

## INTRAPERSONAL CONFLICT FACTORS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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**Abstract.** *An essential characteristic of pedagogical activity is its conflict potential. Such specific features as high social and normative expectations and significant overloading of roles in combination with individual psychological characteristics of teacher's personality lead to the emergence or exacerbation of various intrapersonal conflicts. Unsettled conflict usually becomes a constant source of discontent with yourself and the environment, causes a high level of anxiety, starts devastating processes of emotional burnout. Therefore, it is important to provide timely assistance to teachers in situations of intrapersonal conflicts.*

*The purpose of the article is to highlight the results of empirical identification of intrapersonal conflict factors of primary school teachers. To achieve this goal it is necessary to solve the following tasks: 1) to investigate the factors of teachers conflict behaviour at the empirical level; 2) to determine the specifics and nature of the relationship between the level and characteristics of conflict and creativity, between the motivation of achievement and development of subjective qualities of a primary school teacher.*

*Research tools: adapted methods of K. Thomas (N. Hrishyna) on the diagnosis of the style of behaviour in a conflict situation; methods of diagnosis of personality motivation for success (T. Ehlers); methods of studying frustration reactions (S. Rosenzweig); methods of diagnostics of interpersonal relations (L. Sobchuk); A. Rukavysnikov's methods for the definition of mental burnout; Drawing Apperceptive Test (DAT); methods of self-actualization A. Maslow adapted by Gozman, Kroz & Latinskaya. The total number of respondents - 32 primary school teachers of secondary schools in Drohobych, Lviv region.*

*The analysis of the obtained results showed that: 1) there are specific characteristic connections between the level and features of conflict, creativity, between the motivation of achievement and development of subjective qualities of a person; 2) internal conflict as an interpersonal phenomenon is both a personal characteristic and a determinant of social interaction. It has been found that rivalry, low verbal creativity, lack of communicative competence in combination with extrapunitive type of reactions cause increased conflict. According to the results of the researches, a significant number of primary school teachers under study (32%) have increased intrapersonal conflict. Of course, this alarming indicator prevents the establishment of optimal pedagogical communication and provokes conflict among children of primary school age.*

**Keywords:** *intrapersonal conflict, primary school teacher, motivation, mental burnout, self-actualization.*

## **Introduction**

Social tension and conflicts of the society of the XXI century, its fragile spiritual guidelines, teachers' unstable material, living and work conditions, the growing intensification of information flows and innovative processes that require their timely and quality processing and assimilation, as well as daily communicative activity, which is emotionally rich, – are far from being an exhaustive list of factors of a modern personality sociogenic neurotisation. Such researchers as Божович (2000) and Давыдов (1996) have been studying these issues in their own scientific works. Пірен (2001), Самоукина (2000) and Титаренко (2003) study the personality's formation of different types of internal disharmony. The phenomenon of teacher's «professional stress» has been the subject of research of Балл (2003), Карамушка & Дзюба (2009). Scientists have concluded that conflict potential is the essential characteristic of pedagogical activity. Such specific features of conflicts as high social and normative expectations, great responsibility, and significant overloading of roles in combination with individual psychological characteristics of teacher's personality lead to the emergence or exacerbation of various intrapersonal conflicts.

The problem of intrapersonal conflicts is presented in the works of many foreign researchers, in particular, such as Moreno (2001), Archambault, Kurdi, Olivier, & Goulet (2016), McGrath & Bergen (2017) and others. A characteristic feature of the views of Maxwell, Reynolds, Lee, Subasic, & Bromhead (2017) is that the issues of intrapersonal conflict are considered with taking into account the understanding of the essence and structure of the individual. In the concepts of Geerlings, Thijs, & Verkuyten (2018) there are some principles that allow you to get an idea of the model of intrapersonal conflicts and understand their essence. Significant are the principles of humanistic psychology of Gerlach & Gockel (2018) about the impact of intrapersonal conflict on the development of the «I concept» of an individual. In the concepts of psychoanalysis by Colnerud (2015) such categories as contradiction and psychological protection have been put into the basis of the intrapersonal conflict.

Unsettled conflict usually becomes a constant source of discontent with yourself and the environment, causes a high level of anxiety, underestimation of self-esteem and self-confidence, starts devastating processes of emotional burnout. Therefore, scientists consider it important to provide timely and effective assistance to teachers in situations of intrapersonal conflicts.

The purpose of the article is to highlight the results of empirical identification of intrapersonal conflict factors of Ukrainian primary school teachers.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to solve two tasks:

- 1) to investigate factors of teachers conflict behaviour at the empirical level;
- 2) to determine the specifics and nature of the relationship between the level and characteristics of conflict and creativity, between the motivation of achievement and development of subjective qualities of a primary school teacher.

### **Research Tools**

Throughout the study we have used the following research tools: a) adapted methods of K. Thomas on the diagnosis of the style of behaviour in a conflict situation adapted by N. Hrishyna; methods of diagnostics of personality motivation for success (T. Ehlers); methods of studying frustration reactions (S. Rosenzweig); methods of diagnostics of interpersonal relations (L. Sobchuk); A. Rukavysnikov's methods for the definition of mental burnout; Drawing Apperceptive Test (DAT); methods of self-actualization A. Maslow adapted by Gozman, Kroz, & Latinskaya.

Psychological and pedagogical researches covered 32 primary school teachers of secondary schools in Drohobych, Lviv region.

### **Main body**

Many researchers find out psychological determinants of conflict behaviour, typology of conflicts, regularities of their occurrence, such as Анцупов (2003), Deutsch (2006), Coser (1968). Many specialists are interested in the issues of the object of pedagogical conflict (Ишмуратов, 2003), its dynamics Титаренко (2003), the difference between destructive and constructive conflicts (Басова, 2000), as well as the teacher's preparation for the correct behaviour in a conflict situation (Гришина, 2008) and the formation of necessary psychological knowledge and skills to prevent conflict (Рыбакова, 1991). Since the personal specificity of teachers' conflict in the conditions of modern native educational process has been studied rather superficially, the problems of our investigation are significantly relevant.

### **Results**

With the aim of empirical identification of primary school teachers conflict behaviour factors we used the methods of K. Thomas on the diagnosis of the

individual's propensity to conflict behaviour adapted by N. Hrishyna (Мілютіна, 2004). Table 1 presents the results of the distribution of teachers according to the prevailing style of behaviour in a conflict situation.

*Table 1 Distribution of primary school teachers by the prevailing style of behaviour in a conflict situation*

	Competition	Cooperation	Compromise	Avoidance	Adjustment
Teachers	4	10	4	8	6

The results of studying the style of conflict behaviour show that teachers prefer cooperation and avoidance of conflict situations (which is 31% and 26% among 32 respondents). The strategy of avoidance (26% of the investigated) is used by those teachers who are motivated not for constructive relations. In the least the teachers under study tend to the strategy of competition (14%) and compromise (14%).

The next task of the study was to diagnose the teachers' motivational characteristics. While studying we have found out a close relationship between the level of motivation and success in life and, in particular, in a constructive interpersonal interaction. During the researches, it is proved that teachers with a high degree of motivation are confident in the successful completion of cases, constantly analyze their achievements and failures, are responsible, determined in uncertain situations, enjoy solving complex professional problems, are not confused in the situation of competition, show great perseverance and courage in overcoming difficult situations.

For the participants of the research, we proposed «T. Ehlers' methods of diagnosing personality motivation for success» (Райгородский, 2000). These methods contain 41 statements. The results have the following variations: a) from 0 to 10 points – low motivation for success; b) from 11 to 16 points – average level of motivation; c) from 17 to 20 points – a moderately high level of motivation; d) above 21 points – an excessively high level of motivation for success.

Between two teachers under study a rather high level of motivation for success has been revealed. Fourteen people under the research, on the contrary, had low motivation for success. Other teachers (16) showed the average level of this motivation. Their pedagogical style of work with students is characterised by a bit of authoritarianism and imposing their own ideas and beliefs.

After determining the motivation to avoid failures among the diagnosed we have obtained uneven indicators, namely: 1) dominating high level of avoidance – 16 people under study; 2) average level among 10 respondents; 3) low – 6 people. Risk tendency was quite low among most teachers; its high

level was inherent only to five people. To summarize this stage of the study, we have calculated the correlation between the number of pedagogical conflicts of different types and the peculiarities of teachers' motivation involved in them (see table.2).

*Table 2 Distribution of types of conflicts depending on the characteristics of primary school teachers' motivation*

Motivation	activity conflicts	behaviour conflicts	motivation conflicts	relationship conflicts	didactogeny
Achievement	0, 38	0, 27	0,02	- 0, 39	0,22
Avoidance	0, 34	0, 49	0,15	0, 51	0,42
Risk tendency	0, 029	- 0, 36	- 0,32	- 0,43	0,28

Thus, the motivation of achievement has a direct link at the level of tendencies with activity conflicts. Therefore, a high degree of the first can be considered a preventive means from interpersonal contradictions. Conversely, the motivation of avoiding failures, to say, provokes behaviour conflicts, exacerbation of relations, didactogeny. At the same time, the teachers' tendency to risk prevents almost all types of conflicts.

For studying teachers' intrapersonal conflicts we used S. Rosenzweig's methods of studying frustration reactions (Миронова, 2006); L. Sobchuk's methods of diagnostics of interpersonal relations (DIS) (Собчик, 2003); A. Rukavishnikov's methods for the definition of mental burnout (Фетискин, Козлов, & Мануйлов, 2002); Drawing Apperceptive Test (DAT) (Карелин, 2000).

The results of the interpretation of the gained data among the diagnosed teachers are given below in more detail.

1. The researched Inna B. (teacher of the first year class):

*Table 3 Results by Rosenzweig's methods*

	OD	ED	NP	
E	3	5,5	3	11,5
I	0	4,5	4	8,5
M	1,5	1,5	1	4
	4,5	11,5	8	

*Table 4 Results on the methods of diagnostics of interpersonal relations (DIS)*

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Self-real	4	4	4	3	2	3	4	7
Self-ideal	6	5	4	1	4	5	8	6

Characteristics according to DIS do not exceed 8 points, which is the sign of inner harmony. The dominant aspects of behaviour are the willingness to help and sympathize with others, a developed sense of responsibility. Low values on the scale of «personal distance» indicate on a wide network of contacts with others, tolerance and humanity in the formation to them, the desire to interact with them. In general, Inna B. is quite pleased with herself, needs to be accepted and supported.

The results according to A. Rukavishnikov’s methods for the definition of mental burnout are as follows: psychoemotional exhaustion (PE) – 22 p. – average; personal distance (PD) – 15 p. – low; professional motivation (PM) – 38 p. – very high; mental burnout index (MBI) – 75 p. – medium.

The data according to Drawing Apperceptive Test (DAT) indicate that Inna's dominance manifests itself in the form of friendly support, optimism – in contacts. Identification with «the third»: a hidden source of conflict; passive avoidance; active intervention to defend her interests; identification with the character. As a result, she feels herself depressed and abandoned. Aggressive trends are being replaced. The feeling of pity for others, the desire to help and to calm is expressed. In frustrating situations the following features dominate: self-defence, denial of her involvement in the extenuating circumstances, accusations and irony to others.

Inna B. is a harmonious personality, assesses her role in conflict situations critically, and strives for social interaction, in which she is successful and self-satisfied. She is interested in work, productive and competent in it. She arouses a positive attitude to herself by the majority of children in her class.

2. The researched Olha K. (teacher of the second year class):

*Table 5 Results by Rosenzweig’s methods*

	OD	ED	NP	
E	1	8	3	12
I	0	2	1	3
M	5	1	3	9
	6	11	7	

*Table 6 Results on the methods of diagnostics of interpersonal relations (DIS)*

	I	II	III	IY	Y	YI	YII	YIII
Real	9	7	8	9	14	14	10	13
Ideal	12	7	7	3	3	5	10	14

Mental burnout: – 52 p. – very high level; PD – 60 p. – very high; PM – 27 p. – high; MBI – 139 p. – very high rate.

The results of DAT: identification with the «third» occurs in the position of detachment, resoluteness interaction – (passive observer), in a passive-interference due to the high awareness of being unnoticeable and useless. Conflict in the interpersonal sphere: identification with an aggrieved, helpless character, who defends himself in an extra-punitive manner.

The dominant reaction in frustrating situations: she tends to deny responsibility for their appearance and solution. This indicates a low degree of development of arbitrary behaviour, weakness of the inner-self (due to the active action of protective mechanisms), and unformed coping strategies.

Most of the expressed DIS indicators are above normal, which confirms the significant internal tension (14 p.). As to dependent-obedient and submissive-shy octants, they are the signs of difficulties in social adaptation, which is manifested in complete obedience, excessive guilt, self-abasement, overconformity, total dependence on the opinions of others. Excessive helpfulness, tendency to compromise, hypersocial attitudes cause the inability to be a leader-organizer in the classroom.

Olha K. is dissatisfied with herself, wants to become more confident and independent. All these factors complicate, and even make her self-realization impossible, which leads to conflicts and negative relations with children.

3. The researched Iryna P. (teacher of the third year class):

*Table 7 Results by Rosenzweig’s methods*

	OD	ED	NP	
E	2	5	2	9
I	0	3	5	8
M	2	2.5	3	7
	4	10.5	10	

*Table 8 Results on the methods of diagnostics of interpersonal relations (DIS)*

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Self-real	11	8	11	15	4	8	7	5
Self-ideal	11	7	7	0	5	4	9	10

MB – 59 p. – very high level; PD – 49 p. – very high; PM – 29 p. – high; MBI – 137 p. – a very high figure.

Reduced interest in contacts with others, a sense of exhaustion and low emotional tolerance are observed. We can also see the reluctance to engage in professional activities for both high assessment of their competence and success, indifference to career. Thus, a high degree of professional burnout can cause persistent conflicts in the interpersonal sphere.

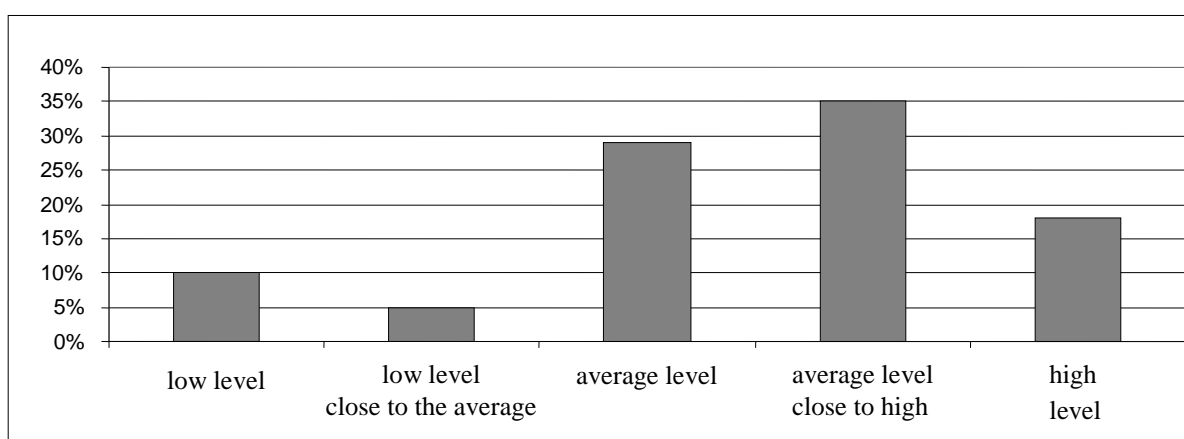
The results of DAT: The dominance of the character is the result of a concurrence of circumstances. There is an aversion to people of low social status, identification with the «third», manifested in the position of the observer with the prospect of active inclusion in interpersonal relations.

The observer's position emphasizes the lines of carelessness and irresponsibility. A distrustful-skeptical pattern of behaviour is non-adaptive. The existing long-term interpersonal conflict is shown. The protection according to extrapunitive type dominates. Ideally, strives to be more friendly and congruent in relationships with others. The conflict could arise from uncritical self-esteem, belief in own faultlessness, critical and cynical attitude towards people (expressed personal distance). She has a sufficient capacity to meet the needs. Her behaviour was dominated by didactogeny and interpersonal conflicts.

These data indicate that the total number of diagnosed primary school teachers have increased intrapersonal conflict. Psychologists believe that it is based on the gap between the desire for self-actualization (by A. Maslow, the highest need of the individual) and the real result (Маслоу, 1999).

As research instruments we used the methods of self-actualization by A. Maslow adapted by Gozman, Kroz & Latinskaya. According to the results of the diagnosis, twelve indicators were obtained, including one general and eleven on a scale.

The overall indicator reflects the individual's desire for self-actualization. During the test, the following results were recorded: low level – 10%; low level close to the average – 5%; average level – 29%; average level close to high – 35%; high level – 18%. Thus, the majority of respondents of the indicated sample have an average and close to a high level of desire for self-actualization (see Fig. 1.).



*Figure 1 The results of the study on the evaluation of the level of personality's self-actualization. Common indicator*



Here are the results on a scale 1 – orientation in time: low – 8%; low, close to average – 10%; average – 40%; average, close to high – 24%; high – 18%.

According to the criterion of values (scale 2), teachers have the following indicators: low – 5%; low, close to the average – 8%; average – 10%; average, close to high – 45%; high – 29% of respondents.

With regard to the view on human nature (scale 3), the people under study showed: low – 10%; low, close to the average – 21%; average – 35%; average, close to high – 16%; high – 18% of participants under study. The curve has a normal distribution.

The need for knowledge (scale 4) is manifested in the diagnosed as follows: low – 8 %; low, close to the average – 13%; average – 28 %; average, close to high – 23%; high – 24% of the diagnosed. The curve has a normal distribution.

The pursuit of creativity (scale 5) was the next criterion of the study. Its results: low – 5%; low, close to average – 10%; average – 35%; average, close to high – 16%; high – 32% of respondents.

According to the scale «autonomy» (№6) we have found the following indicators: low – 10%; low, close to the average – 13%; average – 10%; average, close to high – 24%; high – 40% of the studied.

As you can see, most of the people in this sample have a high level and average, close to high.

Let us summarize the results of our further research according to the following five features:

- 1) spontaneity (scale 7): low – 13%; low, close to average – 13%; average 37%; average, close to high – 21%; high – 13% of respondents. The curve has a normal distribution;
- 2) self-understanding (scale 8): low – 16%; low, close to medium – 35%; medium – 18%; medium, close to high – 27%; high – 2% of the participants in the research;
- 3) autosympathy (scale 9): low – 5%; low, close to the average – 5%; average – 24%; average, close to high – 37%; high level – 27% diagnosed;
- 4) rapport (scale of 10): low level – 8%; low, close to the average – 21%; mid-level – 29%; average, close to high – 27%; high level – 13% of respondents. The curve has a normal distribution;
- 5) flexibility in communication (scale 11): low – 2%; low, close to the average – 16%; average – 45%; average, close to high – 18%; high – 16% of the study.

Processing of the results was carried out in a spreadsheet SPSS to test the hypothesis of «High level of verbal and nonverbal creativity involves a high level of self-actualization». During the mathematical study of the first for the

purpose of statistical testing of the above hypothesis Pearson's criterion  $\chi^2$  was chosen. The correlations having been found between indicators of self-actualization and types of conflict situations confirmed the validity of the assumptions about the direct influence of verbal and non-verbal creativity of the individual to the level of self-actualization. In other words: the more the teacher is engaged in the development of his own creativity, the more the level of his self-actualization will grow, which, on its part, improves the art of resolving pedagogical conflicts and adequate responding to them (table. 9).

*Table 9 Distribution of types of conflicts depending on the features of primary school teachers' self-actualization (only significant correlations are shown in the table)*

SELF-ACTUALIZATION	activity conflicts	behaviour conflicts	conflicts of motivation	relationship conflicts	humiliating statements
1. Orientation in time	0,36	0,42	The connection unreliable	The connection unreliable	The connection unreliable
2. Values	The connection unreliable	The connection unreliable	0,41	0,38	-0,53
3. View on human nature	The connection unreliable	The connection unreliable	-0,39	-0,45	-0,43
SELF-ACTUALIZATION	activity conflicts	behaviour conflicts	conflicts of motivation	relationship conflicts	humiliating statements
4. Need for knowledge	0,43	The connection unreliable	The connection unreliable	The connection unreliable	The connection unreliable
5. Creativity	The connection unreliable	-0,46	The connection unreliable	The connection unreliable	-0,32
6. Autonomy	The connection unreliable	-0,33	The connection unreliable	-0,36	The connection unreliable
7. Spontaneity	0,47	The connection unreliable	The connection unreliable	The connection unreliable	0,35
8. Self-understanding	-0,38	-0,45	-0,34	-0,42	-0,62
9. Autosympathy	The connection unreliable	The connection unreliable	-0,46	-0,37	-0,54
10. Rapport	-0,48	-0,35	The connection unreliable	The connection unreliable	-0,63
11. Flexible communication	-0,39	-0,44	-0,54	-0,44	-0,55

Therefore, the development of teachers' self-actualization substantially reduces the risk of didactogeny, relationship and motivation conflicts. To the greatest extent among the diagnosed teachers traits that reduce the conflict potential are the following: contact, flexibility in communication, self-understanding. At the same time, time orientation and active orientation on values increase the risk of interpersonal friction partially.

### **Summary**

Thus, on the basis of the conducted empirical research and analysis of the results we obtained the grounds for such conclusions, which relate only to the group of diagnosed teachers:

1. There are specific characteristic connections between the level and features of conflict, creativity, achievement motivation and development of subjective qualities of a person.
2. Internal conflict potential as intrapsychic phenomenon is both personal characteristics and determinant of social interaction.
3. Competition, low verbal creativity, insufficient communicative competence of teachers in combination with extra-punitive type of their reactions cause an increase in the level of their conflict.
4. A significant number of diagnosed primary school teachers (32%) have increased intrapersonal conflict. Of course, it prevents the establishment of optimal pedagogical communication and provokes conflict among children of primary school age.
5. Based on theoretical views on the psychological nature of pedagogical conflicts, practical recommendations for primary school teachers are as follows: participation in integration programs, personal growth training, psychotherapeutic and rehabilitation cycles, which are a universal tool for the correction of intrapersonal conflict. The new experience of interaction acquired during the training sessions can contribute to the improvement of professional competence, self-actualization, social sensitivity, mastery of constructive ways out of conflict situations.

Prospects for further research problems are connected with such aspects as gender participants in pedagogical conflicts, the level of their claims, the relationship between students, the psychological climate in the student community and the like.

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