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EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE AS A PEDAGOGICAL CONDITION FOR INCREASING THE COGNITIVE MOTIVATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

The article analyses the problem of increasing the cognitive motivation of primary school students through the formation of emotional competence. The research is situated within the context of modern educational paradigms that prioritize the holistic development of the child, moving beyond purely academic outcomes. Its particular relevance is underscored by the implementation of the New Ukrainian School concept, which explicitly emphasizes the formation of key competencies, including emotional and social skills, as a cornerstone of effective learning.

The primary aim of the study is to theoretically substantiate emotional competence as a pedagogical condition for increasing cognitive motivation. The article reveals the essence of the concept of "emotional competence", defining it through its core components: emotional literacy, emotional self-regulation, empathy, and constructive interaction skills. The article investigates the specific characteristics of cognitive motivation in primary school age children, tracing its dynamic evolution from external motivators (such as grades and parental approval) to the development of intrinsic, internal motives driven by a genuine interest in learning and the inherent satisfaction of cognitive activity.

The key mechanisms of the relationship are substantiated: emotional self-regulation helps to overcome learning difficulties; empathy and a positive emotional climate contribute to the formation of interest in learning; and emotional feedback from the teacher acts as a powerful motivator. A set of pedagogical conditions are proposed, including the creation of an emotionally safe environment, the use of game and art therapy technologies, the organization of student cooperation and systematic work with emotional reflection.

It is concluded that emotional competence is a basic factor in the development of intrinsic motivation to learn.

Key words: emotional competence, cognitive motivation, primary grades, emotional intelligence, pedagogical conditions, emotional self-regulation, empathy, educational activity.

(статтю подано мовою оригіналу)

Modern transformations in the education system of Ukraine, driven by its integration into the European educational space and the implementation of the concept of the New Ukrainian School (NUS) [2], put on the agenda the issue of the comprehensive development of the child's personality. This paradigm shift moves beyond the traditional knowledge-based model towards a competency-based approach, where the learner's emotional and social well-being is considered equally important as academic achievement. In conditions where the educational process is fundamentally reoriented towards the principles of child-centeredness and the formation of key competencies for lifelong learning, the development of students' emotional competence is becoming a priority. Effective pedagogical activity today is impossible without taking into account the emotional state of students, the creation of a favourable psychological climate and partnership relations, which are the foundation for the formation of motivation, creativity, and self-realization. The ability of a teacher to structure the educational process on a positive emotional basis, to build authentic, trusting relationships with students, and to skilfully recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions while empathetically perceiving the emotional world of younger schoolchildren is therefore a cornerstone of successful educational outcomes.

At the same time, the leading component of the activation of students' cognitive activity is and ensuring the effectiveness of the educational process is stable cognitive motivation. Motivation acts as a driving force in the learning process, directly influencing the depth of assimilation of new knowledge, the development of critical thinking skills, and the cultivation of a genuine cognitive need. Research indicates that cognitive interest typically begins with elementary curiosity and spontaneous reactions to novelty but, under systematically favourable pedagogical conditions, can progressively transform into a deep interest and a stable habit of independent mental work. The formation of such intrinsic motivation is particularly crucial at the primary school level, as this period lays the fundamental groundwork for a child's entire subsequent attitude towards learning and cognitive exploration.

Analysing the phenomenon of emotional intelligence in science, researchers over the past two decades have identified its numerous specific manifestations (G. Gardner, D. Caruso, R. Sternberg), formulated theoretical approaches to the structure of this phenomenon, and also investigated the importance of emotional competence for the successful realization of the personality (J. Mayer, P. Salovey, D. Goleman).

The RULER study (Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing, Regulating emotions) by M. Brackett and his colleagues at Yale University is one of the most empirically validated approaches. Studies show that students in classrooms where RULER is implemented demonstrate higher levels of social-emotional skills, better classroom climate, and higher academic performance. The mechanism is that children learn to "name their emotions" which reduces their intensity and allows them to focus on the task rather than on anxiety or anger [1; 6].

According to R. Leeper's theory, emotional processes play a fundamental role in the formation of motivation, being a key factor in the high motivation of modern people.

However, despite the extensive study of the phenomena of cognitive motivation and emotional competence separately, there is an insufficient number of scientific works that directly analyse their relationship and substantiate

emotional competence as a pedagogical condition for increasing cognitive motivation, especially in younger school age. This research gap emphasizes the need for a systematic study of the mechanisms by which the development of the emotional sphere can purposefully influence students' cognitive activity.

The purpose of the article is to theoretically substantiate that emotional competence is an important pedagogical condition for increasing the cognitive motivation of primary school students, as well as to describe a set of pedagogical conditions and practical methods for its formation.

Emotional competence is a multifaceted concept that in psychology and pedagogy is defined as a set of individual abilities that allow one to be aware of, understand and manage one's own emotions and the emotions of other people. This includes not only emotional experience, but also knowledge about emotions and the ability to use this information for adaptation and successful interaction [1].

The structure of emotional competence, especially important in the context of educational activities, can be divided into four key components that are closely related to the models of *J. Mayer* and *P. Salovey*:

- Emotional literacy (self-awareness): This is the child's ability to adequately identify, recognize and verbalize their own emotions, as well as understand the reasons that caused them. This component is primary, since awareness of emotions is a prerequisite for further management of them.

- Emotional self-regulation: This is the ability to control one's own emotional states and impulsive reactions. This component includes restraint, self-control, and the ability to rationally influence emotions to ensure an optimal level of activity.

- Empathy (social awareness): It is characterized by the ability to empathize and sympathize with another person, as well as to identify their feelings. The development of empathy in primary school students is the basis for the formation of positive interpersonal relationships in the team.

- Constructive interaction skills (social skills): This is the ability to interact effectively with other people, build trusting, partnership relationships, resolve conflicts, and express one's emotions without aggression [6].

The development of these skills directly affects the formation of cognitive motivation, since academic success is closely related to the child's comfort in the social environment of the classroom and self-confidence. This relationship becomes especially evident when analysing the specifics of the cognitive motivation of primary school students.

The motivation of a younger schoolchild is a complex and changeable psychological system in which external stimuli and internal driving forces are closely intertwined and constantly interact. At the initial stage of education, the vast majority of children are dominated by external motives, which is quite natural for their age and socialization. Such motives include, first of all, the desire to get a good grade, which often becomes a direct indicator of success in the eyes of the child. No less important is the desire to earn verbal approval, praise from a teacher or parents, whose attitude has enormous authority. However, the main goal and key task of modern primary education is not just to support this external interest, but a systematic and consistent transition to the formation of stable internal cognitive motivation. This motivation is not based on obtaining external attributes of success, but on a genuine interest in the process of knowledge itself, on a feeling of joy from discoveries and solving mysteries. It manifests itself in the satisfaction of intellectual tension when solving complex tasks, in an internal sense of competence and in one's own growth, when achieving personal success becomes self-evident and does not require constant external reinforcement. It is this internal driving force that makes learning a personally meaningful activity and lays the foundation for later self-education and a love of knowledge throughout life [4].

Emotional competence is not just a side effect, but a basic pedagogical condition that directly affects the formation and development of cognitive motivation. This connection can be traced through several key mechanisms.

First, emotional self-regulation is a crucial factor in overcoming learning difficulties. Younger students often face fear, anxiety, or dissatisfaction when they do not succeed in something. The ability to manage these negative emotions allows students not to retreat, but to continue to make efforts. This helps them move from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation, as they begin to feel satisfaction from overcoming obstacles, and not only from the final result.

Second, empathy and a positive emotional climate in the classroom play a central role in the formation of cognitive interest. When a teacher creates an atmosphere of trust, support, and cooperation, students feel safe, which reduces the level of anxiety that can inhibit the learning process. In such an environment, students are not afraid to make mistakes and can freely express their curiosity. Material that evokes an emotional response is better absorbed and retained in memory longer, as emotions can act as "facilitators" of thinking [3].

Thirdly, emotional feedback from the teacher is a powerful motivator. When the teacher sincerely admires the successes of students, shows pleasure from joint work, this creates positive reinforcement, which directly stimulates cognitive interest. The teacher, as an authoritative figure, can use his/her emotional influence to achieve educational goals, helping students form an emotional-value attitude towards knowledge.

As a result, emotional competence is a regulator of the individual's consciousness, its motivator and driving force. It allows the student to transform external motives (the desire for approval) into stable internal ones (the desire for knowledge), since a successful cognitive process is accompanied by positive emotions, which, in turn, strengthen the desire to learn (table 1).

Table 1

The relationship between the components of emotional competence and cognitive motivation

Emotional competence component	Impact on cognitive motivation	Interaction mechanism
Emotional self-regulation	Overcoming learning difficulties	The ability to manage emotions helps the student overcome the fear of failure and continue their efforts, which strengthens their confidence and internal motivation to overcome obstacles.
Empathy and constructive interaction	Forming interest and a positive attitude towards learning	A positive emotional climate and a sense of belonging to a team create conditions where learning becomes a source of joy and satisfaction, rather than anxiety.
Emotional literacy	Developing intrinsic motivation	Awareness of positive emotions from success in learning (the joy of "discovery") contributes to the fact that the student begins to strive not just for an assessment, but for the process of learning itself.

To effectively increase cognitive motivation through the development of emotional competence, a systematic approach is needed that covers various aspects of the educational process. Each pedagogical condition and its corresponding methods are aimed at forming a specific component of the emotional sphere, which together create a favourable ground for the growth of intrinsic motivation.

Creating an atmosphere of emotional comfort and security is one of the most important prerequisites for the formation of emotional intelligence and cognitive interest. In such an environment, students are not afraid to make mistakes, freely express their thoughts and feelings, which contributes to open and trusting interaction. To create such an environment, you can use:

Emotional circle. At the beginning of the lesson, children express their mood using pictograms, emotion cards or a scale. This allows the teacher to adapt the educational process to the emotional state of students and helps children realize and verbalize their feelings.

The "quiet place" method. Setting up a special corner in the classroom with soft toys or anti-stress materials, where a child can emotionally recover when feeling stressed.

The "I-statement" method. Developing in children the skills to express their emotions without aggression, using constructions such as "I am angry because..." or "I am sad when..."[5].

Sensory breaks. Activities such as the "Butterfly Exercise" where children slowly pat their shoulders in rhythm with their breathing, help relieve anxiety and stabilize emotional states.

Sensory box: Children are asked to find and describe objects in a box with different textures (cotton wool, buttons, fabric, etc.) by touch, which helps activate sensory perception and emotional release.

Gaming and creative technologies are effective tools for developing emotional literacy and self-regulation in a playful way. These methods allow children to experiment with emotions in a safe space without fear of judgment. For example:

The Magic Bag Game. Children are asked to symbolically "put" all negative emotions into a bag and then "throw" them out. This helps children become aware of and learn to cope with negativity.

The Finger Drawing Emotions Game. An art therapy exercise that allows a child to express their mood through creativity, using colours and tactile sensations.

The Facial Gymnastics Game. An exercise during which children train facial muscles by depicting different emotions (surprise, anger, fear, disgust). This helps them better recognize emotions in themselves and others.

"Coloured Water" Game. Children are asked to paint water in different colours to create "angry," "kind," or "happy" water. This teaches children to associate emotions with colours and explore their shades.

"Anchor" Exercise. Participants are asked to draw things or people that support them and provide a sense of security, which helps them overcome anxiety and become aware of their resources.

Group tasks and communication exercises contribute to the development of empathy and constructive interaction skills, which are key to creating a favourable climate in the team and increasing learning motivation. This can be:

"Friendship Relay". Children hold hands and pass handshakes around in a circle, symbolically exchanging friendship. This contributes to the emotional and psychological rapprochement of students.

Pair and group projects. Tasks where success depends on the ability to negotiate, distribute roles and take into account the feelings of others. This contributes to the development of social skills, which are an integral part of emotional competence.

Developing self-awareness and the ability to self-analyse is fundamental to emotional competence. Systematic work with emotional reflection helps the child to realize how their emotions affect their behaviour and learning. For example, *"Emotion Calendar"* and *"Emotion Barometer"*. Tools with which the child draws an "emotion of the day" or marks their mood on a scale every day. This allows students to track the dynamics of their emotional state, and also shows how certain events influence their mood. Such practice forms the habit of observing their state and being aware of it.

I Can Poster. A poster divided into zones of anger, sadness, and calm, containing small tools (e.g., breathing exercises) to help the child return to the calm zone. This builds self-control skills in students.

Conclusions. The conducted research confirms that emotional competence is not only a “soft skill”, but a basic pedagogical condition that plays a decisive role in increasing the cognitive motivation of primary school students. In the younger school age, when the motivational sphere is in the stage of formation, the teacher’s purposeful work with the emotional development of students is fundamental for the formation of a stable internal motivation for learning.

A favourable emotional environment, characterized by trust, support, and lack of fear, is a catalyst for the disclosure of the cognitive potential of the child. The systematic use of pedagogical methods that include game, art therapy and interactive technologies allows children to develop emotional literacy, self-regulation skills, empathy and constructive interaction. This, in turn, ensures a smooth transition from external motives (the desire for evaluation) to a stable internal cognitive motivation, which is associated with the pleasure of the learning process itself.

Prospects for further research lie in the development and testing of holistic, integrated practical programs for the development of emotional competence in the educational environment. Such programs should be aimed not only at students, but also at teachers, since the emotional competence of a teacher is a key tool for creating a motivational and favourable climate in the classroom.

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I.V. Хаджинова, С.Е. Умарлі. Емоційна компетентність як педагогічна умова підвищення пізнавальної мотивації учнів початкових класів.

У статті аналізується проблема підвищення когнітивної мотивації учнів початкової школи через розвиток їх емоційної компетентності. Актуальність дослідження зумовлена вимогами сучасної освітньої системи, що орієнтована на всебічний розвиток особистості дитини. В концепції «Нової української школи» чітко наголошено на формуванні ключових компетенцій, включаючи емоційні та соціальні навички, як важливий фактор ефективного навчання.

Основною метою дослідження є теоретичне обґрунтування емоційної компетентності як педагогічної умови підвищення когнітивної мотивації учнів початкових класів. У статті розкривається сутність поняття «емоційна компетентність», яка визначається через її основні компоненти: емоційна грамотність (здатність розпізнавати та вербалізувати власні емоції), емоційна саморегуляція (керування імпульсами та емоційними станами), емпатія (здатність розуміти та поділяти почуття інших) та навички конструктивної взаємодії (побудова стосунків та вирішення конфліктів). У статті досліджуються специфічні характеристики когнітивної мотивації у дітей молодшого шкільного віку, простежується її динамічна еволюція від зовнішніх мотиваторів (таких як оцінки та схвалення батьків) до

розвитку внутрішніх мотивів, зумовлених щирим інтересом до навчання та притаманним задоволенням від пізнавальної діяльності.

Обґрунтовано ключові механізми взаємозв'язку: емоційна саморегуляція допомагає подолати труднощі у навчанні; емпатія та позитивний емоційний клімат сприяють формуванню інтересу до навчання; а емоційний зворотний зв'язок від вчителя виступає потужним мотиватором. Запропоновано комплекс педагогічних умов, що включає створення емоційно безпечного середовища, використання ігрових та арт-терапевтичних технологій, організацію співпраці учнів та систематичну роботу з емоційною рефлексією.

Зроблено висновок, що емоційна компетентність є базовим фактором розвитку внутрішньої мотивації до навчання.

Ключові слова: емоційна компетентність, когнітивна мотивація, початкові класи, емоційний інтелект, педагогічні умови, емоційна саморегуляція, емпатія, навчальна діяльність.

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