

SELF-EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCE AS AN INDEX OF PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL MATURITY OF A FUTURE PRESCHOOL EDUCATION SPECIALIST

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Abstract: The article discusses the issue of developing auto-pedagogical competence in preschool education specialists. The problem is relevant for several reasons: the scarcity of domestic and foreign theoretical-experimental studies in this direction; the significance of the researched phenomenon as a component of the life competence of a future educator; the importance of implementing a systemic approach to the development of auto-pedagogical competence in preschool education specialists; the demand for pedagogical practices in diagnostic procedures and the formation of the investigated quality. The content and structure of the leading category are specified, criteria and indicators for assessing auto-pedagogical competence are developed, an author's typology is characterized, and pedagogical conditions for the effective development of the desire for self-improvement in preschool education specialists as individuals and professionals are substantiated. The purpose of the article is to elucidate the essence of the auto-pedagogical competence phenomenon, characterize the metrics for assessing its level of development, describe the author's typology of auto-pedagogical competence in preschool education specialists, and theoretically substantiate the pedagogical conditions for its effective development in higher education institutions.

Keywords: auto-competence; auto-pedagogical competence; self-development; reflection; subjective position; educational strategy; conditions for optimizing the educational process.

1 Introduction

The present day forces the student youth to solve life challenges of high novelty and complexity, actualizes the necessity to behave competently in a multivariate world to differentiate life events based on their significance, safety, and utility. This increases the importance of timely formation in future preschool education professionals of a conscious attitude towards life, the profession, and oneself; constructing an adequate worldview and self-concept; creating favorable conditions in higher education institutions for the formation and development of auto-pedagogical competence, the need for self-development, and self-improvement.

The problem of forming auto-pedagogical competence in future professionals of the preschool education system is one of the fundamental and insufficiently developed issues in domestic science. The main emphasis in this process should be placed on creating conditions for independent learning, self-development, and self-improvement of students. Such extensive work involves the implementation of a comprehensive approach, the development of specialized educational programs and methodologies, and the utilization of modern information and educational technologies and resources.

In the modern educational landscape, the requirements for the quality of education and professional competence of educators are constantly increasing. New achievements and technologies emerge daily, making it crucial for the student youth to adapt to them, learn quickly, develop their skills, and achieve personal and professional goals. One of the important components of a teacher's competence is auto-pedagogical competence, which involves the development of self-education and self-development skills, the ability for reflection, critical analysis of one's own activities, and continuous improvement of personal qualities and professional skills. They allow teachers not only to work effectively but also make them valuable and in-demand in the professional environment throughout their careers.

The transition in higher education from external regulators of behavior and activity of students to internal ones is connected with the processes of socialization of the individual and their moral development. The weakening and displacement of external forms of regulation occurs faster than the establishment of internal, value-based regulators of behavior and activity in the

student youth. This results in the emergence of a spiritual-moral vacuum in their consciousness which causes the inability to reconcile personal interests with group interests and individual strategy with social position. The primitive nature of needs and values, the depletion of their spiritual component, diminish the dignity of the individual, hinder their harmonious development, and impact auto-pedagogical competence.

Currently, there is a need for intentional self-improvement in the formation of future educators. No external system of influence is able to ensure the full formation of the personal and professional competence of modern youth. As individuals capable of self-development, it is essential to actualize their potential, recognize the importance of self-support and self-influence, and take an active position towards themselves as a future professional.

The key task of a higher education institution in modern Ukraine is to prepare a professional of a new formation capable of self-realization in the conditions of rapid social and economic changes, uncertainty of perspectives, high competition, and intensification of life. The formation and development of a personally and professionally mature educator is a complex and long-term process that necessitate the harmonious combination of the traditional focus on the culture of utility in higher education institutions with an increased emphasis on the culture of dignity.

The culture of utility, aimed at ensuring the functional suitability of the future professional, is pragmatic and adaptive in its nature, reduces the individual to functions, prioritizes knowledge, skills, and abilities. The culture of dignity focuses on the valuable vector of personality development of the future educator, actualizes the importance of taking into account the history of their individual development, unique personal experience, subjective position, basic moral and spiritual qualities, auto-pedagogical competence as a component of professionalism.

2 Literature Review

The theoretical foundations of our research are based on the works of both domestic and foreign specialists who specialize in the issues of professional competence of educators, self-education, self-development, and reflection, which are actualized in the educational activity. The analysis of scientific sources proves that in psychological-pedagogical literature, considerable attention has been devoted to the problem of preparing pedagogical personnel, the professional and personal development of future specialists. Numerous studies by domestic psychologists and educators, including H. Ball, V. Bondar, H. Belenka, M. Boryshevsky, I. Dychkivska, N. Havrysh, M. Zabrodsky, Ye. Holoborodko, V. Yevdokimov, O. Kyrychuk, V. Kremen, S. Maksymenko, S. Musatov, I. Onyshchuk, O. Ostapchuk, V. Rybalka, M. Savchin, V. Semichenko, T. Yatsenko, and others, are dedicated to the theoretical justification and technological modernization of approaches to its solution.

According to M. Barchii and M. Voronova, the problem of professional development of personality requires the development of professional consciousness among educators. This involves professional knowledge structured in specific programs of professional actions and an individual's knowledge about themselves as subjects of professional activity. Professional consciousness, in addition to the ability for reflection, is characterized by the subject's capacity for value-oriented self-determination and reflection as a way of their existence. This implies that the genuine mechanism of human development as a professional is the reflective ability for self-determination [2].

V. H. Kremen rightfully points out: traditionally, the educational process of a higher education institution is oriented towards the acquisition, at best creative, of a certain amount of knowledge.

This function remains one of the important ones but is not the only one. The main tasks of modern higher education include teaching young people to independently master new information, to apply acquired knowledge in their practical activities. To remain effective in the diverse field of communication and influences, an individual must be self-sufficient. For this purpose, it is necessary to abandon strict regulation of the process of formation of the future professional, to start helping them construct and implement an optimal path of learning and development based on their individual essence [10].

As noted by H. Ball, to develop as a personality, a student should make independent efforts for their own growth, self-development, realization of their essential forces, nurturing mechanisms of self-improvement, the ability to acquire more and more certainty to satisfy their basic individual and social needs. This entails incorporating a humanistic approach into the higher education educational process, which requires the utmost encouragement of youth towards personal freedom, inseparably linked with responsibility [1].

Among the various aspects of studying the issue of personal and professional development of an educator, the question of developing auto-pedagogical competence in student youth remains one of the least defined. It is indirectly touched by the researchers who investigate the issues of developing professional-valuable self-attitude, subjective position, the ability for self-development, personal and professional development, and personal-professional maturity in students.

In particular, V. Yevdokimov defines personal-professional development as the unity that includes both the development of professional activity and the development of the individual's professionalism. According to the author, the leading tendencies in personal-professional development are the development of subjectivity and the individual unique, creative potential. V. Yevdokimov emphasizes that the personal and professional development of the future educator is, on the one hand, the process of forming the personality, and on the other hand, the process of revealing and self-creation of personal and professional qualities, methods of activity, and pedagogical interaction. Personal and professional development of the educator involves gaining experience in overcoming obstacles on the way to achieving successful individual results in professional growth [20].

A considerable amount of work by domestic and foreign experts is dedicated to defining the content, structure, and factors of forming valuable self-attitude in future professionals. For instance, T. Bilan emphasizes the crucial role of positive self-attitude, adequate self-assessment in professional self-identification and self-development of an individual, in managing one's own behavior, and in shaping their demands. The author operates with the concepts of "adequate" and "inadequate" attitudes toward oneself, stating that the maximum adequacy in self-attitude is evidenced by a high level and moral content of self-esteem.

T. Bilan emphasizes: a necessary condition for the progressive development of valuable self-attitude is the youth's awareness of their virtues and flaws. The author notes that the attitude toward oneself is formed through self-awareness, based on the attitude towards oneself as an object of perception. The criterion for self-esteem, according to the expert, involves comparing oneself with others, and emphasizes the indirect nature of an individual's attitude toward oneself, influenced by external evaluations from authoritative figures and personal successes and failures. The author highlights the crucial role of reflection in professional development, the ability to analyze and assess adequately [3].

One of the most crucial factors in the formation of a spiritually oriented, creative, and independent educator is their internal activity an important determinant of which is adequate self-attitude. Foreign researchers such as A. Maslow, C. Rogers, G. Allport, V. Frankl, and E. Fromm emphasize the dependence of self-attitude on the socio-cultural environment. Representatives

of humanistic psychology reveal the content and meaningful invariants of personality and the process of self-actualization.

Highlighting the concept of self-actualization, A. Maslow expresses an optimistic view of human nature, emphasizing the significance of scientific knowledge about the reserves of the human spirit, the possibilities of personal growth, maintaining and restoring psychological health [12]. Continuing this idea, C. Rogers identifies external and internal factors and mechanisms of self-actualization, characterizes the qualities of a mentally healthy personality and justifies a higher level of self-actualization functioning [15].

A number of domestic experts emphasize the direct connection of self-attitude with personality development, its system of values, and fundamental qualities (O. Ball, M. Zabrodsky, O. Kononko, O. Reinpolska, and others); they highlight its subjective nature, rooted in the readiness to reflect on one's actions – to analyze, assess adequately, and make necessary corrections in pedagogical activities (I. Bekh, M. Boryshevsky, V. Oleksiuk, M. Savchin, V. Tatenko, and others).

Characterizing self-attitude as a personal phenomenon, M. Boryshevsky describes it as a specific activity of the subject directed towards one's own "self," evidenced by internal actions, emotional specificity, and objective content, representing a general feeling of being "for" or "against" oneself. The author notes that the basis of self-attitude is the process of evaluating one's traits and qualities in the context of satisfying or dissatisfying the need for self-realization. According to M. Boryshevsky, self-attitude is not confined to self-awareness but is linked to the real life activities of the individual. This expert emphasizes that the emotional and evaluative system of self-attitude is based on self-respect, self-sympathy, a sense of dignity, self-support, and maintaining a stable level of self-acceptance. [4].

Given that the issue of self-attitude is considered in the context of the professional activities of student youth, it is appropriate to focus on a concept closely related to the previous one, namely "professional-valuable self-esteem." Most experts qualify it as an integral characteristic of professional self-awareness, as a type of emotional experience, as feelings directed towards one's own "self," as an awareness of one's own value, and associate it with the position of the future educator as a whole.

V. Tatenko's approach indicates that a significant outcome of the process of self-awareness is the internal position of the doer: on the one hand, a professional doer, and on the other, the author of their inner world, their own personality. Professional-valuable self-attitude is qualified by this author as a position of an individual in relation to himself in professional activity, as an assessment by a future professional of their qualities and achievements. This position defines the complex attitudes of the future educator towards various aspects of their "self" in professional activities, constituting a unity of self-awareness, experience, and actions regarding oneself. According to V. Tatenko's definition, a positive internal professional position serves as an objective indicator of the dynamics of their professional-valuable self-attitude. The dynamic structure of this position vividly characterizes changes in the future educator's attitude toward themselves as a professional at all levels of their existence in the profession. [17]

S. Kharchenko identified leading groups of socially significant problems that, on a personal level, pose challenges to self-realization in professional activities. Three groups of problems have been identified: the problem of professional skills, the issue of interpersonal relationships in the pedagogical process, and intrapersonal problems - difficulties in self-feeling, self-regulation, and self-organization. Given that the framework in this approach involves assessing manifestations of "self," the young individual's awareness of themselves and their attitude toward themselves as an educator, a need to interconnect oneself and the profession, personal and professional issues, individual tasks, and values with professional ones is actualized [8].

Ye. Holoborodko emphasizes: a young person's attitude toward various aspects of their "self" is formed thanks to comparing their own perceptions of themselves (real and ideal) and considering evaluations from significant individuals. The complex of these perceptions is directly related to the professional and personal growth of the teacher, their self-realization, and self-improvement. The professional-valuable self-attitude of the future teacher determines their attitude towards themselves in professional activities, the process of their professional development, self-realization, and self-development [6].

Professional-valuable self-attitude is connected with the personal and professional maturity of the future teacher. The issue of professional maturity is devoted in the works of N. Didyk, O. Kononko, O. Lukasevych, L. Ovsianetska, L. Potapchuk, L. Rybachuk, V. Semichenko, H. Sukhobtska, V. Tsyna, I. Shevelyuk, and other experts.

L. Ovsianetska considers maturity as a state of complete development of the personality, their spiritual and intellectual abilities. Among the main characteristics of a mature personality identified by the expert are responsibility, the ability to actively interact with the environment, effective use of knowledge and skills, a creative approach to life, constructive solution of the complex problems on the way to self-realization, and dynamics of changes in leading motives and interests. Therefore, the author considers the maturity of the individual to be the total state of high development of the physiological, intellectual, volitional, moral and social parameters of a person. L. Ovsianetska attributes to the main characteristics of a mature personality: a developed "self-concept", a formed value-meaning sphere of life, the ability to establish social ties, the ability to make responsible decisions and analyze their effectiveness, creative abilities, moral qualities, a formed outlook, aspirations for self-realization, the ability to overcome life crises [13].

Characterizing the individual maturity of a person, V. Haluziak includes in it the ability to: independently predict one's behavior, obtain the necessary information and analyze it, constructively solve life problems, reflect on achievements and mistakes, draw conclusions from one's own behavior, and adequately assess the results of one's own efforts. The main structural components of personal maturity identified by the author include: conscious life goals, high social status, leadership qualities, independence, confidence in one's capabilities, creativity, a desire for self-realization, achieving high results, adequate self-assessment, a friendly attitude towards people, moral and spiritual qualities, striving for self-improvement, awareness of the meaning of life, and satisfaction with it [5].

V. Tsyna interprets the concept of "personal and professional maturity" of the future educator as an integrative characteristic of the individual, evidenced by their civic, life-professional, spiritual, social, psychological, and motivational maturity, self-development and the formation of key competencies. According to the author, this complex determines the individual's readiness for professional activity and the fulfillment of a subjective pedagogical position [18].

Summarizing the scientific achievements on the mentioned issue, it can be stated that most authors note that maturity is the apogee of development, and a mature personality is characterized, above all, by a high degree of constructive independence, adequate self-concept, internal determination of behavior, conscious attitude towards life, high productivity, and moral and spiritual development. The ability to actively respond to life changes, to competently solve professional problems is connected with self-determination, the subjective potential of a future specialist.

As V. Vikhrushch emphasizes, by demonstrating independence, creativity, and the ability to take responsibility, a young person creates themselves, enriches the experience of self-analysis, and outlines paths for self-improvement. Despite the fact that the issue of reflection is one of the current topics in domestic and foreign pedagogy, the features of its development throughout the

professional path, in the process of the specialist's development as a subject of reflection, remain insufficiently explored to this day. Scientists have noted a paradoxical inconsistency: on the one hand, pedagogical activity is reflective by its nature, professional reflection determines the intensity of a teacher's self-determination, contributes to their rethinking of mastery, and the ability for creativity; on the other hand, reflection as a pedagogical phenomenon becomes the subject of attention for a limited circle of researchers [19].

The phenomenon of reflection is considered in the context of various types of individual activities, analyzed within the framework of the specialist's individual experience, and actualizes the definition of factors, conditions, and methods of formation of pedagogical reflection. The works by T. Bilan, I. Bekh, S. Vaskovska, V. Vikhrushch, O. Dubaseniuk, N. Huzii, D. Humeniuk, L. Khoruzha, and others are dedicated to the issue of professional self-awareness.

According to D. Humeniuk's research, the reflective competence of a professional involves a thorough understanding of the pedagogical situation for the formation of the author's strategy (the ability to think in new, original ways), and therefore, the development of pedagogical reflection. The latter guides the specialist not only towards self-discovery of the essential characteristics of their professional work but also towards self-analysis of the results of its implementation. Pedagogical reflection, the ability to analyze and adequately evaluate achievements and miscalculations, respectively ensures the exploration of new non-standard ways of solving pedagogical tasks [7].

As O. Kononko points out, improving the preparation process of a future professional actualizes the need to increase attention to the purposeful regulation by students of their emotions and behavior in personal and professional spheres of life. The author notes that most educators find it challenging to cope with tasks related to the need for predicting, constructing, and determining a course of actions. This is explained by insufficient independence, a lack of relevant experience, self-doubt, and a dependence on consciousness and behavior primarily influenced by external determinants - instructions, prescriptions, and the control of authoritative people. Furthermore, the absence in the content of professional training of higher education institutions lacks a focus on the development of auto-psychological competence among student youth as an important index of professionalism of a graduate of higher education institutions.

Characterizing auto-psychological competence as an integrative category, O. Kononko emphasizes the need to optimize the educational process, the formation of qualities important for professional activity in student youth - efficiency, accuracy, reliability, stability, self-confidence. According to the author, important indicators of the formation of auto-pedagogical competence include a valuable attitude towards the profession and oneself in pedagogical activities, high labor productivity, and positive socio-personal characteristics [9].

T. Kremeshna emphasizes: the essence of the process of forming a student's valuable attitude towards themselves and their professional activity is manifested in the transformation of professionalism as a socially significant value into a personal one, the realization in practical activities. Transforming into a personally significant value, professionalism begins to act as an internal regulator of pedagogical activity. Receiving information about the essence of professionalism, the future specialist as an active subject of educational activity analyzes it on the cognitive and emotional levels, selects what is necessary for pedagogical practice, and satisfies their need for creativity.

This specified expert associates the effectiveness of developing auto-pedagogical competence with the formation of the future professional's: creative pedagogical individuality; knowledge at theoretical and methodological levels; use of modern educational technologies; cultivation of the student's subjective position; development of their creativity; cultivation of a system of needs and values; rejection of rigid regulation of the educational

process; granting youth the right to choose; utilization of the psychophysiological potential of the individual and enrichment of individual experience. T. Kremeshna includes methods of self-education, self-organization, self-control, and self-awareness as criteria for evaluating the productivity of pedagogical activity [11].

According to the research of V. Semichenko, self-awareness as a component of auto-pedagogical competence significantly influences the overall professional orientation of a future educator. The researcher notes: spontaneous formation of professional self-awareness hinders the adaptation of young professionals, slows down the process of their self-development, and reduces motivation for further improvement themselves as a personality and a professional. The expert actualizes the need to pay more attention to the student as an individuality and a subject of the educational process, fostering their ability for self-regulation, self-realization, self-development, and reflection. The author underscores: subjectivity is a decisive characteristic of auto-pedagogical competence, manifested through the young individual's aspiration for self-realization, positive changes in themselves and the educational environment, creative solutions to pedagogical tasks, and satisfaction with the process and results of professional activity [16].

Experts note that successful realization in a profession is impossible without the development of the semantic, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional aspects of personality. Successful continuous personal and professional growth is largely determined by the degree of development of auto-competence. Thanks to this, the full disclosure of personality in professional activity takes place, acquiring an individual professional style, activating its resources, reflection, self-improvement, and self-regulation. In the structure of a teacher's auto-competence, the following components are crucial: self-control, behavior in conflict, manifestations of empathy, willingness to collaborate, ability for self-analysis, modeling and forecasting, and acmeological support.

As emphasized by O. Dubaseniuk, professional activity not only satisfies the individual's needs for development and realization of potential, achieving a certain status, but also, due to the specificity of the activity, can lead to various types of professional disruptions, professionally conditioned accentuations, professional fatigue, and decreased efficiency. By professional disruptions, the author means changes in both activity and personality that negatively affect work productivity and interaction with others. This occurs during an unproductive exit from crisis, evidenced by a negative professional stance, decreased activity, deteriorating interaction with colleagues, and etc. O. Dubaseniuk notes: significant work experience is not always an indication of high professionalism: with age, an educator may enter a state of stagnation, be subject to stereotypes, and halt their progressive movement. The author emphasizes: focusing on something else can isolate the educator from their own personality and from professional self-preservation.[14]

Therefore, to develop auto-pedagogical competence in student youth, it is important to balance internal and external vectors, harmoniously combine the development of individuality and social orientation.

3 Methods

Analysis and synthesis of the philosophical and psycho-pedagogical literature on the researched problem; observation and individual interviews with the subjects to obtain empirical data regarding the specifics of auto-pedagogical competence in future educators were used in this study.

4 Results and Discussion

This research is aimed at studying the phenomenon of auto-pedagogical competence, defining its content, structure, assessment criteria, typology, and pedagogical conditions for optimizing the formation process of the investigated

phenomenon. Auto-pedagogical competence is understood as an integrative characteristic of the professional activity of a teacher, which includes the skills of self-education, self-development, self-analysis, and reflection, as well as the ability for independent improvement and adaptation to the changing conditions of the educational process.

During the research, authors proceed from the understanding that a stable positive attitude of a student towards themselves as the subject of future professional activity indicates their personal maturity, the completion of the process of professional self-determination of a preschool education specialist, the awareness that the chosen profession has a personal meaning for him, acts as a prerequisite for the formation of self-pedagogical competence. Auto-pedagogical competence of a preschool education specialist is considered as an integrative characteristic of their personality in professional activity, with the structural components being:

- a system of conscious, broad, and deep self-knowledge as an individual prepared for pedagogical activity.
- valuable self-attitude in the context of the profession of a preschool education specialist.
- personal and professional activity demonstrated through productive subjective position, the ability to act adequately to a situation, a creative approach to educational activity and interaction, and the constructive resolution of pedagogical problems.

The auto-pedagogical competence of a preschool education specialist is a process and a result of a conscious and managed process focused on self-awareness, self-reflection, self-improvement, the development of an individual style of activity and behavior, and the formation of fundamental personal qualities relevant to the profession.

Table 1 presents criteria for assessing the level of formation of auto-pedagogical competence in preschool education specialists and indicators for each criterion.

Table 1: Criteria and indicators for assessing the level of formation of auto-pedagogical competence in preschool education specialists.

CRITERIA	INDICATORS
<i>Self-determination</i>	Independently chooses a profession; defines the goal, motives, means of activity, and behavior; consciously influences their outlook, subjective position, self-attitude, and attitude towards the surrounding world, lifestyle; constructs, adjusts, and realizes professional perspectives; determines their activity in various spheres of life, trusts their self-assessment; seeks to manifest their individual characteristics externally, present their own capabilities, achieve high standards of quality; realizes the meaning of their personal and professional life.
<i>Self-organization</i>	Organizes their life activity; acts purposefully and constructively, always brings what has been started to completion; analyzes their actions, their effectiveness, and the consequences for themselves and others; correlates prognostic assessments with real results; controls and regulates emotions, behavior, judgments; adequately evaluates achievements; acts rationally, organizes their time correctly, does not get distracted by extraneous matters, focuses on the main tasks; recognizes and corrects mistakes, if necessary, adjusts results and actions.

Problem-solving	Recognizes the existence of a problem; feels like an active subject of life; acknowledges the right to make mistakes; approaches problem-solving with honesty, without deceit or exploitation of others; makes responsible and independent choices, selects constructive ways of action, and moral forms of behavior; demonstrates initiative, self-confidence, and optimism; selects the most appropriate alternative from several, implements their intentions in life; is aware of the consequences of their decisions and their impact on others; works on self-improvement, accumulates the necessary resources, stimulates creativity; guided by conscience and life principles that have personal meaning.
Reflection	Internally determined, capable of self-reflection on personal achievements and miscalculations; observes oneself, analyzes and evaluates own actions, qualities, and behavior style; recognizes the correctness and incorrectness of own deeds, the quality of learning, and work methods; knows what comes easier and what is more difficult; draws adequate and well-founded conclusions; constructively experiences various events in personal and professional life; acknowledges own virtues and flaws; reevaluates achievements and strives to move forward; prefers comparing oneself to one's past self rather than to other people.
Self-development	Open to new experiences, seeks to gain new knowledge, and improve as a person and professional; flexible and adaptable, capable of reassessing one's point of view, reevaluating values under the influence of undeniable facts; trusts intuition and individual experience; makes thoughtful, considered decisions; strives to break free from harmful habits; seeks positive changes in personal and professional life; gracefully handles both victories and losses, self-critical, humorously deals with mistakes, calmly corrects them, not prone to unhealthy self-blame; aims to unfold and enrich one's potential; actively engages with the surrounding world, seeks harmony with oneself and the environment.

Components taken into account during the analysis of empirical data that characterize the type of self-education competence of students include:

1. *Motivational* (interest in self-education, desire for self-development, and willingness to self-improvement).
2. *Cognitive* (theoretical knowledge in the field of pedagogy, psychology, and teaching methods; understanding of personal virtues and shortcomings; adequate self-concept).
3. *Operational and Activity-related* (skills and abilities in the implementation of self-educational activity; proficiency in relevant methods and technologies; solving pedagogical tasks and addressing professional issues).
4. *Reflective* (ability to analyze and evaluate one's own activity; the capacity to adjust and optimize professional skills).

The criteria and indicators for the development of self-education competence in future preschool education professionals, as described in Table 1, served as the starting point in assessing the

investigated phenomenon during the conducted exploratory experiment. The previously highlighted structural components of the studied phenomenon were taken into account. A total of 108 students from Nizhyn, Pyriatyn, and Drohobych participated in the experiment.

The main research methods included observation and surveys. Observation of the manifestations of self-pedagogical competence was carried out during the students' pedagogical practice in preschool education institutions in the process of choosing and performing tasks of a pedagogical nature. Each participant in the experiment underwent three observations, totaling 324 sessions. The observation protocols documented: independence in self-determination, organization in space and time, adequacy of response to obstacles, constructive resolution of pedagogical problems, the nature of self-analysis and evaluation of personal achievements and miscalculations, efforts for self-realization, striving for success, and improvement of results.

During the observation, it was revealed that only about a third of future preschool education specialists were characterized by high indicators of the development of self-pedagogical competence, stability in their manifestations, balanced consciousness and behavior, optimism, self-confidence, adequate self-assessment, and the desire to achieve success. At the same time, approximately two-thirds of the participants in the experiment, in situations of self-determination, mostly struggled, showed lack of self-confidence, required assistance and support from the teacher, exhibited inadequate self-assessment, highly unstable behavior, and impulsive emotions.

In order to identify the features of the development of future preschool education specialists' auto-pedagogical competence, they were asked to answer the questions of the thematic questionnaire. It consisted of eight open-ended and closed-ended questions, challenging respondents to, on the one hand, make choices from several provided alternatives (options), and on the other hand, independently formulate their own judgments about themselves as an individual and a professional. The response options from the participants are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Quantitative distribution of response options from future preschool education specialists to the questionnaire "Me in the Profession."

QUESTIONS	RESPONSE OPTIONS	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS (IN %)
1. Ideal of a person	Intellectual qualities	24
	Social-moral qualities	34
	Volitional qualities	18
	Physical qualities	8
	Not oriented towards an ideal	4
	No response	12
2. Ideal of an educator	Intellectual qualities	14
	Social-moral qualities	24
	Volitional qualities	12
	Physical qualities	10
	Prefessionalism	34
	Not oriented towards an ideal	4
3. Correspondence of profession to abilities	No response	2
	Fully corresponds	64
	Partially corresponds	20
	Does not correspond	10
	No response	6
4. Self-confidence	Confident	24
	Self-assured	12
	Not confident	32
	Varies	22
	No response	10
5. Reflection	Usually independently analyze, critically	26

	evaluate my achievements and miscalculations	32
	Occasionally reflect	18
	Rarely analyze my work, more often rely on the assessments of authoritative people	10
	Never reflect, just follow the requirements	14
	No response	
	Always act conscientiously	
	I try to behave conscientiously, but sometimes it turns out to be difficult	18
	I am guided more by external demands rather than a sense of conscientiousness	26
6. Conscientiousness	Conscience makes it difficult to achieve desired outcomes	34
	No response	12
	Intellectual qualities	10
	Social-moral qualities	24
7. Your virtues	Volitional qualities	38
	Physical qualities	16
	No response	10
	Intellectual qualities	12
	Social-moral qualities	20
8. Your flaws	Physical qualities	32
	Domestic issues	24
	No response	18
		10

The analysis of the response options of the future specialists made it possible to make a number of generalizations.

The respondents' responses to the *first question* related to the definition of the characteristics of an ideal person showed that the most important characteristics by which the students of the experimental group distinguish such a person from others are: socio-moral qualities (kindness, honesty, justice, responsibility, etc.); intellectual characteristics (knowledgeable, well-informed, thoughtful, creative); and willpower (endurance, perseverance, independence, confidence). Physical qualities (height, weight, appearance, clothing) proved to be significantly less essential. Interestingly, 8% of students avoided answering, and 4% indicated that they do not orient themselves towards an ideal because it does not actually exist.

Somewhat different from the previous ones were the responses to the *second question*, which concerned the image of an ideal educator. Respondents placed professionalism in the first position, understanding it as an integral characteristic of personality, their ability to systematically, effectively, and reliably perform complex teaching activity. Some respondents clarified that this refers not only to achieving high performance indicators but also to professional motivation, the meaning of work for the individual, and their professional outlook. This highlights the issue of the student youth's moral values towards themselves, teaching activities, the profession, and the world. Over a third of the respondents preferred professionalism over other qualities and attributes. Among the characteristics important for an ideal teacher, moral qualities were identified - humanity, justice, responsibility (24%). Intellectual, volitional, and physical characteristics were intermediate and received from 10% to 14% of the votes. A singular response was "I do not orient myself toward ideals" (4%), indicating the desire for independence.

Almost two-thirds of the respondents (64%) stated that they consciously chose a profession that corresponds to their abilities and preferences. At the same time, almost a third of the respondents admitted that the profession only partially (20%) or

not at all (10%) corresponds to their inclinations and intentions. They acknowledged that they entered the university on the advice of their relatives or counting on the support of acquaintances. A small number of students (6%) avoided the need to answer the question, indicating a likely uncertainty on this matter.

Anxiety-inducing are the responses of the respondents to the *fourth question*, which concerned their self-assessment of the ability to feel confident in the educational process. Only about a quarter of the experimental group (24%) affirmed that they usually behave confidently, overcome obstacles on the way to their goals, and bring what they start to completion. Concurrently, 54% of students, or more than half of the respondents, indicated their uncertainty (32%) or the instability of confident behavior (22%). Uncertainty most often correlates with undesirable qualities for a future teacher, such as a low level of independence, conformity, inability to establish harmonious relationships with peers, alienation, a habit of doubting everything, risk avoidance, and inadequate self-assessment. 12% of students acknowledged themselves as self-confident, and 10% avoided answering.

Considering that auto-pedagogical competence presupposes a high level of reflective development, the *fifth question* aimed to elucidate the self-assessments of the respondents. It was revealed that slightly more than a quarter of those surveyed are capable of independently analyzing the process and results of their activity, critically assessing it, and making corrections if necessary. Almost a third of the participants were satisfied with the answer "It varies," which is equivalent to "from time to time" and indicates uncertainty in judgment. Additionally, 42% of students admitted that they rarely engage in reflection (18%), simply fulfill requirements (10%), or do not have a definite answer (14%).

Usually, a future educator who strive for self-realization and self-improvement is a conscientious person capable of internal self-regulation of behavior and activity. Conscience serves as an internal ethical authority for them. Authors were interested in how future educators relate to their conscience. It turned out that only 18% of respondents always act conscientiously, guided by fairness and common sense. This is a very low result for a future educator! 82% of students either behave conscientiously from time to time (26%), acknowledge the priority of external demands (34%), believe that conscience complicates life (12%), or simply avoid answering altogether (10%). Thus, during the formative stage, it is essential to pay due attention to the development of conscience in the respondents.

Orientation towards one's virtues and shortcomings is an important condition for the formation of auto-pedagogical competence. Concerning their virtues, more than a third of respondents (38%) primarily included moral qualities: kindness, honesty, justice, responsibility, self-criticism, sensitivity, tolerance, which can be considered a positive result. Regarding their significant virtues, 24% of students included intellectual qualities: setting achievable goals, having plans to achieve them, enjoying reasoning, quickly memorizing new information, being attentive, learning easily, dealing with abstract concepts, effectively using acquired knowledge, having problem-solving skills, being inquisitive.

There is a certain underestimation by students of the volitional qualities and their role in the formation of self-competence. Only 16% of respondents paid attention to them and attributed independence, perseverance, self-confidence, determination, and self-control to their virtues. 10% of future educators included pleasant appearance, neatness of hairstyle and clothing, a beautiful voice, and a cheerful demeanor in their virtues. 12% of respondents left the question unanswered, which is a negative factor indicating a lack of adequately formed self-assessment.

32% of respondents admitted moral shortcomings ("Insufficient sensitivity," "Rarely show kindness," and "Often act irresponsibly"). At the same time, 20% of the student youth complained about their intellectual qualities, including the ability

to memorize, think independently, make mistakes, and be inattentive etc. 24% of respondents attributed some physical characteristics to their shortcomings, such as "Overweight," "Clumsy," "Unpleasant appearance," and "Quiet voice." Interestingly, 18% of those surveyed classified their shortcomings not as personal qualities but as domestic issues ("Unemployment," "Lack of money," "Inability to buy clothing," "Housing problems," "Conflicts with neighbors," "Technical malfunctions," etc.) The same 10% of respondents couldn't identify their shortcomings.

Based on the observation and survey data of future specialists in preschool education and relying on identified criteria, indicators, and components, a typology of auto-pedagogical competence has been developed. It includes four main types: *creatively-personified*, *pragmatically-personified*, *destructively-personified*, and *reproductively-depersonified*. Each type is characterized in Table 3.

Table 3: Qualitative-quantitative characterization of types of moral position in older preschool children

Type of self-pedagogical competence	Peculiarities of consciousness and behavior of representatives of each type	Quantitative Composition (in %)
<i>Creatively-personified</i>	Distinguished by a harmonious combination of a value attitude towards oneself (<i>dignity</i>), towards peers (<i>respect</i>), and towards collective activities (<i>responsibility</i>). Strives to satisfy both personal and group interests, achieve success, and attain high-quality standards. Business communication is balanced with personal interactions. Acts independently, purposefully, persistently, and confidently. Creative, resourceful, conscientious. Aims for success, oriented towards high-quality standards. Has a defined circle of friends while engaging constructively with any peer, establishing humane relationships, justly distributing roles, coordinating positions, considering partner's possibilities and interests. Recognizes personal virtues and flaws, acknowledges the achievements of partners. Friendly, sincere, honest. Aware of rights and responsibilities, guided by moral norms in behavior. Communicative activity is extensive and productive; communication means are diverse, with a preference for dialogue over monologue. Inclined towards reflection, self-assessment is adequate, mostly positive, dependent more on real achievements than external judgments.	24
<i>Pragmatically-personified</i>	egocentric interests dominate, as well as narcissism, a desire to achieve success at any cost, and demonstrate achievements and abilities to others. Takes moral norms and social boundaries into account. The character of joint activity is determined by the partner's authority: the more influential and higher the status in the social group, the more the child takes them into consideration. Activity manifests situationally, usually higher at the beginning than at	36

	the end. When facing difficulties, easily loses confidence and readily seeks help. Acts cautiously, avoids risks, primarily follows familiar algorithms. Towards a more authoritative peer, behaves cautiously, obsequiously, tries to be helpful, pleasing, willingly complies with their demands and requests. In interactions with those weaker, may show hostility, intolerance, aggression, attempts to dominate, exploit others for personal gain. Makes deals with the partner for success, seeks advantageous conditions, resorts to cunning. Emotions are unstable, communication style varies from harmonious to conflictual depending on the satisfaction of own interests. Self-assessment is inadequate, inflated, demands are higher than the contributions of personal efforts to shared achievements.	
<i>Destructively-personified</i>	Demonstrative type inclined to various forms of antisocial behavior. Engages in practical and verbal actions aimed at the destruction of constructive content and harmonious interaction. Abuses rudeness, violates basic moral norms of behavior, and ignores rules and limitations. In interactions with peers, often conflicts, shows aggression, humiliates, criticizes, insults, mocks failures, and threatens. Distrustful, impulsive, internally insecure, and externally conscious violator of social norms, prone to counterproductive actions and unwillingness to fulfill the social role of a companion or a humanely oriented partner. Emotionally unstable, inconsistent in expressions and behavior. Spends some time alone, communication with peers is brief, joint activities are short-lived, and interactions often involve differences and misunderstandings. Communicative abilities are weak, and the toolkit is poor and monotonous. Eagerly asserts "rights" and at the same time easily forgets about duties and promises. Monologue dominates over dialogue. Self-assessment is undefined, unstable, and demands are unjustifiably inflated.	28
<i>Reproductively-depersonified</i>	Social orientation predominates over valuable self-attitude. Tries to adhere to social norms and requirements in interaction with others. Friendly but non-initiative, lacks self-confidence. More often responds to proposals to interact than initiates them. Seeks not so much to achieve success as to avoid failure. Tries not to attract attention, to remain "in the shadows." Behavior depends on the control and guidance of authoritative people – adults or	12

	<p>more skillful peers. Avoids any problems, conflicts, and the need to solve them. Usually acts according to a pattern, chooses simple familiar tasks, avoids risks. In joint activity, almost never suggests ideas, does not make independent decisions, does not stand up for positions, is satisfied with average qualitative and quantitative indicators. In communication, acts as an executor of decisions and proposals of peers. Does not feel upset about it, feels comfortable. Does not take offense at criticism, does not take a refusal to communicate personally, easily switches attention to something else or remains an observer. Poorly orients in own virtues and flaws. The circle of communication is undefined, situational. Self-esteem is inadequate, low, and demands are low. Judgments about oneself are determined exclusively by the opinions of authoritative people.</p>	
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In order to form the auto-pedagogical competence of preschool specialists, it is advisable to:

- *work with personal goals and motivation* (students' determination of their learning goals and motivations will help to understand how to achieve them and develop professional skills);
- *use innovative learning technologies* (interactive whiteboards, computer programs, multimedia presentations);
- *growth in the specific weight of independent work* (students' independent study of the material, conducting research, data analysis, formulating conclusions);
- *constant development, enrichment of personal experience* (pedagogical practice, internship, participation in conferences, seminars, master classes, online courses, webinars, electronic library, educational platforms and social networks).

Overall, the formation of auto-pedagogical competence in future preschool educators involves creating conditions conducive to the development of self-organization, self-analysis, reflection skills, as well as providing access to various sources of information and educational resources.

Based on the analysis of scientific sources provided at the beginning of the article, we have developed and substantiated pedagogical conditions for optimizing the process of forming auto-pedagogical competence in future preschool education specialists. These include:

1. Approaching the content of education with the realities of today; ensuring a balance between the activity of students' inner world and their external behavior.
2. Cultivating self-organization, self-analysis, self-assessment, and reflection skills among student youth; shaping specific, measurable, achievable, time-bound personal goals.
3. Creating a developmental environment within higher education institutions for active exchange of experiences among students, discussion and analysis of professional issues, finding ways to solve them, and receiving feedback from both tutors and students.
4. Implementing distance and mixed learning formats for education of student youth, developing and utilizing modern information technologies and resources.

The implementation of a complex of the specified pedagogical conditions into the educational practice will contribute to optimizing the educational process and developing in future specialists in the preschool sector the ability to purposefully self-define, make independent and productive decisions, realize their potential, self-improve, and assert their dignity and personal boundaries.

This will shape auto-pedagogical competence, enhancing the ability of student youth to independently learn, regulate behavior and actions, and adequately evaluate achievements. It will help prepare highly qualified specialists capable of adapting to the rapidly changing world and effectively addressing professional challenges.

In the long-term perspective, the development of auto-pedagogical competence in future specialists in the preschool sector will contribute to the improvement of the quality of the educational process in higher education institutions, professional mobility, and self-realization of student youth. This, in turn, will modernize the educational process, introduce a systematic approach to personality development into pedagogical practice, be based on the principles of the humanistic paradigm and the principle of subjectivity, and meet society's needs for creative specialists.

5 Conclusion

The research is dedicated to the phenomenon of developing auto-pedagogical competence in future specialists in the preschool sector. By this, we mean an integrative characterization of personality, evidenced by the ability of student youth for self-organization, goal-setting, self-regulation, self-analysis, and reflection. It refers to the future educator's capacity for self-improvement as both an individual and a professional. Criteria, indicators, and components were identified to characterize the degree of formation of auto-pedagogical competence in students. An author's typology of the investigated phenomenon was developed and justified, including creative-personified, pragmatic-personified, destructive-personified, and reproductive-depersonalized types. Pedagogical conditions for optimizing the process of forming auto-pedagogical competence include: 1. Aligning the content of education with the realities of today; ensuring a balance between the activity of the inner world and the external behavior of students. 2. Engaging student youth in the manifestation of self-organization, self-analysis, self-assessment, and reflection skills; formation of specific, measurable, achievable, time-bound personal goals. 3. Creating a developmental environment within higher education institutions for active exchange of experiences among students, discussion and analysis of professional issues, finding ways to address them, and receiving feedback from both instructors and students. 4. Implementing distance and blended learning formats for student education, developing and utilizing modern information technologies and resources.

Prospective directions for further development of auto-pedagogical competence in preschool education specialists involve expanding the geographical scope of diagnostic procedures, creating a model for effectively fostering students' aspirations for self-improvement in both personal and professional qualities, and developing methodological support for this specific area of work.

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Primary Paper Section: A

Secondary Paper Section: AM