

ASSESSMENT OF THE MENTAL STATE OF SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract: The current article assesses the mental states of teachers based on the Eysenck test. During the process of their professional activities, teachers experience various mental states that can both organize and motivate their activities and reduce their effectiveness. Among such states, the following can be distinguished: pre-working state, running-in state, fatigue state, relaxation, monotony, rigidity, anxiety, stress, burnout, frustration states, aggressiveness. The nature, duration and severity of certain mental states have a direct impact on the quality of duties performed, professional longevity, as well as on the general health of a person.

Introduction: Any human activity takes place in a certain state of his psyche, which is generally determined by the conditions in which the activity is carried out, the physical and functional state of the person, his mood, the people around him, etc. A research of scientific literature by various authors [4, 6, 9, 13, 15, 18] allowed us to identify three approaches to defining mental states: The first approach involves considering mental states (MS) exclusively from the point of view of the human psyche, where mental states are considered as a characteristic of a person's mental activity at a certain moment, which manifests itself in the peculiar course of mental processes depending on the phenomena occurring, surrounding objects, previous states, as well as individual personality traits; The second approach considers mental states as functional states of the organism, against the background of which mental processes develop and human activity is realized. From this point of view, special attention is paid to the dynamics of external characteristics of human behavior and activity, which can manifest themselves in the reaction of the body's systems and its functions to what is happening; The third approach, psychophysiological, considers mental states as a reaction of the organism (both from its physiological and mental side) to external and internal influences, with the aim of ensuring its integrity and vital activity in specific conditions, as well as with the aim of obtaining a beneficial result for the organism.

Mental states are a rather complex phenomenon; therefore it causes ambiguity in their definition. In this regard, a number of characteristics applicable to mental states can be identified. MS have a certain structure, which is characterized by: leveling, subjectivity-objectivity and the degree of generalization, where substructures are formed on each of the three components, which form the general structure of mental states [15]. Leveling implies the presence of the following substructures: physiological, psychophysiological, psychological and socio-psychological. The physiological level is the lowest and includes various neurophysiological, morphological, biochemical changes; the psychophysiological level is vegetative reactions, changes in motor skills and sensorics; the psychological level is higher and characterizes mental functions and a person's mood; the socio-psychological level is the highest level and includes characteristics of behavior, activity and a person's attitude as a whole. At the level of subjectivity-objectivity, the second structural component of the MS, the characteristics are organized into subjective ones - the result of self-observation, and objective ones - the consequence of external observation of activity or behavior. At the third level, the characteristics are distributed according to their level of generalization, where they are divided into general, specific and individual.

The structure of mental states is closely related to the functions they perform [4,14]: The function of the creation and development of mental states in the context of any different activity; The integration function – ensures the formation of a certain psychological structure of the personality due to the fact that mental states combine mental processes and properties. As a result, mental states, arising again and again, form a certain hierarchy and relationship of mental processes to properties, which affects the mental activity of a person as a whole, ensuring its integrity; The regulatory function – involves synchronization of mental processes and properties to ensure holistic mental activity; The adaptation function – it ensures interaction and balance of the internal environment with constantly changing external conditions; Differentiation function – manifests itself in the establishment of connections between mental states and mental processes and properties to varying degrees, with different frequencies, magnitudes, stability and other parameters.

Mental states can be various, so their classification is not an easy and ambiguous task, which, again, is due to the different approaches of scientists, as well as the fact that mental states can interact, manifest themselves as part of or in the presence of another mental state, which complicates their differentiation. However, in general terms, mental states can be divided into the following groups (Table 1):

Table 1. Types of mental states

The principle of dividing	Extreme and transitional forms
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By the source of formation	Situationally conditioned (reaction to swearing); Personally conditioned (emotional outburst of choleric)
By degree of severity	Superficial (mood); Deep (passion)
By the emotional sign of influence	Positive (inspiration); Neutral (indifference); Negative (apathy)
By duration	Short-term: seconds-minutes (affect); Medium duration: minutes-hours (fear); Long: hours and even days (monotony, boredom, depression)
By the degree of awareness	Unconscious (trance, sleep); Conscious (determination)
By the predominance of the rational or emotional component	Emotional (fear); Combined (mobilization); Intellectual (concentration)
By the degree of activation of the body	Asthenic (fatigue); Sthenic (rage)
By the main level of systemic manifestation	Physiological (hunger); Psychophysiological (fear); Psychological (inspiration)

All the diversity of mental states of a person are manifested in his daily activities. Mental states are an integral part of sleep and wakefulness, the strengthening or increase of psychophysiological costs entails the emergence of new mental states and their strengthening. The human labor activity leads to the emergence of a huge number of mental states that directly depend on the nature of labor activity, its circumstances, environment, workload, duration and even much more. This can manifest itself in any state, from a state of optimal performance to the emergence of a state of stress or fatigue. Mental states serve as a background for mental activity, and have an impact on the dynamics of mental processes, uniting them and personality traits into a single structure for a certain period of time. They also play the role of a regulator, supporting self-regulation of mental activity. These states largely determine the success of communication, behavior and labour productivity. Among the most significant states in the work of teachers, we can highlight the following: pre-work or pre-start state, the state of running in, the state of fatigue, relaxation, monotony, rigidity, anxiety, stress, burnout, frustration states, aggressiveness. Any human activity begins with preparation for it. At this stage, the body and psyche become ready for the upcoming activity, which is expressed in increased heart rate, breathing, improved attention and concentration, as well as activation of other mental processes [8]. As a result it happens a spiritual uplift, increased motivation and vigour, due to the active production of adrenaline and noradrenaline, as well as the work of the cardiovascular system. However, the state

of preparation can also be expressed in negative states, such as nervousness, fatigue, decreased motivation, anxiety, which can negatively affect the entire activity as a whole. Immediately after the state of preparation comes the running-in stage, which implies the process of smooth entry of the human psyche into the activity. This state can be characterized by two components: the optimal working state - in this state, a person exhibits high concentration of attention, the ability to remember and think, energy, motivation, spiritual uplift, interest, tone, euphoria; the state of intense activity occurs in extreme situations, for example, when the load being performed exceeds the physiological or technical capabilities of the person that is involved [3]. The work period is followed by a state of tiredness. This state occurs as a result of performing long-term and intensive activity. Fatigue manifests itself in a decrease in work capacity and efficiency of performing activity at the psychophysical and behavioral levels [2, 7]. The following states may occur as a result of fatigue: a subjective feeling of fatigue, weakness, lethargy, loss of interest. Relaxation represents a state of calm, reassurance and recovery that occurs after completing an activity [2]. During this process, the activity of the body's functional systems decreases, and active restoration of energy resources occurs. Lack of rest and its improper organization can lead to a state of chronic fatigue, stress and also overwork. In the case of a long-term prevalence of such conditions, it can happen an burnout, which manifests itself in complete indifference and lack of interest in training, dissatisfaction, which will entail an even greater deterioration in the general condition and quality of life, up to the occurrence of neurotic disorders and even somatic diseases [1]. Teaching activities may be accompanied by conditions that negatively affect the activity itself and the personality of the teacher, among other things. Rigidity is a condition in which the ability to adapt to changing conditions of the working environment can be reduced due to cognitive inflexibility, which manifests itself in resistance to novelty, a creative approach, and ingrains thinking and actions “according to a template.” Monotony represents a state of reduced performance that occurs as a result of monotonous work with frequent repetition of the same actions or operations, in the same environmental conditions. Most of the teacher's work is associated with the monotonous performance of the same tasks (filling out reports and forms, preparing and checking the same training modules, giving grades, etc.), which can negatively affect the quality of the work performed and the professional longevity of teachers.

Uneasiness is a subjective feeling of worry or anxiety that may occur before, during, or after an activity. In certain cases, anxiety can be a mobilization state and provide a high level of manifestation and activity, however, anxiety can also negatively affect a person’s general condition. In cases where uneasiness is experienced on a chronic basis, it can develop into anxiety or a number of anxiety disorders. Stress as in the case of anxiety, can have a mobilizing role, being a normal reaction of the body to changing environmental conditions. However, if internal self-

regulation mechanisms are disrupted or if the teacher is exposed to stressful conditions for a long time, stress can become chronic and negatively affect not only the teacher’s work, but also his general condition and other daily activities. Frustration states signify a state in which there is a discrepancy between what is desired and what has been achieved or the impossibility of satisfying needs. Frustration is usually accompanied by disappointment, anxiety, irritation, anger, sadness. The state of frustration, as a rule, has a negative effect on the general condition of a person, expressed in a decrease in motivation and desire to perform everyday tasks, deterioration in the quality of work performed or its complete avoidance. Depending on the general mental health of a person, as well as the body's ability to adapt and compensate, mental states can be quickly regulated with a predominance of activation and motivational states, but can also acquire a chronic form, as a result of reduced adaptive abilities, poor health or fatigue.

Material-method: Purpose of the study. Assessment of the mental state of school teachers. Research methods: theoretical analysis and generalization of data from specialized scientific and methodological literature; self-assessment of mental states according to scientist G. Eysenck.

Results Mental states represent a broad aspect of human mental activity at a specific point in time, reflecting the unique development of mental processes that depend on environmental conditions. However, these mental states are temporarily limited and replace each other. According to the results of the study by G. Eysenck, there are many variants of mental states: anxiety, aggression, frustration, and personality rigidity. The given technique allows us to determine the degree of expression of these mental states that can directly affect the overall quality of life [5, 17]. The test consists of 40 questions, each of which offers three answer categories, where each answer is assessed with points from 2 to 0: suitable – 2 points, suitable but not very much – 1 point, not suitable – 0 points. The questions are divided into 4 categories of mental states: questions 1-10 assess anxiety, questions 11-20 assess frustration, questions 21-30 describe aggression, and questions 31-40 assess rigidity. The sum of points in each category determines the degree of expression of a particular mental state (Table 2).

Table 2. Interpreting Testing

Mental state	<i>Anxiety</i>	<i>Frustration</i>	<i>Aggression</i>	<i>Rigidity</i>
0-7 points	Not anxious	You have high self-esteem	You are calm and self-possessed	There is no rigidity
8-14 points	Anxiety is average, at an acceptable level	Frustration takes place	Intermediate level	Intermediate level
15-20 points	Very anxious	You have low self-esteem	You are aggressive, intemperate	Severe rigidity

Discussion of the research results. The study carried out involved 30 teachers from different schools in Chisinau, in the age categories of 39-49 years. The results of the study are presented below. The average indicator (\bar{X}) for each category is: anxiety – 8.9 points, frustration – 7.5 points, aggressiveness – 6.7 points, rigidity – 8.3 points (Table 3).

Table 3. Eysenck's Mental States Test Results

№	Anxiety	Frustration	Aggressive- ness	Rigidity	№	Anxiety	Frustration	Aggressive- ness	Rigidity
1.	3	0	8	3	16	10	9	5	10
2.	15	13	10	14	17	5	7	5	7
3.	5	2	5	13	18	3	6	4	4
4.	1	0	7	5	19	1	0	7	5
5.	14	8	7	14	20	11	11	7	6
6.	16	15	9	12	21	11	9	8	6
7.	13	11	8	11	22	11	10	8	9
8.	16	15	8	15	23	9	10	8	15
9.	8	9	7	4	24	5	10	5	9
10	6	7	9	5	25	6	7	9	5
11	5	10	5	9	26	5	10	5	9
12	11	11	7	6	27	11	11	7	6
13	14	9	7	14	28	14	9	7	14
14	10	0	7	5	29	10	0	7	5
15	11	11	7	6	30	7	5	5	5
\bar{X}						8,9	7,5	6,7	8,3

According to the data obtained, it can be stated that the level of frustration and aggression are quite low. The low expression of these states indicates high self-esteem of teachers, their resistance to failures and difficulties, as well as prevailing calmness and restraint. Low rates of frustration and aggression indicate a high level of psychological stability, reasonable goal-setting, and the ability to regulate one's state in everyday life.

However, the indicators of anxiety and rigidity are slightly higher. Both conditions have a moderate degree of manifestation. The state of anxiety is a common phenomenon in the modern world, which occurs as a result of the influence of many factors of the external and internal environment. Anxiety manifests itself in a subjective feeling of uneasiness, fear, worry or excitement, rapid heartbeat and breathing, trembling and other physiological manifestations. Prolonged stay in a state of anxiety can lead to various diseases and disorders of physical and psychological health. The increased rigidity in teachers, which manifests itself in decreased cognitive flexibility and the ability to quickly adapt to changing environmental conditions, can be caused by long-term teaching activities that involve performing the same or similar actions year after year. Also, increased anxiety levels can influence increased rigidity as a result of a person experiencing fear or hesitation when applying something new or unknown. With a more detailed study of each of the conditions, you can find that the anxiety level is mostly average (50% of respondents) and 40% of respondents have low anxiety levels. Most respondents (53.3%) have an average level of frustration and 36% have a low level. 66.6% of teachers identify a low level of aggression in them. Also, 53.3% of respondents have a low level of rigidity, but 40% have an average level of rigidity (Fig. 1).

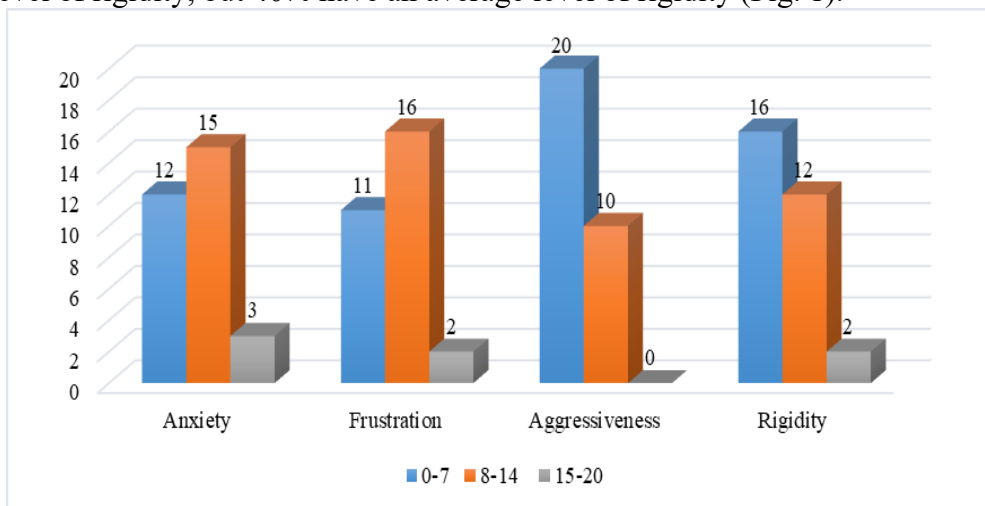


Fig. 1 Indicators of mental states among teachers

Based on the indicators of such important mental states, it can be affirmed that the teachers surveyed are quite stable mentally, also are able to regulate their states and do not allow them to develop into a chronic form. However, for some of the respondents it is important not to allow the aggravation of the states or their increase.

Discussions: The article produced provides a theoretical justification and a detailed description of the methods proposed by the authors for maintaining the mental health of teachers subject to emotional stress. The presented strategies are

based on the principles of psychosomatics (S. Freud and I. Malkina-Pykh) and non-directive psychotherapy (C. Rogers). The methods are grouped into three main categories: self-analysis of current life situations, energetic restoration of teachers and self-regulation of emotions in the context of group interaction. The study evaluated neuropsychological stress in teachers by applying Nemchin's method, highlighting the positive impact of the proposed interventions [18]. The study reveals significant differences in the mental health of teachers, showing that men show a better level of mental health compared to women. Also, teaching staff from the urban environment register higher scores compared to their colleagues from the rural environment [19]. The social, cultural and technological transformations of the last decades have profoundly influenced all fields, redefining the conditions of development for children, young people and adults [20].

Conclusions: Mental states accompany a person in any different activity. Some states are able to prepare and ensure an optimal level of performance, while others can interfere with or complicate the performance of everyday tasks. To ensure maximum productivity, it is necessary to know what mental states exist and how they influence activity, as well as how they can be regulated. Self-regulation of mental states is an important tool that helps to reduce or increase a particular state that is necessary at a particular moment [12, 14, 16]. Self-regulation methods include the following: neuromuscular relaxation, ideomotor training, breathing exercises, visualization, meditation, etc. During the course of the conducted research, it can be concluded that the severity of such states as anxiety, frustration, aggressiveness and rigidity, which most often have a negative impact on any activity, have low or average manifestations. That is, the surveyed teachers for the most part do not experience chronic manifestations of these states, however, some teachers with an average or increased level of these states need to be careful not to allow them to increase. From this point of view, it is possible to justify the relevance of the topic under study, as well as to carry out further research in the given direction by developing a model or experimental program using the methods of mental self-regulation, physical education, and also psychology, which would increase a person's ability to timely and appropriately respond to emerging life situations. The integration of the acmelogic concept in the development of physical education teachers allows the adaptation of teaching strategies to the needs of students, promoting both physical performance and a healthy lifestyle [21]. According to specialized literature, communication is the foundation of humanity, allowing the expression and sharing of ideas, feelings and knowledge [22].

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