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Image of the Teacher in the Light of Needs and Social Expectations

Abstract

In contemporary school reality expectations for the teacher cause that the teacher is obliged for more and more advanced creating the professional image. Technical competence, in the everyday work cannot be sufficient in order to meet requirements of dynamic social and civilization changes. Also, general competence of the teacher performs the substantial role. The constant professional development is a requirement of accommodating the teacher to the work with the new generation of pupils, parents and educational surroundings.

Key words: teacher, school, pupil, qualifications, competence, professionals

Słowa kluczowe: nauczyciel, szkoła, kwalifikacje, kompetencje, profesjonalści

Introduction

Who is a contemporary teacher? What is the social rank of the teaching profession in the contemporary world? Among teachers, on conferences and scientific seminars there are discussions about the qualifications, competence, character, the personality, principles, moral attitudes, the function and the role of a teacher he or she plays in the society.

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At his work a good of the child is a maximum value. The teacher is a person who is responsible for the fate of students (Krawcewicz, 1987, pp. 14–15). How J. Karbowniczek notices the teacher becomes an organizer of the educational process, the diagnostician, the innovator, the class tutor and the educationalist (Karbowniczek, Kwaśniewska, Surma, 2013, p. 158). Teacher of the contemporary school is “a creator with a versatile action, inspiring for action and the searching, teaching openness to the second man, animator of the education and educational life” (Kucharska, 2005, p. 214). The maximum value of teaching ethics is to bring up the wise man who has the ethical knowledge and a skill of choice of appropriate values (Horbowski, 2005, p. 244).

As analysis of the literature on the subject shows the image of the contemporary teacher is associated in the public view with the person who is competent and qualified, guided by social values in pedagogic action assumed, possessing the multilateral knowledge and skills and constantly raising his/her classifications. Many factors result in the image and the prestige of the teacher: intellectual values — knowledge, abilities, experience, moral values — character traits, personalities, attraction — neat appearance, propriety, tact. A teacher is a person prepared professionally, appropriately educated, having a comprehensive knowledge and being characterized by exceptional character traits.

Qualifications and competence of the teacher

In contemporary pedagogy, as well as in fields of study cooperating with it, a test of the theoretical and empirical search concerning qualifications and professional competence of the teacher is taken. The teacher is expected to have high professional qualifications, as well as different competence manifesting among others with such properties as: the openness, the communicativeness, the reflectiveness, the ability of undertaking to cooperate and the cooperation, creativity, innovation, criticism, ability for the creative thinking. Educational challenges, as well as wide tasks put before the teaching profession as a group socio-professional generate the need of creating the optimum model of the contemporary teacher. The model should include such qualifications and competence which they can make the teacher perform professional and high qualitatively tasks.

It is important to gain such a concept of the teacher which would answer to:

- challenges of times;
- current social needs (expectations of participants and authors of the educational process: parents of the pupils, students, teachers);
- world tendencies;

— requirements of European educational reality which would work in conditions occurring of integration processes (Muszkieta, 2001, pp. 5–19; Ordon, 2007, pp. 56–67).

The teacher of the contemporary school performs professional tasks in conditions of the exchange of cultures and formation of multicultural societies. Their realization takes place in dynamic, changing and becoming complicated educational reality, so in this situation the teacher should be a mobile, an opened and innovative person, being characterized by a great level with creativity, with ability to act creatively and non-conventionally. He should have a knowledge of education law, to know basic law regulations, to know the scope of education systems, functioning in various countries, the possibility of the education and the professional training in the European education and the labor market.

Constructing the model of the contemporary teacher one should emphasize that according to European tendencies he is supposed to have higher professional qualifications, irrespective of the degree of the level of the education, in which he performs professional tasks. He should be a top-class specialist in the speciality represented by oneself, as well as have qualifications for teaching other, related disciplines of science (Dziewulak, 1997, p. 143).

So the base of the model forming a contemporary teacher, also of teacher of the basic education is specialist vocational education, carried out exclusively on the higher level and updated and deepened in the course of the professional development, the self-education and the practice.

The next crucial factor of program of skills needed in teacher's work, is wide professional competence. This competence concerns different spheres of pedagogic action. Their base is initial competence which include the general culture of the teacher, conditioning correct relations with all participants in the educational process, as well as ethic-moral competence meaning the ability of the ethical pedagogic procedure for charges, the ability to think preferentially for the good of students and the knowledge about border of ethical legal validity in proceedings. In the model of the contemporary teacher competence bases are very important, necessary to perform educational psychologic-pedagogic, technical, pragmatic and creative functions. Having them conditions the quality of the pedagogic teacher action. A general, specialist extensive knowledge and psychological-pedagogic knowledge is rates of base competence, as well as ability of its recruiting and updating by using the modern information technology.

Teacher — the effective professional in contemporary educational reality must be a social person, being able to cooperate with all people of the educational space, pupils, parents, local environment, authorities and other supporters of the school. In the current economic situation of the education his cer-

tain manager abilities are prerequisite, e.g.: recruiting sponsors, creating the vision of the school and her promotion in the environment. These skills are combined with pragmatic competence — conditioning the ability of the teacher in planning and creating own educational actions.

A sequence of teaching functions and duties is listed in the literature on the subject. According to B. Surma the pressure is put not only on a technical-business-like good training, but above all for the forming of crucial competence (2014, s. 9), which let be a good “organizer of educational process (education and upbringing), diagnostician, innovator, psychotherapist, as well as the person being able to cooperate with the family of the child and with the local environment” (ibidem). Among teacher functions which are crucial are the functions of guide, manager, initiator and integrator (Denek, 2016, p. 269).

As J. Szempruch notices, in professional action, an openness of the teacher which indicates understanding of contemporary world and the awareness of its place in this world, is necessary. Professional skills of the teacher, his knowledge about the life, understanding problems of the modern world, but first of all desire for professional development and an emotional commitment into the everyday pedagogic effort shape the new dimension of the education, raising its quality. Such an education makes the pupil the subject of the education, it motivates him, it is not boring, becomes interesting, creative, innovative and stimulating (2001, p. 68).

I. Adamek thinks, that teacher is able to meet tasks which a modern society expect him to do only if he has, besides indicated features, an ability to the elastic thinking and the adjustment to different situations (2016, pp. 195–196). The author believes that the most important professional competence of the teacher, deciding on the quality of the education are: “communicative, creative, computer and moral (so-called personal competences — motivation, honesty, credibility, responsibility etc.)”

Particularly important for the teacher is the ability for independent and constructive action, to the creativity in performing professional tasks. The teacher should perceive his profession in three perspectives: present, past and future. As I. Adamek notices, the work of the teacher is characterized by non-standard methods and the dynamic changeability, so it is not always possible to expect existing situations and. The teaching education and the preparation for the teacher career should aim to educating for the proper performance of professional tasks and preparations for the professional development, requiring permanent teacher autonomy.

Many definitions of the concept “competences” exist in the literature, there are also many of their classifications. Theoreticians and practitioners, researchers of issues associated with the subject of competence, often distinguish in their studies competences needed at the teaching work determining them with

names: crucial, basic, main (p. 199). The changing social reality causes, that there is no constancy in taking away the being of crucial competence, because occurring transformations require their constant updating and adapting to civilization requirements and their compliance with an accepted system of values by the society.

The important place is assigned to the group of competence called “general abilities”, having interdisciplinary character, cross-sectional, independent of the subject and the stage of the teaching, being applicable to various areas of educational actions. This kind of competence turns out to be very valuable and useful in case of becoming known of unpredictable situations, in which competence technical can turn out to be insufficient.

I. Adamek ranked among them: communication skills, problem solving, logical thinking, leadership, creativity, motivation, ability of the teamwork, ability of the learning (p. 199). Here an ability of controlling and understanding own thought processes turns out to be important and self-learning, ability of the conscious and responsible selection of appropriate methods, appropriate for the given educational environment. Besides the knowledge and the skills, professional competence of the teacher includes very important qualities as: motivation, creativity, skepticism, honesty, responsibility, enthusiasm, self-esteem, credibility, desire for initiating and inspiring various actions, perseverance.

Social and interpersonal competence means the need of both establishing and sustaining different relations of social personal and professional tasks, demanding seeing teamwork, language skills, respect of other cultures and the tradition in a proper way. At the work of the contemporary teacher competence is necessary in information and communications modern technologies, including opening to other cultures, respect of persons, their values and their achievements.

E. Korczewska formulated the requirements concerning the ethical attitude of the teacher. According to her the teacher working with the small child should:

1. Be sure about the fact that he wants to serve his students. Carrying out the mission of the teaching profession in the context of the vocation, one should be aware, that they serve not an idea, but persons. The child needs the guide — the person who help to lead him to surrounding world.

2. Be convinced. The teacher must know a lot in order to do his job well. The inquisitiveness of the small child in getting to know world requires so that the knowledge and abilities of the teacher should be wide.

3. Follow the rules. Generally perceived as desired. If the teacher establishes principles in the group, ruthlessly he is obliged of respecting them.

4. Study to develop willingly. It is a requirement which should accompany the everyday teacher activity not only professional, but also practical one. A self-education is one of basic conditions of being a competent teacher.

5. Be a person you can rely on. Accompanying in the development, getting to know world by the child, conducting the student through difficulties he can experience in his every day, in out of home environment, requires the situation in which the teacher show his kindness, patience and convince the child that he won't disappoint him and will help with every difficult situation (Korczevska, 2009–2013, pp. 6–7).

W. Strykowski quotes understanding competence as the classification. According to the author teaching competences are: knowledge, abilities and beliefs which are essential for the effective teaching and protective work at school (2007, p. 80). It is worth listing the competence areas, important for the teaching profession here.

The set of competence is not full, the list is not closed. Strykowski distinguishes following kinds:

a) technical competence (material) — refer to material, contents of teaching as part of given area, subject, educational track;

b) psychological and pedagogical competence — they are connected with a psychological and pedagogic knowledge of contemporary teacher. They let him find the theoretical base for diagnostic, teaching and education actions;

c) diagnostic competence, associated with getting to know pupils and their surroundings — they include examining and identifying the existing state of situation. The subjects of the recognition are: pupils, individual developmental features of pupils and the social-education environment of school children. Getting to know, that is diagnosing pupils consists of the descriptive and explaining diagnosis. The descriptive diagnosis relies on the description of the specific phenomenon, the feature, or the behavior, however the explaining diagnosis seeks causes and sources. The teacher gets to know pupils with selected methods, monitoring techniques, conducting psychological and teaching tests;

d) competence in the field of planning and designing — in order to gain intentional well-organized education and teaching activity teacher must earlier plan and design his work. The teacher should prepare programme, plan of teaching and education operations;

e) teaching-education competence — this competence area takes teaching-education — competence back oneself to the being, principles and methods of implementation of the process of educating. Cells, methods, forms, teaching centres should be adapted for the purposes of classes and character of material of the teaching and to needs and of the possibility of pupils;;

f) communication competence — it is knowledge to the subject of the process of communicating and the ability of the effective broadcasting and receiv-

ing announcements. A process of the intercommunication of the teacher with pupils has a fundamental influence on education and the upbringing;

g) media and technical competence — refer to organizing the workroom of the teacher and the pupil. A workshop is a notion which is taken back for equipping the school with devices, resources and teaching centres;

h) competence associated with the control and the evaluation of achievements of pupils and the quality measurement of the work-controlling and assessing is an essential element of the well-organized process of educating. B. Niemierko calls this competence the educational diagnosis;

i) competence concerning the design and the evaluation of programmes and school books — if we want to have a good program or a textbook they must fulfill the following functions: information, incentive, exercise, transformation, control-correct and self-learning;

j) autoeducational competence, associated with the professional development — refer to the constant education and the self-improvement of the teacher. The contemporary teacher should be creative and constantly raise his qualifications as well as improve the specific workshop;

k) creative competence — it manifests itself through the innovation and the non-standard action, they have a great influence on the educational process of foster students (Strykowski, 2007, pp. 24–32).

Taking everything into consideration the development and the specific character of the teaching profession, J. Szempruch distinguishes following competence:

— interpretative-communications which are manifested by the communication, understanding and the dialogue in the relation teacher–pupil;

— creative, which are manifested by the innovation and the creativity of the teacher;

— cooperation competences, seen as the ability to create relations and integrating teams;

— pragmatic, referring to effectiveness of the planning, organizing, the realization and the evaluation of educational processes;

— computer-media, expressing the ability of using the information computer technology, during educational processes (2001, pp. 114–119).

The teacher of basic education

The teacher of the early education is a person who performs the leading role in the educational process. A. Klim-Klimaszewska (2012, pp. 162–163) emphasizes that he/she effects the selection of contents of the education-teaching work as well as selects effective methods of pedagogic influences. And so his/her

qualifications and professional competence constitute the relevant aspect of the social image of this profession. Training requirements are an extremely crucial element at employing the teacher, because they constitute so to speak the guarantee, that teacher, acquiring qualifications, was prepared for meeting the completion of statutory duties (Korczyńska, 2009–2012, pp. 1–2).

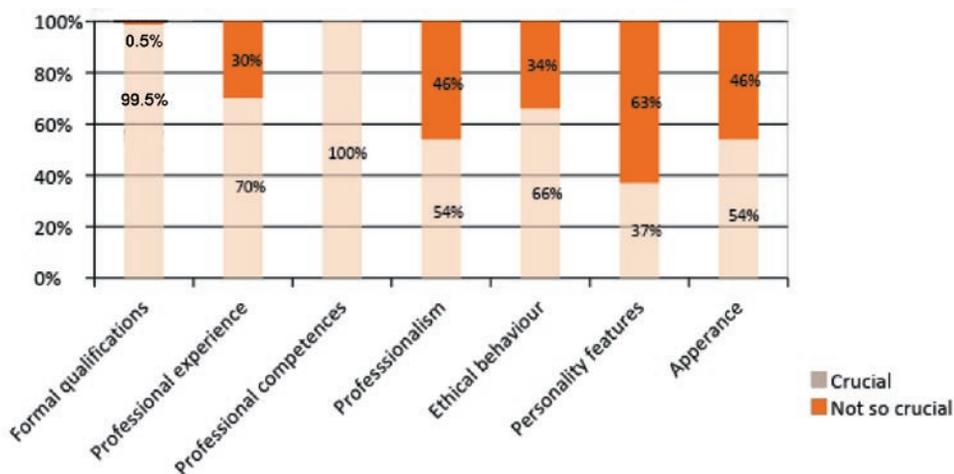
The teacher is a specialist, after all apart from the didactic — education preparation is also essential-internal — “appointing to the profession” (p. 151). So the task of the teacher is carrying out basic functions and educational duties: teaching, protective, social and education and socialization, according to assumptions of the subjective education, with respecting needs, of aspirations of the child and with providing for him conditions for the self-realization. Also, creating conditions for creative actions of the child is the teacher obligation.

It should lead to “achieving by the child the highest level of development, allowing for undertaking new tasks, overcoming more and more great problems, the forming of abilities allowing for the smooth functioning in surrounding reality (crucial abilities)” (ibidem). The appropriateness of the education on the initial rank is the fact that the teacher should fulfill all exchanged functions to the same degree. They appear according to J. Karbowniczek and A. Klim-Klimaszewska (2016, pp. 568–569) in mutual connections, whereas fulfilling one is often an essential condition for the implementation of other. Role of the teacher, on the discussed educational rank goes beyond functions determined in the school and upbringings curriculum, involving functioning of the teacher in the social environment and with creating conditions for the optimum child development.

It is not easy to agree with reflection that the role and the position of the teacher in the basic education is appointed by his high professional competence. An acceptance of the child taking the central place as the main subject of the education, becomes important, setting conditions to his optimum development of the personality of the specific appointed child through his abilities and the forming of child broad development (Mielczarek, 2008, p. 167). However, it is not possible to become a teacher immediately — it is the lasting process of the forming of knowledge, ability, predisposition and competence. It is a long-lasting process on the way to understanding and noticing the others.

The results of own studies

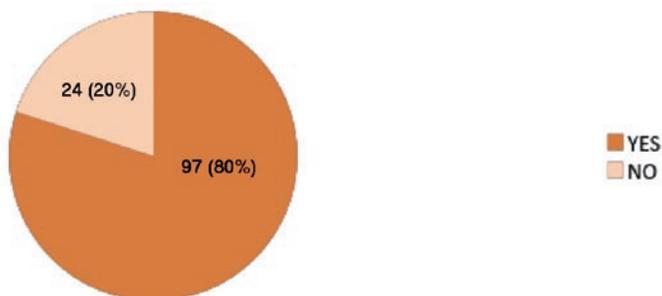
Conducted surveys were aimed at making an attempt of the search of an answer to question: what is the perception and social image of the contemporary teacher, what features, behaviors, classifications and professional competence



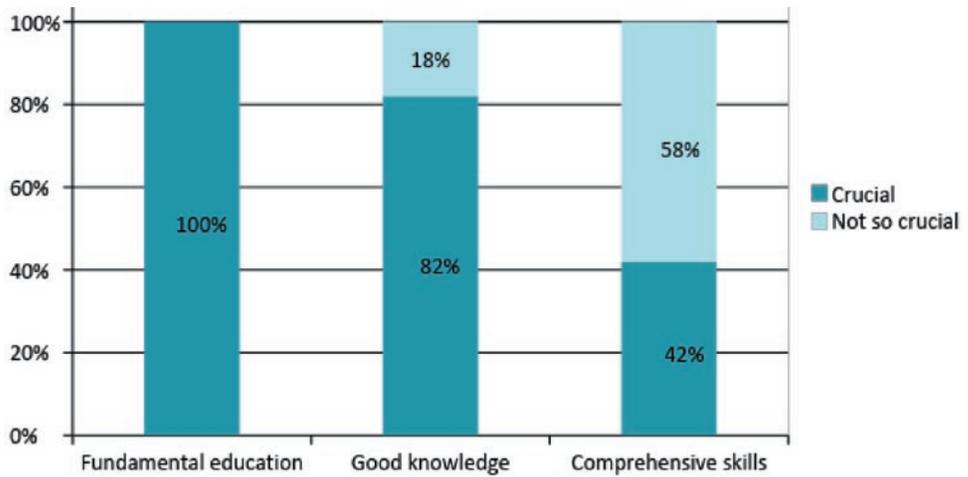
Graph 1. Factors influencing the image of the contemporary teacher in the opinion of respondents

are regarded as important. In order to gather empirical material surveys, the studies were conducted.

121 respondents took part in it-persons are representatives of different social groups. Respondents come largely from urban environments (78 — 64.5%). The sex turned out to be the diversifying feature of respondents: 80 (66%) — women, 41 (34%) — men. Describing the age of respondents it should be told that the age was enough diversified; respondents were in an age between 22 up to 60 years old. The level of education of respondents also turned out to be the feature diversifying the examined population: a 55 (46%) persons was recorded with the higher education, 41 (34%) of persons with the secondary education, and 24 (20%) sounded with the vocational secondary education.



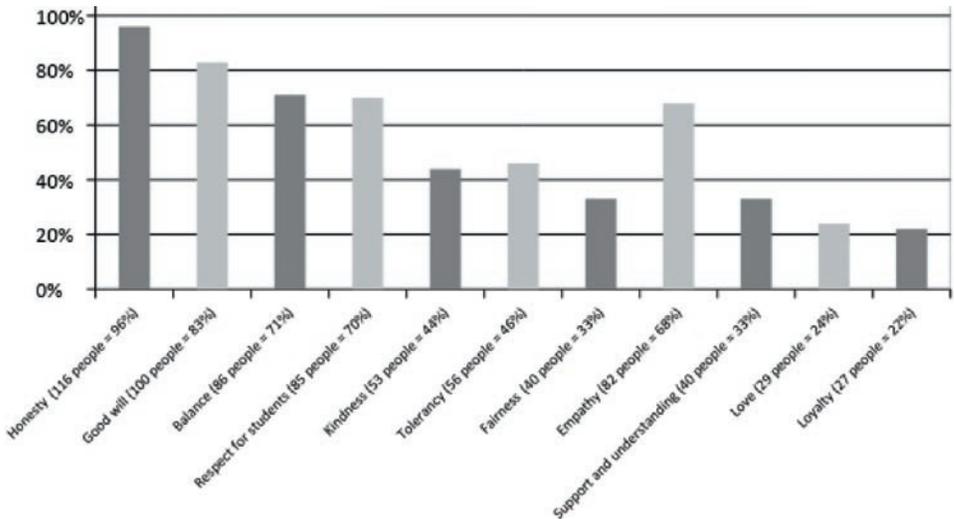
Graph 2. Meaning of the classification and professional competence in the image of the teacher in the opinion of respondents



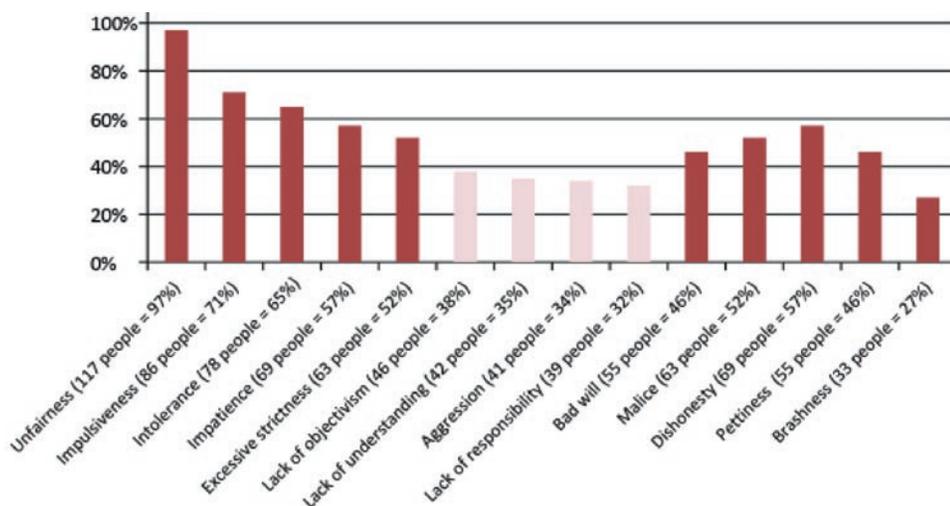
Graph 3. Determining factors about the image of the teaching profession in the respondents opinion

Respondents were asked about factors having, according to their opinion, influence on the image of the contemporary teacher. Collected data was presented on following graphs.

To the question: what features, principles and attitudes of the teacher create his positive social image in the large degree, respondents differently replies.



Graph 4. Determining factors about the image of the teaching profession in the respondents opinion

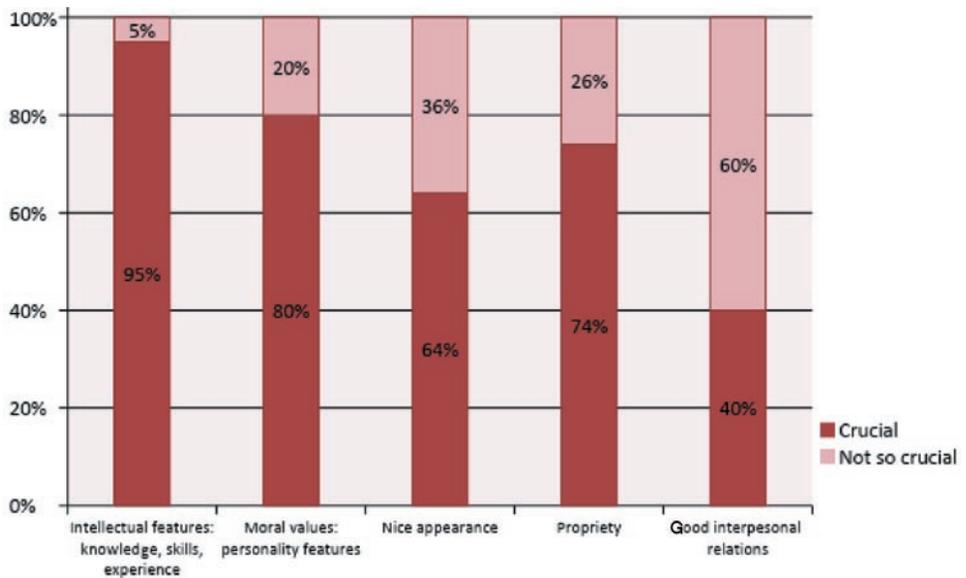


Graph 5. Features negatively influencing the social image of the teaching profession

The substantial amount of respondents thinks that the teacher should be characterized by such features as: honesty (116 — 96%), good will (100 — 83%), balance (86 — 71%), respect for students (85 — 70%), kindness (53 — 44%), tolerance (56 — 46%), fairness (40 — 33%), empathy (82 — 68%), support and understanding (40 — 33%), love (29 — 24%), loyalty (27 — 22%).

In the further test procedure respondents indicated features which influence the social image of the teaching profession negatively. In this context according to their opinion — such features should not characterize the teacher: unfairness (117 — 97%), impulsiveness (86 — 71%), intolerance (78 — 65%), impatience (69 — 57%), excessive strictness (63 — 52%), lack of objectivity (46 — 38%), lack of understanding (42 — 35%), aggression (41 — 34%), lack of responsibility (39 — 32%), bad will (55 — 46%), malice (63 — 52%), dishonesty (69 — 57%), pettiness (55 — 46%), brashness, nervousness impetuosity (33 — 27%).

As you can see from the results of studies the deciding influence on the authority of the teacher have intellectual features (115 — 95%) and moral values (97 — 80%). Very important in feeling of respondents there is a propriety — his tact. Respondents assign the appearance to the teacher (77 — 64%) and ability of building the appropriate interpersonal relationship (48 — 40%).



Graph 6. Factors affecting the authority of the teacher in the opinion of representatives of different social groups

Conclusions

The contemporary teacher working in the changing social reality, in conditions of happening educational changes should take care of the image of his profession. According to results from conducted surveys the image depends on suitable qualifications and professional competence, appropriate personality traits, desired behaviors and social postures.

In the light of social expectations the teacher should increasingly become not only an author, an animator of the educational process, but also its manager, the person integrating educational surroundings, acting for the child and families, basing his educational action for static social values. He should perform tasks in such a way, in order to teach children the cooperation and cooperating in the team, creating and performing tasks with exploiting crucial social competence, to shape natural need of action, cognitive curiosity, aspiration, creativity, creative attitude at people's charges. The teacher should cope with many social expectations of new times — for new civilization challenges.

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