Public Standing of a Teacher and Its Adjustment

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Abstract
Public standing of a teacher is reflective of the customary social attitude towards the profession and associates with the efficiency of the professional practice. The dynamism of social processes determines the importance of defining modern criteria for the semantic categorization of teacher's public standing, differences in the perception of students, parents and school teachers themselves, as well as improvement of the teacher's indigenous creed. The Article presents the results of studies of particularities in the perception of the public standing of a teacher by high school students, their parents and school teachers (N = 150). Using the method of semantic differential and factor analysis, a categorical structure of the perception of a teacher's public standing has been defined, including the factors of 'kindness', 'competence' and 'prestige'. Verifiable group differences in the semantics of a 'teacher' were revealed in categorical criteria 'competence' ($p \leq 0.05$). In the course of comparing particularities of perception of professional and personal public standing of school teachers, it was determined that personal self-esteem is significantly different from the professional one: educators perceive a 'teacher' as less kind, but more competent and prestigious than their 'self'. In the process of adjustment work with school teachers (N = 50), which was based on the principle of outbound mediation of personal and professional introspection processes, there was a change in the teacher's inner public esteem: bridging the distance between perception of a 'teacher' by teachers and students, as well as the convergence of its semantic evaluation with the self-esteem of teachers. The research results bring the need to find ways to increase the prestige of teachers' work in contemporary Russian society.

Keywords: teacher's public standing, students, parents, school teacher, semantic evaluation, perception, factor analysis, external evaluation, teacher's self-assessment.

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1. Introduction

The social importance of teacher's activities determines sustainability of scientific interest in the social and psychological determinants of its effectiveness, personal characteristics of school teachers and conditions for their professional development. While the role of a teacher remains decisive for the processes of individual and social development of schoolchildren, the attitude towards it in contemporary world with its dynamically changing value priorities is unstable. The place of the notion 'teacher' in the public consciousness, the attitude of the examinees – students and parents, as well as teachers themselves, under the conditions of global value changes, undergoes transformation that affects performance of the education process. Identifying particularities of the semantic status of the character of a school teacher, comparing ideas about a teacher between different groups of subjects of the educational process can be the basis for determining ways to improve the effectiveness of educational activity by adjustment of public standing of a teacher.

Public standing, being the object of active societal interest and scientific research today, is determined in differential ways. We have accepted its understanding as the one of sustained group impression, opinion or judgment about an object (Kyshtymova, 2014). The concept of 'Public standing' designates the attitude that has developed in a society towards an object, which can be either poorly comprehended, non-reflexive, as well as rationally justified. In any case, that attitude, firstly, determines the behavior of people in relation to the vehicle of public standing, trust in him, and secondly, influences the bearer of public standing, his self-esteem and behavior.

The issue of perception and self-perception of the character of an educator, school teacher and university professor today is the subject of various studies, whose analysis shows the diversity of methods used and the results obtained, in particular, semantic bases used in categorizing a teacher's character.

Thus fundamental attributes, on the basis of which the concept of a 'teacher' was evaluated, 'observance of rules' and 'capability to influence others' come under consideration. The data were obtained on the basis of analyzing the results of students' interpretations of pseudo-tautology: 'A teacher is a teacher' (Belova, 2016). In another study, using the method of assessing qualities significant for teacher's performance on a given scale by students, it was determined that 'professionalism', 'credibility', 'attitude to the subject of instruction', 'altruism', 'beauty' and 'modesty' of teachers are important for schoolchildren (Slepko, 2013).

When determining teacher's public standing using the method of semantic differential, its penta-, hexa- and hepta-factorial structure was generated, which included such common factors as, for example, 'peculiarities of professional communication', 'teacher as a person', 'psychological affinity with the teaching profession'. The data on the differences in the factor structure of the assessment of a public standing in six different age groups of schoolchildren were presented: 10 to 16 years (Kalyuzhny, 2010), which may be the basis for the conclusion about the instability of that assessment, and, therefore, based on the data obtained by the author, it was impossible to draw a conclusion about the identified particularities of the teacher's public standing, since public standing is characterized by stability.

A social image of a teacher came under review using the analysis of conceptual metaphors: in the course of the study, future educators supplemented an unfinished sentence 'In Chilean society, a teacher is understood as …, because …,' then the resulting statements were discussed and ranked. As a result of the research, the image of a modern teacher was characterized through his positive ('announcer', 'father', 'engine', 'superhero') and negative ('insect', 'mechanical device', 'nanny', 'robot', 'victim') semantics. The authors concluded that the social conditions, under which a teacher works, have a greater impact on the categorization of his public standing than his professional capacity: the reason for its predominantly negative image-building characteristics was the social discredit of the teacher, low reward of his work (Alarson, 2018).

The method of describing memories was used by Chang-Credl when studying the particularities of a teacher's image among social media platform users: The examinees compiled texts about their best and worst teachers, the analysis of those essays afforded us to identify ways of shaping positive public standing of a teacher through the presentation of his character in the media space (Chang-Credl, 2017). Ideas about teacher were also investigated using the method of metaphorical evaluation, which afforded to identify particularities of the holistic: analytical and, at the same time, emotional – reflections of the perceived object (Guerra, 2009).

The method of analyzing photographs was used in the study of the relationship between mental and visual (reflected in photographs) images of teachers (Bautista, 2018). Their difference, according to the position of the authors, was the basis for actualization of the processes of reflection and changing the model of one's behavior among teachers.

The study of self-image and self-esteem of teachers in the face of changing formal requirements for their work, in particular the need to use digital technology in the educational process, was carried out using qualitative methods: interlocution and semi-structured interviews – which allowed teachers to discover how their perception of their professional image depends on their attitude to new educational conditions (Fransson, 2018).

In scientific works, the importance of adjustment of teacher's inner image, the need to harmonize the ideas about it with the teachers themselves and other participants of the educational process, were defined. At the same time, the data on the basic assessment categories, according to which public standing of a teacher is evaluated, is contradictory. Whereby the importance of focused work on pedagogical image-building noted by researchers, theoretical foundations of its organization were unclear. Programs in the course of their implementation targeted at improving teacher's inner image had a general educational character (Ignatenko, 2014).

2. Materials and Methods

Determination of the factors on the basis of which a 'teacher' is categorized and, accordingly, its assessment is shaped, which determines public standing, was carried out using the method of a dedicated semantic differential composed of pairs of bipolar constructs that characterize professional and personal qualities that are important for the performance of pedagogical activity, whereby examinees evaluated public standing of a teacher on a 7-point scale. Evaluation adjectives were determined on the basis of assessment using the G. Kelly repertoire grids method – the stimuli of 'my favorite teacher' and 'my unloved teacher' by students of a Teachers' Training Institute (N = 34).

To identify the particularities of a teacher's image, his semantic evaluation was matched against semantic evaluation of mythopoetic characters: Vasilisa the Wise and the old witch Baba Yaga, whose characters are endowed with stable semantics in mass consciousness and can serve as symbolic markers of the positive and negative poles of the image of a 'teacher/schoolmaster'.

The character of Vasilisa the Wise traditionally symbolized wisdom, beauty and kindness, manifested in her attitude to others. The nature of Baba Yaga, on the other hand, was manifested through negative attitude: 'She kidnaps children and tries to roast them' (Propp, 1998: 147). Baba Yaga's ugliness, as well as her 'connection to the realm of the dead' (ibid.) also gives grounds to use that ambivalent character as a marker of the negative semantic boundary of the semantic space of the image under study.

'Mom' and 'Dad' incentives, marking zones of emotional intimacy and 'self' stimulus, were also subjected to semantic evaluation, the importance of which was determined by the task of identifying the differences between professional and personal self-esteem of school teachers participating in the study.

150 people participated in the research: 50 students of the upper grades of secondary school No. 34 of Irkutsk, 50 parents and 50 teachers working in schools No. 34 and 43, as well as in senior high schools No. 3 and 25 of Irkutsk. Diagnosis of the characteristics of the perception of the stimulus 'teacher' in the group of teachers was carried out twice: before and after the implementation of the experimental program targeted at adjusting teacher's inner image. Thus, the categorial structure of the image-building assessment was determined on the basis of processing 200 diagnostic protocols.

The program was based on the principle of media artistic mediacy of personal development, the proposition that personal and professional reflection, updated in the process of perception of teacher's artistic images and their discussion, contributes to changing teacher's attitude to self as a professional, reducing differences in the semantics of the teacher's structural components in groups of students, their parents and teachers.

Mathematical processing of the data obtained in the process of research was carried out using the IBM SPSS Statistics 23 statistical set. The non-parametric Mann-Whitney U-test was used to compare the values of independent samples, while to compare more than two independent samples, the Kruskal–Wallis test was employed. To assess credibility of the shift in the values of the

test attribute, the *Wilcoxon test was employed*. To determine the indicators of semantic evaluation of the stimuli under consideration, factorial analysis procedure was used.

3. Findings

The analysis of data obtained in the process of diagnostic research made it possible to determine the main evaluation categories according to which teacher's public standing was assessed. To do that, the values obtained in the course of semantic evaluation of the six stimuli, were subjected to a factor analysis procedure using dominant component analysis. Three factors were determined on its basis, explaining 73.233 % of the variables scatter.

The first factor with a high specific load included such scales as 'light – dark' (0.845), 'warm – cold' (0.840), 'good – evil' (0.825), 'pleasant – nasty' (0.808), 'friendly – hostile' (0.808), 'honest –deceitful' (0.793), 'favored – hated' (0.779), 'understanding – not understanding' (0.775). Based on the meaningful value of the scales, the factor was designated 'kindness'.

The second factor of 'competence' was made on the scale: 'Experienced - inexperienced', 'competent – incompetent', 'self-developing – non-developing' (0.683), 'responsible - irresponsible' (0.669), 'educated – uneducated' (0.659), 'smart – cramped' (0.657).

The third factor included scales: 'Rich – poor' (0.755), 'full of strength – tired' (0.725), 'successful – unsuccessful' (0.724) and 'prestigious – non-prestigious' (0.680). It was named 'prestige factor'.

Thus, categorization of a teacher's public standing, which was the basis of image evaluation, was carried out in accordance with the idea of kindness, competence and prestige of the subject.

The peculiarities of the perception of a 'teacher' by students, their parents and teachers were presented in the semantic space of the factors of 'kindness' and 'prestige', along with the images endowed with consistent cultural meaning: 'Mom', 'Dad', 'Vasilisa the Wise' and 'Baba Yaga' (Figure 1).

A 'Mom' was expectedly perceived as 'best' (0.61), while Baba Yaga as the 'worst' (-1.7). A 'Teacher', according to the data, was less kind than 'Mom', 'Vasilisa the Wise' (0.6) and 'Dad' (0.18). At the same time, students perceived him as less kind (0.09) than parents (0.16) and teachers (0.18) (Figure 1).
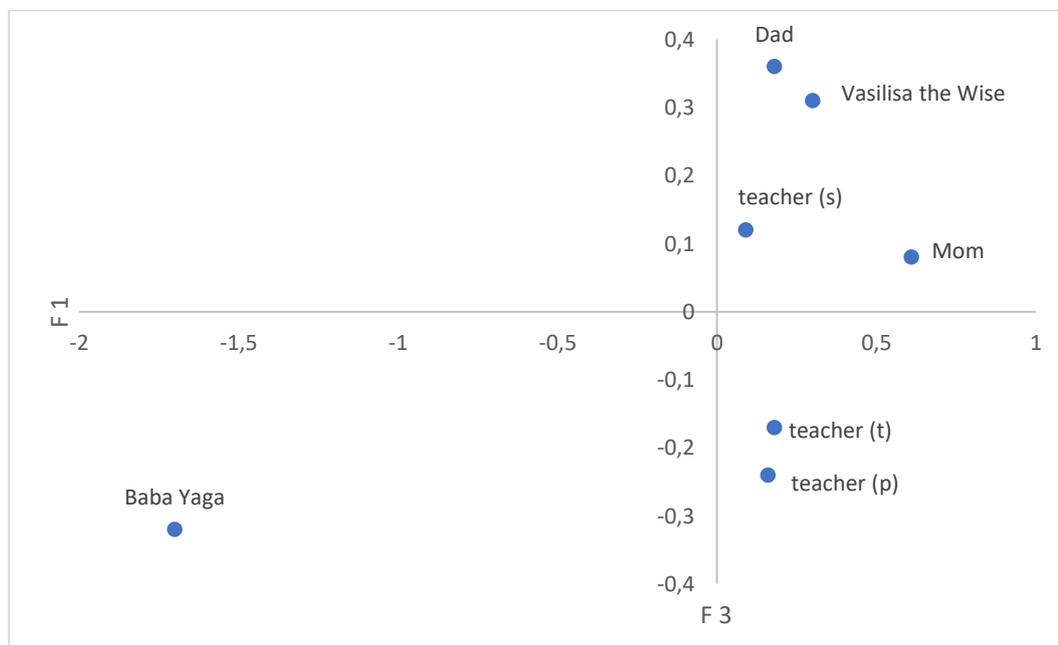

Fig. 1. Evaluation of a Teacher by Different Groups of Examinees in the Semantic Space of Mythopoetic And Parental Images Based on the Factors of 'Kindness' (F1) and 'Prestige' (F3)
Note: 'teacher (p)' – assessment of the image of the teacher by parents, 'teacher (t)' – assessment of the teacher's image by teachers (school teachers), 'teacher (s)' – assessment of the teacher's image by the students.

According to the 'prestige' factor, differences in the evaluation of incentives were more significant: the most prestigious was 'Dad' (0.36), the least one – 'Baba Yaga' (-1.7). At the same time, the assessment of the image of a teacher by parents (-0.24) and teachers (-0.17), as well as the assessment of 'Baba Yaga', were in the area of negative values. Schoolchildren estimated the 'prestige' of a teacher as significantly higher (0.12) (Figures 1, 2).

From the semantic space presented in Figure 2, it can be seen that the teacher's 'competence' (F2) was rated most highly by all groups of examinees: by parents (0.72), teachers (0.45) and students (0.41). Comparison of group evaluations using the Kruskal – Wallis test showed that the differences were statistically significant (H = 10.844, p = 0.004) by the factor of 'competence'. At the same time, parents' perception of the competence of a 'teacher' was much higher than that of the teachers themselves and their students.

According to the data obtained, 'Dad' (0.28), 'Vasilisa the Wise' (0.05), 'Mom' (0.02) and 'Baba Yaga' (-0.78) were less competent (Figure 2).
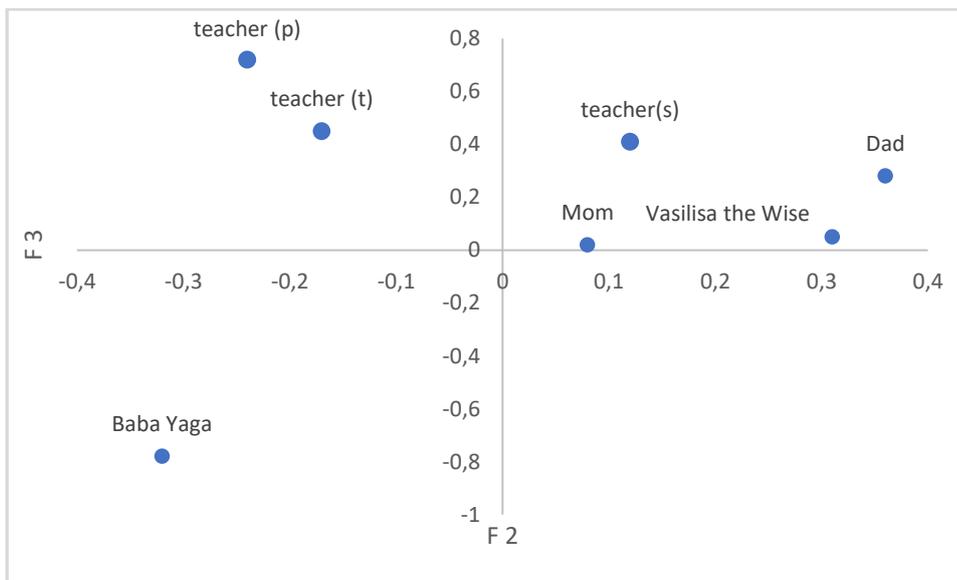

Fig. 2. Evaluation of a Teacher by Different Groups of Examinees in the Semantic Space of Mythopoetic and Parental Images Based on the Factors of 'Competence' (F2) and 'Prestige' (F3).
Note: 'teacher (p)' – assessment of the image of the teacher by parents, 'teacher (t)' – assessment of the teacher's image by teachers (school teachers), 'teacher (s)' – assessment of the teacher's image by the students.

Thus, in the semantic space of the mythopoetic and parental images, the 'teacher' was less kind than 'Mom', 'Vasilisa the Wise' and 'Dad', but more kindly than 'Baba Yaga'. At the same time, students consider 'teachers' to be less kind than those school teachers who participated in the study. The image of a teacher was perceived as the most 'competent' of estimated incentives by all groups of examinees, and the parents rated that criterion the highest. The status assessment of a 'teacher' by parents and teachers was low: according to the 'prestige' factor, it was in the area of negative values, same as is the assessment for 'Baba Yaga'. A comparison of the status assessment of 'Baba Yaga' and 'teacher' by teachers using the Mann–Whitney U-test demonstrated that there were no differences in the semantics of the incentives (U = 1221, p = 0.978). Such negative determination of the status of their profession by school teachers marks critical situation in the education system and cannot fail to influence the quality of educational work.

For schoolchildren, a 'teacher' is more prestigious than 'Baba Yaga' (U = 351, p = 0,008), hence, no statistically significant differences in the perception of the status of a 'teacher' and 'Mom' have been disclosed (U = 1068, p = 0.210). The low status 'teacher' and 'Mom' in the eyes of the millennials may be explained by low socio-economic support, which is consistent with the conclusions of colleagues (Alarson, 2018).

Particularities of the perception of their professional image label the attitude towards professional activity and, of course, affect its efficiency. Therefore, adjustment of the inner image of a 'teacher', characterized, according to the results of the research, by low standards, seemed to be an urgent task. In the course of the study, we developed and implemented an educational program for school teachers, involving the intensification of personal and professional reflection in the process of discussing popular media presentations of a teacher's public standing (feature films 'We Will Live Until Monday', 'French Lessons', 'Schoolmarm') and patterns of modeling personal and professional image (Kyshtymova, 2015). The importance of a teacher's public standing reflected in the public consciousness was discussed; factors affecting it; the role of ideas about the teacher for his professional and personal performance. The program was implemented within 17 hours (except for the time of watching movies), it was attended by young teachers, whose work experience was from one to two years.

To test the assumption that the perception of the public standing of their profession was associated with self-perception, the teachers participating in the study semantically evaluated not only the image of a teacher, but also the 'self' stimulus.

It was revealed that the professional image of a 'teacher' and the image of 'self' among school teachers were significantly different in two assessment categories. So, a 'teacher' is much less kind than 'self': $F_1 = 0.19$ and 0.36, respectively ($U = 953$, $p = 0.04$); he is more 'competent': $F_2 = 0.45$ and 0.03 ($U = 802$, $p = 0.003$). By the factor of 'prestige', no significant differences in the semantics of a 'teacher' and 'Self' were revealed: $F_3 = (-0.22)$ and (-0.19), $U = 1173$, $p = 0.716$.
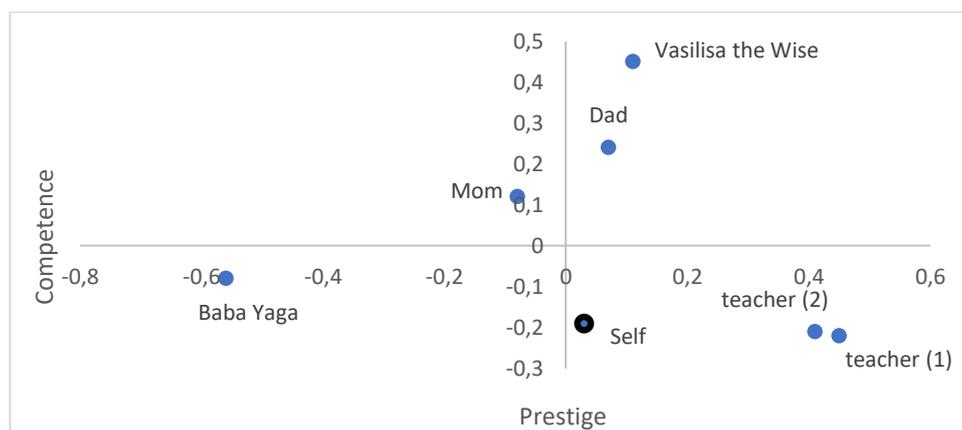

Fig. 3. The Image of the self' of School Teachers in the Semantic Space of Professional, Mythopoetic and Parental Images
Note: *«teacher (1)» factorial values of the semantics of a teacher's image before adjustment work, «teacher (2)» – after.*

It may be assumed that the perception of their personality by school teachers, to a degree greater than the perception of the profession, was affected by their objective social and economic status: they were seeing themselves as 'very kind' and, at the same time, 'very undervalued.'

The actualization of the processes of professional reflection in the process of implementing a program targeted at correcting professional self-attitude affected the perception of a teacher's image. He came to be perceived by school teachers as more 'kind' ($F_1 = 0.19 - 0.25$, $Z = -8.595$, $p = 0.000$) – thus, the semantic distance between the personal and professional self-esteem of school teachers decreased (Figure 4). A decrease in the values of 'competence' ($F_2 = 0.454 - 0.408$, $Z = -8.262$, $p = 0.000$) also indicated a trend towards convergence with the semantics of 'self'.
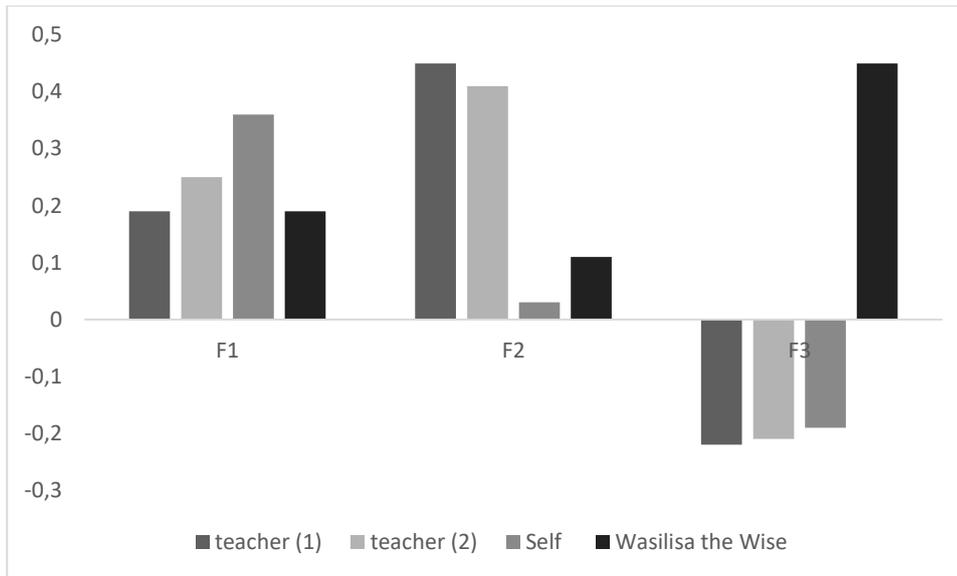
Fig. 4. The dynamics of assessing public standing of a 'teacher' by the factors of 'kindness', 'competence' and 'prestige'.
Note: «teacher (1)» factorial values of the semantics of a teacher's image before adjustment work, «teacher (2)» – after.

The change in the 'prestige' factor of a 'teacher' stimulus was not significant: F3 = (−0.22) − (−0.21). The emerging trend towards a positive change in meanings was nonetheless important, given the complex social nature of a status defined by the social context. It may be assumed, based on the data obtained, that a change in the public perception of the standing of a 'teacher' is possible through media communication of positive artistic images of teachers. Under the conditions of prevalence of negative images in the media space, positive changes in the teacher's public standing are not possible.

The results of the Choi survey were consistent with that judgment, wherein it was shown that a negative presentation of a teacher in a preschool institution by the media causes a greater trust of information consumers than a positive one. The data affords to make conclusion that media discourse determines the social status of the teacher to a greater extent, rather than his professionalism. The presentation of a teacher's image in Hollywood films was the subject of scientific reflection, and their social relevance in regards of formation of attitude towards a teacher was noted (Dahlgren, 2017).

4. Discussion
The fundamental problem addressed by the study is the contradiction between the traditional public importance of the teacher's function and a change in attitudes towards him in contemporary Russian society, the negative presentation of his public standing in the media. The dependence of teacher's professional performance on his self-attitude, and self-attitude on the attitude of students and their parents towards him, actualizes the problem of identifying the categorical structure of perception of the teacher's public standing by the subjects of the educational process.

The structure of semantic evaluation of the character of a "teacher" exposed in the course of research, including the factors of kindness, competence and prestige, was not consistent with the reasoning presented in earlier scientific work that determined the attitude towards a teacher (Alarson, 2018; Belova, 2016; Kaljuzhnyj, 2010; Slepko, 2013).

The results of our study of low rating of the public standing of a 'teacher' do not agree with the data that more than a third of teachers gave their professional qualities higher rating than students (Hammer, 2018).

5. Conclusion

Under the conditions of dynamic changes in values, socially significant priorities and criteria for social success that are taking place in the Russian society, images traditionally endowed with positive semantics, wherein a teacher was traditionally included, are undergoing transformations. High cultural status has always been reflected in the media, primarily in literary texts. The contemporary public information space is filled with alternate images of teachers: poor, even miserable, lost, unworthy. Those images are communicated through news broadcasts, television shows, feature films. They encourage negative attitude towards a 'teacher' in Russian society, determining the decline in his social status. This situation, determining the negative characteristics of the public standing of a teacher from the outside, is aggravated by low wages and complication of formal requirements, manifested primarily in the need to issue numerous documents. Those circumstances do not contribute to the improvement of professional self-esteem of a teacher, his inner image.

In the process of research, we identified a system of categories, according to which public standing of a teacher in contemporary Russian society was assessed. According to the identified criteria (kindness, competence and prestige), particularities of perception of a teacher's public standing were determined and compared with the estimates of characters that carry habitual (positive or negative) value: fairytale characters and parents. The low valuation of a 'teacher' by the factor of 'prestige' in every group of examinees indicated a grave, socially significant problem of the importance of studying the effects of such attitude towards a teacher on his personal self-esteem and brought it into the foreground.

Indeed, in the process of comparing semantic assessments of the incentives 'Self' and 'teacher', differences in their perceptions were identified by the factors of 'kindness' (F_1 = 0.357 -0.189, U = 953, p = 0.04) and competence (F_2 = 0.03-0.45, U = 802, p = 0.003) by school teachers. The assessment of the status of 'Self' was as low as the one of a 'teacher' (F_3 = (-0.19) - (-0.21), U = 1173, p = 0.716). Low image rating of a 'teacher' by school teachers and the semantic distance in the perception of own personality and profession shaped the basis of developing a teachers' public standing adjustment program targeted at actualizing the processes of professional and personal reflection, and its implementation in a group of school teachers.

The revealed dynamics of the semantics of a 'teacher' following the criteria of 'kindness' (Z = -8.595, p = 0.000) and 'competence' (Z = -8.262, p = 0.000) testifies of the efficiency of the elected approach – joint discussion of a teachers' media images and mechanics of shaping and functioning of a good image. On the other hand, the absence of reliable changes in teachers' perception of their professional public standing in terms of 'prestige', contiguity of their assessments of the status of a 'teacher' and 'Baba Yaga' (U = 1221, p = 0.978) marks the complexity of the problem of professional image self-assessment, its dependence on the external-social and economic factors that evade psychological correction, – their change requires a review of the conditions of teaching work and the semantic interpretation of the image of a teacher in the media.

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