zeer, A. K. Markova, A. V. Morozov, J. Raven, E. V. Rapatsevich, G. Selevenko, L. M. and S. M. Spencer, Yu. G. Tatur, F. Hedouri, V. D. Shadrikov, etc.

The concept of “competence” is defined:

- As the possession of certain knowledge, which makes it possible to judge something, awareness [18];
- The degree of correlation of knowledge, skills, and skills of individuals of a professional status to the actual level of difficulty of executable decisions and tasks performed [6];
- The skill of high-quality execution of certain operations in a area, including narrow subject knowledge, subject skills, special thinking methods, understanding of responsibility for one’s own actions [14];
- Possible personal qualities that can be accurately measured, also have a chance to show the difference between an effective and inefficient performer of one or another activity [16];
- The ability to integrate knowledge and abilities, and their application in circumstances of rapidly changing environmental conditions [19];
- The complex of professional knowledge, skills and experience, methods of performing quality work [9];
- The focus of the person, its capabilities and character, thus, a certain relation to the object of its activity [15];

- The complex of several individual qualities, abilities and distinctive features, skills and peculiarities of motivation that an individual must possess for the purpose of effective activity within the framework of different types of tasks, a certain position or a company as a whole [2];
- One of the constituents of the general culture of an individual, a complex of his worldviews and concepts of knowledge, skills that provide directional, independent activity [8];
- The accumulated property of a person, the property of his personality and the coefficient of his effective activity [17];
- Neoplasm of the subject of activity, which is formed in the process of vocational training; it is a systematic manifestation of knowledge, skills, abilities and personal qualities, which allows successfully solving functional tasks that constitute the essence of professional activity [12].

Thus, professional competence is not a simple set of knowledge, it is the ability to solve certain problems in a professional activity.

Reflecting the degree of compliance of a person with the conditions of activity, competence contains competences that imply changes in the significance of psychological components depending on the conditions of professional activity [5].

Professional competence contains several interdependent qualities: gnostic or cognitive, reflecting the presence of the required professional knowledge; regulatory, allowing to apply existing professional knowledge, with the aim of resolving professional issues; reflexive-status, providing the opportunity, by recognizing authority, to act in a concrete way; normative characteristic, reflecting the area of opportunity, the scope of professional vision, the level of communication skills, etc. [1].

The assessment of professional competence can be represented in the form of the main structural components [4]. The results of the study of the structural components of a profession are also of great importance not only for the purpose of studying employee competencies, but also for understanding the characteristics of their formation [11].

In accordance with the concept of interaction, the subject is the object of work, the profession of the PS staff refers to the profession where interaction takes place in the “person-to-person” system. For this system, we can identify such professionally important qualities that are necessary in the work:

1. Desire to communicate with people;
2. Ability to easily contact new people;
3. Friendliness;
4. Ability to restrain emotions;
5. Ability to analyze the behavior of others;
6. Ability to listen and take the position of another person;
7. Accuracy, organization;
8. Work motivation.

Thus, the psychological characteristics of the staff of the educational department of the PS determine the requirements of the profession to the intellectual, motivational, communicative, and characterological spheres of the individual.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

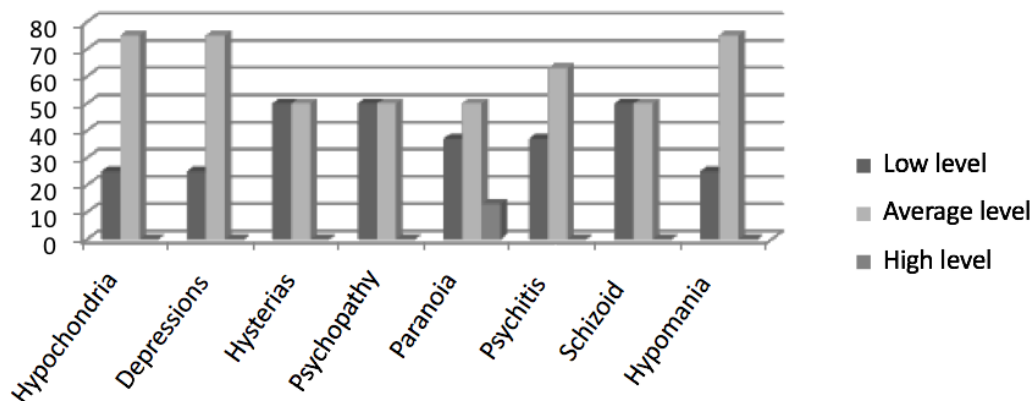
In the study, we used the following techniques:

1. The questionnaire “Mini-mult” (abbreviated version of MMPI). The purpose of the test is to identify the most common characterological personality traits caused by the conditions of activity [10].
2. Methods of diagnosis of labor motivation of V. I. Gerchikov. The test is designed to establish the type of motivation in the activity. [7].

3. The brief indicative test (V. N. Buzin, E. F. Wonderlic). It is designed to diagnose the general level of intellectual abilities. [13].
4. The test of V. F. Ryakhovsky. Test assessing the level of sociability, level of communication skills, ability to establish, maintain and maintain personal and business relationships [3].

### 3. Results

Most of the staff of the educational department of the PS have average indicators of diagnosed personality traits (Fig. 1).



**Fig. 1.** The severity of personal properties of the staff of the educational department of the PS.

Hypochondria scale: 25% of subjects – low, 75% – average level. Most of the employees are active, calmly tolerate a change of atmosphere and perfectly balance in conflicts.

Depression scale: 25% – low level, 75% – medium level. The subjects in this team are confident, capable of independent decision-making, easily tolerate failure.

Scale of hysteria: 50% – low level, 50% – medium level. Employees in this team have no pronounced propensity for neurological defensive reactions of the conversion type; there is no desire, by all means, to draw attention to oneself.

Scale of psychopathy: 50% – low level, 50% – medium level. Department staff do not possess aggression, conflict. They are not inherent touchiness, sensitivity, excitability.

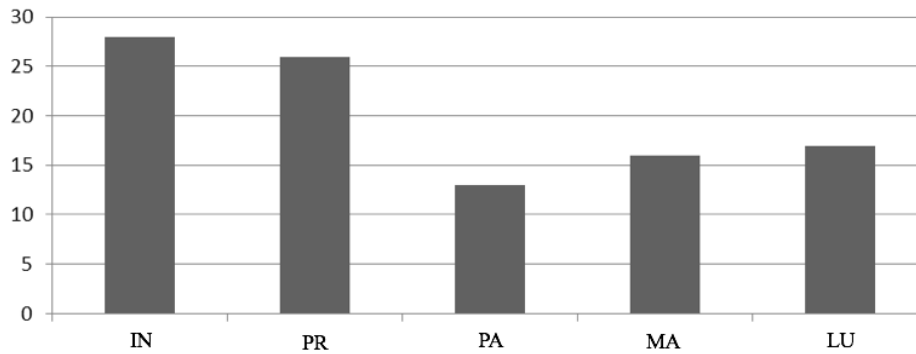
The paranoia scale: 37% – low level, 50% – medium level, 13% – high level. Most employees are not characterized by vindictiveness, aggressiveness, overestimation of their own successes, while 13% have a tendency to form overvalued ideas, frequent conflicts with others.

Psychasthenia scale: 37% – low level, 63% – medium level. Employees of the department are not peculiar (or peculiar to a small extent) anxiety, indecision.

Schizoid scale: 50% – low level, 50% – medium level. Employees do not tend to mix hypersensitivity with emotional coldness and alienation in interpersonal relationships.

Hypomania scale: 25% of subjects – low, 75% – average level. Department staff have mostly deep, sustained interests. They are endurance and perseverance.

In order to identify the labor installation, the methodology for diagnosing the labor motivation of V. I. Gerchikov was carried out (Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2.** Types of work motivation.

*Note.* IN – instrumental, PR – professional, PA – patriotic, MA – master's, LU - lumpenized.

It was revealed that, in the majority, the subjects have an instrumental type of motivation (28%) and a professional type (26%). The master's type (16%) and the patriotic type (13%) are the most poorly represented ones. The manager should be alerted to a fairly high level of the lumpen type of motivation (17%). Employees with a high level of avoidable motivation do not strive for high results in their professional activities, and the strategic goals of the organization are not of great interest to them.

The predominance of the professional type suggests that employees need professional recognition and the possibility of self-expression.

The high level of the instrumental type is associated with a considerable share of labor that is not included in the official duties of the staff, since interest in such work is replaced by their expectation of reward.

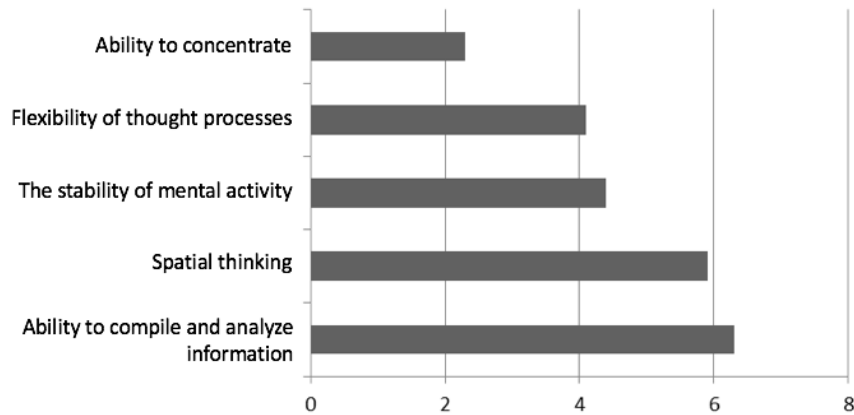
Employees with low or zero type of master's and patriotic motivation stand out against the general background. This suggests a poorly developed corporate culture in the organization and organizational values.

To diagnose the intellectual development of the staff of the department of educational work of the AIS, the BIT (Brief Indicative Test) test was used. As a result of data processing, we get 5 indicators:

1. Ability to compile and analyze information;
2. Spatial thinking;
3. Mental stability;
4. Flexibility of thought processes;
5. Ability to concentrate;
6. Integral indicator of intellectual development.

In a team, 25% of employees have a level of general mental ability below the average, which may indicate some difficulties in the process of vocational training. The share of 50% has the integral indicator is on average. This means that with sufficient training, time and effort, the employee is able to solve a wide range of standard professional tasks. Another 25% form the integral indicator at the level above the average. This level is sufficient to master any profession and solve any professional task.

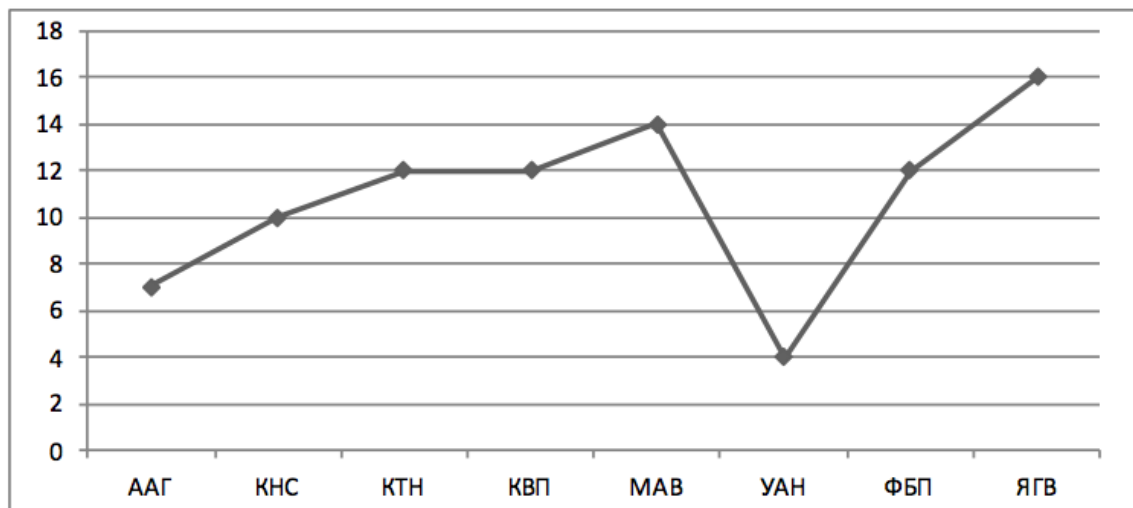
Indicators of the level of intellectual development of the staff of the educational department of the PS are presented in Fig. 3.



**Fig. 3.** Average values of indicators of intellectual development.

The results of diagnostics of the staff of the educational department of the PS according to the methodology “Assessing the level of sociability” by V. F. Ryakhovsky are presented in Fig. 4.

50% of the staff of the educational department of the PS are sociable, sometimes even beyond measure. They are happy to meet new people, love to be in the center of attention, never refuse to request, although not always able to cope with it. They lack only assiduity, patience when confronted with serious problems.



**Fig. 4.** The distribution of points according to the method “Assessment of the level of sociability”.

25% of employees are always up to date, take part in all discussions. Everywhere feel at ease. They grab for any business, although they cannot always successfully complete it. Therefore, managers and colleagues treat these people with a certain caution and doubts.

25% of employees are inquisitive, they listen with pleasure to an interesting interlocutor, being quite patient in communicating with others, defend their position without hot temper, and without negative experiences go to meet new people. However, at the same time, they do not like noisy companies, they can be annoyed by verbosity and extravagant antics.

Employees with low communication skills in this team have not been identified.

#### 4. Discussion

Summarizing the findings of the research, we can conclude that the following indicators most affect the success in work:

- Cumulative intelligence;
- Mental stability;

- Flexibility of thought processes.

According to the results of psychodiagnostic measures, the main psychological characteristics of the subjects identified: intellectual features, motivation of the subjects, individual characterological qualities.

## 5. Conclusion

Thus, the professional competence of the staff of the educational department of the PS is:

1. High general intellectual abilities;
2. Mental stability and low fatigue;
3. Flexibility of thinking, the ability to highlight the main content, to alternate the implementation of various types of tasks, to work with a variety of materials;
4. A limited focus on finding the price of labor, when labor is a tool to meet other needs not related to professional activities (instrumental motivation);
5. The developed professional motivation when employees are interested in the content of the work; difficult tasks as an opportunity for self-expression, professional recognition;
6. A minimal attention to work difficulties; search for a comfortable business environment;
7. A minimized degree of impulsive behavior, rashness of actions; lack of tendency to violate generally accepted standards of behavior.

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