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Modern Class Teacher: New Priority Tasks and Requirements

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Abstract

The role of the class teacher in the modern educational space is increasingly attracting the attention of both the state and society as a whole. The class teacher is required to comply not only with state standards, but also with the expectations of society and socio-cultural norms. An analysis of existing studies has revealed an acute shortage of activities devoted to studying the ideas of adolescents and their parents about what qualities an ideal class teacher should have. The purpose of our study is to analyze the ideas of students and their parents about what qualities an ideal class teacher should have. The Republic of Tatarstan (a region in Russia) became a research site in which 321 schoolchildren and 303 parents took part. The participants were asked to define the role of the class teacher in the class, his/her personality traits, characteristics (gender, age, hobbies, etc.). The survey results showed that students' ideas about the ideal class teacher are practically no different from their parents' opinions. It does not matter what gender, age, hobbies their teacher has, whether he/she plays sports, can sing or play musical instruments. Among the priority professional and personal qualities of a class teacher, respondents named "love for children", "love for one's work", "patience", "fairness". In addition, the roles, professional skills, and abilities of an ideal class teacher were identified.

Keywords: class teacher, parents, schoolchildren, requirements for a class teacher, ideal image.

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Introduction

Many international (European Commission, 2020; Recommendation, n.d.) and Russian regulatory documents and studies (The Government of the Russian Federation, 2015) emphasize the role of the younger generation education in modern conditions. Modern problems of education are caused by economic and political reforms, changes in socio-cultural life, social stratification of the standard of living of most families, destruction of established moral and ethical norms and traditions of family life. A wide range of mental anomalies and deviations in children's behavior, deterioration of health, neuroses, manifestations of aggression are noted. Neglect of the targeted organization of educational work at school aggravates all these negative factors.

In this regard, the role of the class teacher, who is entrusted with this high mission, increases to a greater extent. In domestic schools, the institution of class management as the main educator of the class is preserved. Class management is a special type of pedagogical activity aimed at solving the problems of education and socialization of students. A class teacher is a school teacher who performs the functions of an organizer of children's lives, aimed at strengthening and developing mutual understanding between students, their parents, teachers and other participants in the educational process.

Ching-Leung-Lung (2013) considers the role of the class teacher as a mentor and consultant, guiding and stimulating the activities of students, developing their personal growth, and creating a positive culture in the classroom. O. Vasilachi and T. Rusnac believe (Vasilachi & Rusnac, 2021) that the class teacher is the leader in organizing and managing the educational process in the classroom. Foreign researchers pay great attention to the study of problems related to the competencies of class teachers in the field of environmental education (Uyanik, 2020), their activities in the context of a pandemic (Tahani, 2021).

The evolution of the educational system places ever higher demands on class teachers for their competence, professional skills and abilities, and personal qualities. The formation of the professionalism of a class teacher is closely intertwined with the expectations of society and the state, but it is important to consider the opinions of parents and students, who build up the picture of what an ideal class teacher should be like. Such information will become a valuable tool for a class teacher who wants to develop his/her personal and professional skills and abilities, as well as strengthen his/her authority among colleagues and students. Thus, the information received will help to rethink the role of the class teacher in the upbringing of the younger generation, enrich it with new meanings, and make the necessary changes to the class teacher's profессиogram.

Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the ideas of students and their parents about what qualities an ideal class teacher should have.

Literature review

The requirements for a class teacher are dictated by the level of development of modern society, pedagogical science and practice. Educational functions in a general education organization are performed by all teaching staff. At the same time, a key role is assigned to class teachers. At the present stage, the institution of class management exists in the post-Soviet space, in China, France and a number of other countries. In the USA, a special structure has been formed – the dean's office, which deals with education issues. In the foreign education system, the functions of the class teacher are related to each other by practicing teachers, tutors, school psychologists, social educators (Nikolina et al., 2023).

The Letter of the Ministry of Education of Russia dated 12.05.2020 N VB-1011/08 “On methodological recommendations” (2020) sets out the main functions and areas of work of the class teacher. To perform these functions, the teacher must have developed professional and personal qualities; he must have professional knowledge, skills, and abilities that will allow him to effectively perform the assigned educational tasks.

The personality of the class teacher remains the subject of study by scientists and practitioners (Spirina, 2023). The studies reveal the specifics of the class teacher's work, directions, types of activities and functionality of class management (Batashova et al., 2023); features of the class teacher's work with parents (Buralova et al., 2023); a comprehensive analysis of the main difficulties facing the class teacher in the implementation of educational functions (Ostyakova, 2020).

The ideal model (example, standard, image) of a class teacher is a job description, which includes: the main personal qualities that a class teacher should have, knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform the functions of a class teacher. A professionogram is also understood as a qualification characteristic of an employee.

The professionogram of a class teacher, as an ideal professional image, includes the components described in Table 1 (Handbook, 2002).

Table 1. The profессиogram of a class teacher.

Class Teacher Qualities	Class Teacher Knowledge	Class Teacher Skills and abilities
Love for children, ability to communicate with them, trust, understanding, patience, responsiveness, goodwill, sincerity in relationships, high level of culture, broad outlook, personal charm, sense of humor, resourcefulness, firmness and determination of character, self-confidence, willpower, dedication, diversity of emotional life, high level of development of all mental properties: perception, imagination, memory, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge of the features of development of the personality and the children's group, • psychological and pedagogical knowledge, • general knowledge (knowledge from different areas of human life) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diagnostic, • design, • practical, • evaluative, • reflexive

The scientific literature analysis showed that scientists are mainly engaged in studying the image of an ideal teacher (Selmurzaeva et al., 2023); researching the traits and qualities that can characterize an effective teacher (Al-Busaidi et al., 2016; Samples, 2013); and the attitude of students towards the teacher (Vahdani-Sanavi & Demirkol, 2024; Wan et al., 2011).

Batashova et al. (2023), Okunev (2024), Spirina (2023) presented in their studies the ideal image of a modern class teacher. Muskhonova (2024) revealed the attitude of students toward the class teacher. Buralova et al. (2023) analyzed the satisfaction with the activities of the class teacher on the part of students and their parents.

Selmurzaeva et al. (2023) argue that in the scientific literature there are practically no studies of the ideal image of a class teacher among different subjects of the educational process. This fact once again emphasizes the relevance of the chosen topic of our research.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the Republic of Tatarstan (a region in Russia). 321 schoolchildren and 303 parents took part in the survey. The survey was conducted using a questionnaire, which consisted of eight semi-closed questions, and four additional questions were intended for parents. The survey was conducted by filling out an electronic questionnaire compiled in Google forms. Students and their parents were asked to answer 9 questions (the role of the class teacher in the class, personality traits, gender, age, hobbies, etc.). Parents were asked to answer 4 additional questions (the format of the relationship between the student and the class teacher; the professional skills of the class teacher; the role of the class teacher in a

person's life; the problems and difficulties that the class teacher currently faces; the importance of work experience in the work of the class teacher).

The research methods used in the study are as follows: analysis and reflection of scientific literature on the research problem; survey of parents and schoolchildren in the form of questionnaires; generalization and interpretation of the obtained data; frequency analysis, ranking. To assess the degree of statistical reliability of differences between various indicators obtained in the study of boys' and girls' ideas about the ideal class teacher, the statistical criterion of differences – φ^* – Fisher's angular transformation was applied.

Results

As for the survey results, 92.1 % of schoolchildren and 95.9 % of parents are confident in the necessity of the position of class teacher at school.

The results of the answers to the question "What role should a class teacher play in the classroom?" are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' ideas about the roles that a class teacher should perform in the classroom.

Class teacher's roles	Schoolchildren (n = 321)		Rank	Parents (n = 303)		Rank	Φ^* empir.	Hypothesis
	Frequency	Valid percent age		Frequency	Valid percent age			
Controller (monitoring academic performance and discipline)	238	74,1	1	263	86,8	1	4,01	H ₁ , p≤0,01
Parent (second mother)	125	47,4	3	86	28,4	5	4,89	H ₁ , p≤0,01
Defender (supporter and protector in difficult circumstances)	195	60,7	2	226	74,6	2	2,75	H ₁ , p≤0,05
Manager (leisure manager)	54	16,8	5	109	36	4	5,48	H ₁ , p≤0,01
Friend (senior comrade)	63	19,6	4	129	42,6	3	6,57	H ₁ , p≤0,01

According to the table, children and parents agree that the class teacher is obliged to ensure control over the students' studies and behavior, as well as to provide support in difficult life situations. However, opinions differ on the issues of the class teacher's further responsibilities. Children see the class teacher as

a figure reminiscent of a second mother, while parents tend to associate the teacher with a friend or older comrade.

For 73.2 % of schoolchildren and 82.3 % of their parents, the gender of the class teacher is not significant. Despite this, 23.9 % of children and 17.4 % of their parents would rather see a woman as the ideal class teacher.

The age of the class teacher is not important in educational work for 53.3 % of schoolchildren and 55 % of parents. At the same time, 7.2 % of schoolchildren and 25.7 % of their parents preferred a young class teacher (20–35 years old). And 37.8 % of children and 19.7 % of parents believe that the optimal age of the class teacher should be 35–55 years.

According to 74.6 % of children and 80.4 % of parents, a class teacher does not necessarily have to play sports, sing and play musical instruments (74.6 % of children, 96.2 % of parents), or have a hobby (55.1 % of children, 58.6 % of parents). At the same time, it is important for 17.9 % of parents and 23.9 % of schoolchildren that a class teacher play sports. It should also be noted that 41.2 % of parents and 43 % of children believe that a class teacher should have a hobby.

The results of the survey of schoolchildren and their parents on the question “What qualities should a class teacher have?” are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Class teacher’s personal qualities distribution.

№	Class teacher’s personal qualities	Schoolchildren		Parents		Φ^* empir.	Hypothesis
		frequency	rank	frequency	rank		
1	Kindness	178	9	246	2	6,98	H ₁ , p≤0,01
2	Erudition	64	25	118	17	5,2	H ₁ , p≤0,01
3	Patience	227	3	239	4	2,3	H ₁ , p≤0,05
4	Honesty	214	5	182	10	1,6	H ₁ , p≤0,05
5	Responsiveness	155	14	209	7	5,2	H ₁ , p≤0,01
6	Fairness	200	6	231	5	3,7	H ₁ , p≤0,01
7	Strictness	91	24	164	12	6,5	H ₁ , p≤0,01
8	Cheerfulness	160	13	71	24	6,9	H ₁ , p≤0,01
9	Love for children	267	1	268	1	1,86	H ₀
10	Love for work	228	2	244	3	2,8	H ₁ , p≤0,01
11	Loyalty	120	19	34	25	7,8	H ₁ , p≤0,01
12	Politeness	163	12	112	19,5	3,5	H ₁ , p≤0,01
13	Willingness to help	218	4	122	16	6,9	H ₁ , p≤0,01
14	Exactingness	52	27	133	14	7,6	H ₁ , p≤0,01
15	Literacy	186	8	217	6	5,3	H ₁ , p≤0,01

№	Class teacher's personal qualities	Schoolchildren		Parents		Φ^* empir.	Hypothesis
		frequency	rank	frequency	rank		
16	The ability to allow almost everything to a child	60	26	16	26	4,1	H ₁ , p≤0,01
17	Ability to show little emotion	16	29	1	29,5	9,4	H ₁ , p≤0,01
18	Emotionality	96	23	12	28	5,3	H ₁ , p≤0,01
19	Sociability	191	7	116	18	3,3	H ₁ , p≤0,01
20	Ability to keep distance in communication	44	28	18	27	1,2	H ₀
21	Goodwill	149	16	125	15	2,2	H ₁ , p≤0,05
22	Ability to listen	168	11	185	9	2,2	H ₁ , p≤0,05
23	Justice	154	15	180	11	2,8	H ₁ , p≤0,01
24	Ability to provide assistance to a child	130	17	112	19,5	1,01	H ₀
25	Ability to understand a child	177	10	111	21	4,6	H ₁ , p≤0,01
26	The ability to not interfere in children's affairs	35	30	1	29,5	6,9	H ₁ , p≤0,01
27	Ability to take the student's point of view	99	22	102	22	0,8	H ₀
28	The ability to find an approach to each child	123	18	208	8	7,6	H ₁ , p≤0,01
29	Creativity	104	21	77	23	1,8	H ₁ , p≤0,05
30	Orderliness	117	20	134	13	10,3	H ₁ , p≤0,01

The children named the following as priority qualities for a class teacher: “love for children”, “love for work”, “patience”, “willingness to help”, “honesty”, “fairness”, “sociability”, “kindness” and “ability to understand a child”. Their parents noted such qualities as “love for children”, “kindness”, “love for work”, “patience”, “fairness”, “literacy”, “responsiveness”, “ability to find an approach to each child”, “ability to listen”, “honesty”. It is obvious that the personal qualities of the class teacher are most important for students. In addition to personal qualities, it is important for parents that the class teacher also has professional qualities. They are concerned that the class teacher is competent, able to find an approach to each child, and able to listen to the child.

It is also worth paying attention to the parents' answers to additional questions. All parents agreed that the class teacher plays a significant role in the life of each person. 51.8 % of parents believe that work experience is important in the work of the class teacher. At the same time, 21.4 % did not agree with this statement, and 26.8 % of respondents found it difficult to answer.

When asked what format of relations a class teacher should adhere to in communication with a student, 71.5 % of respondents named the style of cooperation. The comradely style was chosen by 21 % of parents, equality was chosen by 4.5 %, and the format of subordination was chosen by 3 %.

As for professional skills a class teacher should have, it is worth mentioning that respondents consider that an ideal class teacher should “be able to convey information in an accessible way” (86.7 %), “understand the peculiarities of the child’s psyche” (75.9 %), “organize the educational process” (51.5 %), “be stress-resistant” (70.6 %), “show pedagogical exactingness” (54.2 %), “be able to influence the child” (43.3 %). It should be noted that, according to 14.5 % of parents, the class teacher should “know how to conduct a parent-teacher meeting.” Obviously, for parents, the ability of the class teacher to find a common language with the child and to engage in the education of schoolchildren is more important.

The final question that parents answered concerned the problems and difficulties that, in their opinion, the class teacher currently faces. The following results were obtained: 43.4 % of parents named such a problem as “bad manners of children”, 41.3 % noted “disrespectful attitude of parents to the class teacher”, 31.9 % singled out “bureaucracy, a large flow of documents that have to be filled out”. In addition, 18.3 % of parents believe that the class teacher faces “children’s addiction to gadgets”, 6.3 % have problems with “low wages”. 26.4 % of parents did not respond to the last question.

Discussion

It should be noted that the obtained results coincide with the conclusions made by Ostyakova (2020). The main problems faced by class teachers are due to bureaucratic workload, a large amount of paperwork, difficulties in contacting children at risk, modern parents due to “inadequate” demands on their part. It was also found that most parents see the main mission of the school in teaching schoolchildren. At the same time, educational work is given a second place.

In addition, our results confirm the results of Spirina (2023) that the ideal class teacher should have such qualities as patience, love for children, politeness, and kindness. Our findings coincided with the findings of Glikman (2003) that the class teacher should be sociable, kind, patient, cultured, and have impeccable behavior.

It is highly likely that parents value such qualities in class teachers as “kindness” ($p \leq 0.01$), “erudition” ($p \leq 0.01$), “patience” ($p \leq 0.05$), “responsiveness” ($p \leq 0.01$), “fairness” ($p \leq 0.01$), “strictness” ($p \leq 0.01$), “love for one’s work” ($p \leq 0.05$), “literacy” ($p \leq 0.01$), “ability to listen” ($p \leq 0.05$), “ability to find an approach to each child” ($p \leq 0.01$). It is highly likely that students value the following qualities in their class teachers: “honesty” ($p \leq 0.05$), “cheerfulness” ($p \leq 0.01$), “loyalty” ($p \leq 0.01$), “politeness” ($p \leq 0.01$), “willingness to help” ($p \leq 0.01$), “demandingness, ability to show little emotion” ($p \leq 0.01$), “emotionality” ($p \leq 0.01$), “sociability” ($p \leq 0.01$), “friendliness” ($p \leq 0.05$), “ability to understand a child” ($p \leq 0.01$), “ability not to interfere in children’s affairs” ($p \leq 0.01$), “creativity” ($p \leq 0.05$), “orderliness” ($p \leq 0.01$).

The ideal class teacher, according to the children, should not allow himself to get angry, yell at children, have favorites among the students in the class, or have bad habits.

Conclusion

The issues related to the education of the younger generation, the growing role of the class teacher in a modern school, and the increasing demands on the personality of the class teacher remain relevant in scientific literature. Effective interaction of the class teacher with students and parents is a key factor for the successful implementation of educational activities. Understanding the attitude of children and their parents to the class teacher, as well as their vision of the image of an ideal teacher, will help to adjust professional actions and revise the content of the class teacher's profессиogram so that it meets modern requirements as much as possible. Thus, we were able to scientifically substantiate the role of the class teacher in the educational process, as well as analyze the ideas of students and their parents about what qualities an ideal class teacher should have.

As a result of the survey of students and parents, a portrait of the ideal class teacher was formed. It turned out that external characteristics, such as age or gender, do not play a decisive role in this image. The main qualities that students and their parents undoubtedly value are the ability to monitor academic performance and discipline, as well as the willingness to provide support in difficult situations. In their opinion, it is not necessary for a class teacher to have athletic talents, a musical education or the ability to sing. At the same time, the presence of hobbies will undoubtedly play an important role.

The practical significance of the study is that the results obtained can be used in the process of training future class teachers, professional development programs, and in working with parents.

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