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Content, Positives, and Controversies of Academic Empathy and Motivation

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Abstract

Greatness of current universities faces many difficulties and the complexity of dynamics typical by tremendous acceleration of social relations and ties. If academics and scientists want to help students and younger colleagues to handle the complexity and tempo of requirements arisen by a study and work at (least nationally) prestigious universities, empathy is a must. Empathy is a phenomenon with many meanings and contents. There exists a clash of empathy on the part of teachers, but at the same time, on the part of students in the academic practice. Despite the fact that empathy as a socio-relational competence and basis of commitment and facilitative processes help to understand and find the key to the heart and intellect of other individuals (students), it absorbs a lot of energy. This is often reflected in the fatigue, mood swings, and nervousness of the university teacher. This 'imperfection of empathy' in turn may lead to the situation that students begin to perceive the teacher as erratic and his or her behavior as controversial: once empathetic and full of involvement, and sometimes as cold and even aggressive. Assuming that the teacher serves as a role model for his or her students, teacher's empathy is a model for the future (feed-backing) empathy of students towards the other teachers, classmates, and later also to the future colleagues at work. Therefore, on the basis of the analysis, comparison, generalization and synthesis of different views in the theoretical part, methodological part of the paper presents the results of a sociological questioning conducted on a sample of 300 students of University of Zilina, Slovak Republic. Students' expressions on the positive evaluation of teacher's empathy versus the negative assessment of teacher's moodiness and nervousness in relation to the students are compared. Deeper comparison of the expressions of students at two absolutely different study programs: Management (150 students) versus Informatics (150 students) and results of a subsequent qualitative questioning focused directly to the area

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of empathy (on the sample of 40 students) are interesting too. Divergence of opinions, relating these ones to the linked foreign surveys and drawing relevant conclusions are completed by a set of proposed recommendations. These recommendations have the ambition to improve the management systems of universities and provide suggestions that could help the teachers and students when harmonizing their mutual expectations and reinforcing existing academic motivation.

Keywords: content; positives; academic empathy ; motivation;

1.Introduction

At present, when the crisis of relationships more strongly occurs also at the universities, the importance of empathy connected with improving the motivation of students and teachers increases. Empathy is not a concept which has its application only in a clinical practice. For many years, it is penetrating into other societal and business spheres, and also into the university education. Despite the fact that university students are adults, they are experiencing many different forms of social uncertainties. According to Unnikrishnan, Darshan, Kulkarni, Thapar, Mithra & Kumar (2015), “students not only face the academic pressure, but also face pressure because of being alone, fearing failure and extended dependence on their parents.” But, replacing lack of true relationships only by artificial, imaginary connections or couplings (via electronic social networks) is far from sufficient. The need to perceive the students as human beings and help them overcome various relational and psychological uncertainties, that they experience, arises earnestly. If academics depend on the cultivation progression of their students, the empathy and motivation are worth of the intentional research focus.

Empathy represents a specific psychological, sociological, behavioral and influential term with many various, often with questionable or even controversial interpretations and impacts on both empathized and empathizing people. According to many authors, e. g. Zahavi (2014), although the interest in empathy increased in recent years, there is still no clear consensus about what precisely it is. In this line, empathy can be understood as the capacity to share and understand another’s state of mind or emotion (Loannidou & Konstantikaki, 2008). It can be identified also as the capacity to be affected by the emotional state of another, assess the reasons for the other’s state, identify with the others (De Waal, 2008) and predict their feelings, motivations, and actions (Bernhardt & Singer, 2012, 2). When the empathy is thoroughly and responsibly fulfilled, it provides a ‘direct experiential understanding’ (Gallese, Keysers & Rizzolatti, 2004, 396). Shortly: it is a ‘glue’ of the social world that draws people to help one another and stops them from hurting others (Baron-Cohen & Wheelwright, 2004).

Student motivation is a vital determinant of academic performance and achievement (Maurer et al., 2013) and it is an important psychological concept in academic learning (Yoshida, 2008). Self-determination theory, when applied to the realm of education, is concerned primarily with promoting in students an interest in learning, a valuing of education, and a confidence in their own capacities and attributes (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991). Accepting the existence of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, it is important to consider also re-defined three-category continuum of students’ motivation consisted of an autonomous regulation, controlled regulation, and motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Students, who endorse more autonomous motivations (acting out of choice and pleasure) compared to controlled ones (acting for reward, behaving to avoid punishment), are the most persistent in their education (Ratelle , Guay, Vallerand, Larose & Senecal, 2007).

The basic idea of this paper is our conviction that students’ confidence and motivation could be increased through the empathy and motivation applied thoroughly from the side of the teacher. The

teacher, by empathy and motivating the students, is able to mediate them a much deeper context of lectured themes, can draw students into the pedagogical and professional events, and professional world of unique concepts and images. Despite the opinion of some individuals, that empathy does not belong to the educational process at the universities, many teachers experience confirm that empathetic educative insert of teacher helps students feel the excitement in discovering new things and creating new, innovative and bold solutions. Students value the teachers' humanity and concern and try to get back his energy expended, just by their own empathy – empathy towards the teacher and his duties, and also empathy towards the fellow students. This not only returns the teachers' spent time and motivational energy, but in addition, it strengthens the teacher's motivation for continuing to be a professional model: zealous, selfless, and enthusiasm disseminating.

The goal of the paper is to explore the theme of academic motivation and empathy from the theoretical and empirical site. Building on the analysis, comparison, synthesis, and generalization of theoretical knowledge about both studied concepts, the methodological part is devoted to results presentation of two partial surveys performed at the University of Zilina. The results confirm the importance of empathy and positive motivational effects on the academic performance of students, and also point out the negative consequences of the occasional impacts of teachers' empathy – their moodiness and nervousness. Final part of the paper contains recommendations on how to (at least partially) avoid these undesirable elements and impacts.

1.1. Academic empathy and academic motivation

Sustainability and responsibility of the universities presume the existence of cultivated environment and mastered social, motivational and communicational competences of the scholars. According to Vartiak (2017), organizations, including the universities, which are investing their social and financial source in line with a sustainable and responsible investment, should not stand still but expand their activities in this area (p. 85). This means the universities that act internally as well externally through the prism of socially responsible behavior, have to take into account also the questions of relational corrections, facilitation, and empathy (towards university employees, students, partners, etc.).

Empathy can be defined as the drive to identify emotions and thoughts in others (Wakabayashi, Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright, Goldenfeld, Delaney, Fine, Smith, R. & Weil 2006, 930) and be motivated to respond with a sensitive care (Batson, 2009). When relating empathy to the academic motivation, the trueness of empathy and motivation on the part of academicians (teachers, scientists, advisers, administrative staff, and senior staff of the faculties or university) motivate the extent and content of empathy and motivation on the part of students. In these intentions, academic motivation of students can be considered as an expression and the strength of their willingness and enthusiasm for study and overall academic achievements. According to Amrai, Motlagh, Zalani & Parhon (2011), motivation for academic achievement is such a pervasive inclination towards doing a task successfully in a particular context and assessing the performance spontaneously. Kumpikaite-Valiuniene, Glinska, Aslan & Ramirez (2016) opine that the motivation arises from people's needs and their beliefs about how best to satisfy their needs. Moreover, even this could be not enough to get the best results (p. 196). This means that apart from the motivation from inside of student oneself (student's self-motivation), the motivational influence from the side of teachers and peers is needed. According to Cooper (2013), empathy has a crucial relationship to the motivation, values development, and achievement. In most cases, effective learning cannot be achieved without the motivation (Hrbackova & Suchankova, 2016), while motivation of the teacher as well motivation of the students are equally important.

In a positive sense, the teachers' empathic approach will enable students to experience greater understanding and acceptance, resulting in more positive attitudes toward themselves and toward schooling (Feshbach & Feshbach, 2009). We can add further positives of teacher's empathetic affecting the students: students much better and more willingly cooperate with the teacher, voluntarily show a strong interest in curriculum, and achieve significantly better academic results (Blaskova, 2014). They even open themselves to the teacher – by developing their own empathy towards the teacher and their own passion, they enhance the progress and dynamics of educating. In this way, together and in the long term, students strengthen the motivation of teacher.

In a negative sense, the less empathy and positive relations between the teacher and student, the more difficult it is to reach common viewpoints and mutual understanding, regardless of the use of a larger and more precise vocabulary (Shamasundar, 1999) and motivating, cordial forms of behavior. True empathy requires namely 'socially beneficial' intention to respond compassionately to the other's distress (Decety & Jackson, 2004) and preferred motives. This means, study programs have to be characterized by empathy of scholars and administrative staff and should "foster student motivation to stay in schools and work hard at learning goals," (Christenson & Havsy, 2004, 71). It is because the students who are empathetic are likely to have relations that foster academic activities (Fayombo, 2012).

Recent studies confirm that both empathy and motivation can be successfully described and understood in neurological terms and be measured by physiological indicators (Hojat, 2016; Murayama et al., 2015; Marsden et al., 2014). Preston & de Waal (2002) operate with matching neural response: as a result of neural representation, the individual can feel something of what the other feels and understand the other's internal state. Decety & Jackson (2004) opine that shared neural representations, self-awareness, mental flexibility, and emotion regulation constitute the basic 'macrocomponents' of empathy, which are underpinned by specific neural systems. Tavor, Parker Jones, Mars, Smith, Behrens & Babdi (2016), using the magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), experiment on how neuronal codes can simultaneously represent many relationships between objects and agents in an environment and disclose many individual differences in brain responses. From the viewpoint of connecting empathy with the motivation, the know flows from the study of Bernhardt & Singer (2012) that there exist some counteracted factors of empathy with opposed influence to motivational systems, such as the desire for revenge, desire to protect oneself from negative emotions, etc. This means, the using functional MRI can also become a real opportunity for searching the academic empathy closely related to the academic motivation.

Empathy in general, and especially the academic empathy represents the multi-content and multidimensional phenomenon. It consists of affective, cognitive, altruistic, control, motivational, developmental and other (mixed) components or dimensions (Jacob & de Vignemont, 2012; Light & Zahn-Waxler, 2012; Wakabayashi et al., 2006; Paus, 2001; Povinelli, 1993; etc.). The benefit of respecting all mentioned components consists in the acceptance of an essential fundament of academic empathy: this one is based, motivated, built, structured, and formed under the influence and impressions obtained in the interpersonal interactions, i.e. interactions between the teacher and the students. According to Shamasundar (1999), natural consequences of interpersonal interactions are empathic understanding, transfer of mood states (like hope, distress or expectancy), affective states (like anxiety, sadness, anger or hostility), ideas, images and even attitudes and values, etc. (p. 232).

However, as mentioned above, sensational and evaluative aspects of empathy sometimes leads to the situation in which while the empathizing teacher is absolutely engaged and pulled into the

empathetic relation with the students, teacher's emotions and intra-psychical processes are partially subdued – almost all emotional and motivational attention is targeted on the empathized students. This is potentially dangerous for the teacher's personality and his or her ability to return promptly into the 'normal', standard psychological balance. In other words, a possible consequence of an effort given into the role of empathic can lead to teacher's fatigue and even psychological stress, and his or her behavior starts to be sometimes distracted and nervous. Furthermore, impaired teacher's empathy expressed via his or her moodiness or nervousness can be immediately perceived by the students, and can cause negative impressions in the mind of students.

The opinion of Gordon (2005) is very punctual: "Teachers find that their own empathy for their students deepens. This is often reciprocated as students become aware of the teacher's moments of frustration and offer help," (p. 196). This means, the academic motivation of the teacher is very fragile and sensitive to the form of feedback and response from students and other scholars. Priority problem, built on the necessary principle of life (physical and mental) energy preservation, is to set the proper ways to helping empathetic teacher to 'recharge his or her battery' and be again receptive to the students. For these reasons, it is necessary to examine empathy in the academic environment and gain inspiration, how to disseminate the empathetic understanding also on further university teachers, managers and administrative staff, as well as the students. It is very important to build a deliberate effort of empathetic teachers to aware and effectively manage their 'empathetic fatigue', manage their own moodiness and nervousness, and never undermine the built relationship with the students (to avoid a situation where students decrypt the teacher's dis-empathy). It would absolutely never happen that the opposite perception of the teacher's effort will be generated, i.e. so that students refuse the empathy as the help in their academic progress.

2.Method

Study of Al-Sahafi & Mohd (2015) confirm that among five types of emotional intelligence, empathy has the highest level and is closely followed by motivation, and these ones are significantly correlated with the academic achievement. This means, if teacher training programs impart knowledge of empathy and empathy training, such ones have positive effect on teachers and their students (Feshbach & Feshbach, 2009). From the other hand, the study environment (technical, emotional, spatial, etc.) and motivation of students are important to consider when designing the study program (Ling & Venesaar, 2015). Flowing from mentioned above opinions and our previous surveys, this study is focused on searching the importance of teacher's empathy viewed by students (quantitative survey), and searching the deeper positive and negative aspects of empathy related to the academic motivation (subsequent qualitative survey).

2.1. Quantitative survey on empathy versus moodiness

On the sample of 300 students of University of Zilina, Slovak Republic (Table 1), we performed a questionnaire survey in January – February 2017. From the viewpoint of study programs, we focused on two groups of students: student of study program Management (150 students, of which 67 attend the bachelor study and 83 attend the master study) and study program Informatics (150 students of bachelor study).

Table 1. Identification of respondents (own study)

All Students: 300 [Male: 207 (69%), Female: 93 (31%)]						
	Bachelor study			Master study		
	Frequency	% of all students	% of bachelors	Frequency	% of all students	% of masters
Total	217	77.59	100.00	83	22.41	100.00
1st year	62	20.67	28.57	26	8.67	31.33
2nd year	124	41.33	57.14	57	91.33	68.67
3rd year	21	7.00	14.29	–	–	–
Management	67	22.33	30.88	83	27.67	100
Informatics	150	50.00	69.12	0	0	0

Among other questions, we asked students to express their opinion on the importance they give to the teacher’s empathy when thinking of the great university. The scale 1–7 was used where 1 = the less important; 7 = the most important. Results are shown in Table 2 and suggest that nearly half of all surveyed students considered empathy in the case of university teachers clearly as the most important; additional 41% of students (they marked grade 5 and 6) inclined to the opinion that empathy among the university teachers is important. When comparing expressions of students of Informatics versus Management, we can see that Management students perceive empathy for much more important than Informatics students. This result can be caused by the fact that empathy is an integral part of every great and creative manager/leader and Management students, while studying the Management, are led to use different motivational skills, and thus the empathy too. On the contrary, students of Informatics are not keeping to such skills, but nonetheless, they should feel empathy towards them from their teachers’ side to be able to cope with the demands of Informatics profession.

Table 2. Importance of empathy and humanity expressed by students (own study)

The scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Total (%)	0.00	0.33	2.00	9.00	13.67	27.33	47.67
Management (%)	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.67	14.67	28.00	50.67
Informatics (%)	0.00	0.67	4.00	11.33	12.67	26.67	44.67

Although the empathy is very contributive in relation to the academic motivation and achievements, this one means the very demanding and exhausting competence. Based on this knowledge, we asked students to evaluate also the possible counter-posted side of empathy: teacher’s moodiness and nervousness. Table 3 confirms the students’ expressions are very strict – they condemn these characteristics and assess them as really negative. The scale on this issue was also from 1 to 7, but in this case 1 = least an improper factor and 7 = most inconvenient factor. Results show that 41% of all surveyed students considered the moodiness and nervousness among university teachers for most inconvenient factor; an additional 46.67% of students are inclined (they marked

grade 5 and 6) to the point that the teacher should not be moody and nervous. Expressions comparison of the students of Management and Informatics indicates that students of Informatics are much stricter and more demanding in this area. On the contrary, we can also say that students of Management (despite their high stringency) are more forthcoming on this issue. This follows the fact they understand more deeply the psychological demands of this profession, and due to studying Management science, they are better able to empathize with the role of creative leaders – represented by their teachers, and aware that the implementation of this activity is very difficult and exhausting.

Table 3. Weight of moodiness and nervousness of teacher expressed by students (own study)

The scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Total (%)	2.33	0.00	3.00	7.00	19.33	27.34	41.00
Management (%)	4.00	0.00	3.33	5.33	22.67	26.67	38.00
Informatics (%)	0.67	0.00	2.67	8.66	16.00	28.00	44.00

We can make a deeper searching of the students’ expressions. Cross-table 4 displays the correlation of all respondents’ responses (regardless of the study program) on the importance of empathy and humanity of the great university teacher and/versus unsuitability of the teacher’s moodiness and nervousness. It can be seen from the correlation of these attributes that students are really very demanding and critical and, at the same time, they require a high degree of empathy and low level of moodiness and nervousness from the teachers.

Table 4. The frequency of characters between empathy (humanity) and moodiness (nervousness), (own study)

		Moodiness and nervousness							Total
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Empathy and humanity	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	3	0	0	1	3	0	0	2	6
	4	0	1	3	8	6	4	5	27
	5	0	0	2	2	17	11	9	41
	6	0	0	0	8	21	26	27	82
	7	0	6	3	0	13	41	80	143
Total		0	7	9	21	58	82	123	300

Table 5 shows the computation of students’ responses dependency between the empathy and moodiness through a chi-square test. A calculation was made separately for the Managers and separately for Informatics, and then for all students together. Searching was performed at a significance level 0.05%. In the first calculation (students of Management = Man.), we compared the

calculated value in the degree of freedom 15 with the table value which is 24.996. Whereas the calculated value of chi-square (in Table 5) is significantly higher (62.281), we can talk about a strong dependency between these factors. In the second calculation (students of Informatics = Inf.), we compared the calculated value in the degree of freedom 25 with table value which is 37.652, and because the calculated value is higher again, we can confirm a strong dependency of searched attributes. In the third calculation, we focused on the responses of all surveyed students. When comparing the calculated value of the degree of freedom 25 with the table value (37.652), the strong dependency was confirmed too. This means that there is a very strong correlation of the perception of students in empathetic behavior of teachers towards students versus perception of the teachers' exhaustion which is accompanied by their lower tolerance or higher nervousness. Mentioned dependence confirms in particular that the accommodating approach and empathetic behavior are very demanding on the psyche. In addition, each university teacher acts as a scientist, has a number of diverse other duties (organizational, publishing, monitoring, etc.), cooperates with a great amount of colleagues from various (also abroad) universities, associations, networks, etc. It is therefore necessary to build the atmosphere in which the students will be aware of this fact and will be understanding towards their empathetic teachers. Of course, the teachers who apply and promote an empathetic approach to the teaching and collaboration with students must precisely understand this controversy of empathy, especially in order to prevent their mental exhaustion, respectively to silence it.

Table 5. Chi-square test for empathy and humanity vs. moodiness and nervousness differentiated by study programs and presented also totally (own study)

	Value			df			Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		
	Man.	Inf.	Total	Man.	Inf.	Total	Man.	Inf.	Total
Pearson Chi-Square	62,281 ^a	68,756 ^a	110,365 ^a	15	25	25	.000	.000	.000
Likelihood Ratio	66,622	59,804	105,078	15	25	25	.000	.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	7,054	31,497	29,963	1	1	1	.008	.000	.000
N of Valid Cases	150	150	300						

2.2. Subsequent Qualitative Survey on Empathy

Flowing from presented quantitative results, we have decided to perform also a subsequent qualitative questioning. Particular items were focused directly to the area of empathy. We again used a technique of questionnaire, but this one was accompanied by the open discussion with the students and explaining them the reasons of our interest. The survey was realized on the sample of 40 students who participated in first (quantitative) survey too, and simultaneously, attend a Master study program Management. A sample of the students was intentionally chosen because these students represent relatively mastered individuals capable to have and express their opinions in the field of management and effective forms of teaching in conditions with and without the teacher's empathy. Concretely, attention was focused only on the most discussed question: positive versus negative consequences of the empathy application. This is very important when trying to reduce or eliminate the students' motivation. According to Maurer et al. (2013), motivation refers to the absence of intention and motivation (p. 78) and is observed when individuals do not perceive the contingencies between their actions and their consequences (Ratelle et al., 2007, 735). As flows from Table 6 and Table 7, the questionnaire presented 7 major positives and 7 major negatives of the teacher's empathetic action to

the surveyed students. These ones were selected on the basis of our previous surveys and opinions of other authors. Students were asked to express whether they agree or not with the defined statements (using an inspiration of Likert scale: absolutely agree; rather agree; both agree and disagree; rather disagree; and absolutely disagree). In a case of positive empathetic action of the university teacher, the students identify themselves most with the statement (up 87.5% of students, of which 42.5% of students absolutely agree) that the influence of empathy is deepening trust between the teachers and students. Other significant results include the agreement that the application of empathy reduces the students' stress and feeling of alienation (85% of students, of which 37.5% of students absolutely agree) and that is possible to transfer on students' teacher's own enthusiasm through the empathy (82.5% of students of which 35% of students absolutely agree). These results suggest that the responded students perceive the successful empathic behavior of their teachers as very positive, realize the concrete positive effects that act directly on them, such as reducing stress, enthusiasm for study the subject, and much more trust in their teachers. All these positive effects have an impact on the students' development, especially on their professional-personality profile, since it is very likely that they will accept and acquire such an empathetic approach and will use it when leading their subordinates and colleagues in the future.

Table 6. Positives of teacher's empathetic influence on students (own study)

	Absolutely agree	Rather agree	Both agree and disagree	Rather disagree	Absolutely disagree
Statement	Under the influence of empathy, trust between students and teachers is deeper				
% of students	42.5	45.0	10.0	2.5	0.0
Statement	Teacher is able to transmit his enthusiasm on students				
% of students	35.0	47.5	15.0	2.5	0.0
Statement	Teacher sees problems from the perspective of students and students see problems from the perspective of teacher				
% of students	12.5	22.5	47.5	17.5	0.0
Statement	Empathy of teacher has a positive effect on strengthening the empathy of students				
% of students	22.5	57.5	17.5	2.5	0.0
Statement	Empathy prevents misunderstandings and conflicts between teachers and students				
% of students	25.0	52.5	12.5	10.0	0.0
Statement	Empathy encourages creativity and courage of students to embark on challenging projects				
% of students	12.5	57.5	25.0	5.0	0.0
Statement	Empathy of teacher removes stress of students and their feelings of alienation				
% of students	37.5	47.5	15.0	0.0	0.0

When examining negatives that may arise from the behavior of empathic university teacher, we have established seven most probable *negative impacts* (Table 7). Again, we asked the students to mark the extent in what they agree with presented statements (range has remained unchanged). A very positive finding of the study is that students realize the action of empathy and humanity of their teacher does not distort and reduce the quality of the educational process (up 97.5% of students). Another very positive finding is the students understand that if the positive empathetic approach will be applied to them, they will be able to use it in the future, either in the private or professional life. 80% of students unequivocally rejected the possibility the empathy could have just the opposite effect on them, and that such an ability will not be able to acquire.

The finding is interesting that only 42.5% of students did not reject the assertion that empathetic teacher loses his authority and respect of students. Due to this result, it is possible to accept the students had a previous experience with the teacher who had a desire to be friendly and accommodating to them at the expense of his own authority. If a teacher cannot handle to dose the correct degree of empathy towards a selected collective of students, it can happen that students will abuse his over-friendliness; this in turn will lead to loss of respect and possible reduction in the importance of expertise. It could also be a situation in which an excessive (uncontrolled) degree of empathy could lead to a situation where the teacher will put the students' problems and priorities over his own priorities to the extent that it will interfere the running of the study. It is at these factors can be seen in Table 7 a slight hesitation in answering the students where around a third of them inclined to answer 'both agree and disagree'. Such findings should inspire the university teachers to learn how to make efficient use of the power of their empathy toward students and thus, influence them positively not only in a better quality and more successful mastering of their study, but just in shaping their personality in the future in order to students themselves acquire the skills and power to apply the empathy and empathic influence on others.

Table 7.Negatives of teacher's empathetic influence on students (own study)

	Absolutely agree	Rather agree	Both agree and disagree	Rather disagree	Absolutely disagree
Statement	Empathetic teacher loses authority and respect				
% of students	5.0	5.0	32.5	47.5	10.0
Statement	Application of teacher's empathy toward students reduces the quality of educational process				
% of students	0.0	2.5	0.0	62.5	35.0
Statement	Perception of problems from the perspective of students reduces the importance of expert knowledge				
% of students	0.0	5.0	25.0	37.5	32.0
Statement	Empathy of teacher encourages egotism and hostility among students				
% of students	0.0	2.5	15.0	57.5	25.0
Statement	Empathy causes priorities conflict of teachers and students				
% of students	0.0	5.0	20.0	55.0	20.0
Statement	Empathy undermines the willingness of students to study responsibly and with full deployment				
% of students	0.0	2.5	25.0	35.0	37.5
Statement	Empathy of teacher induces students' feelings of unreachability of such a competence				
% of students	0.0	5.0	15.0	45.0	35.0

3. Discussion

Based on our previous studies, we understand the teacher's and students' empathy, built on the foundation of e.g. trust, reliability, creativity and responsibility, are closely connected with the teacher's and students' motivation (Blaskova et al., 2015; Blaskova, 2014; etc.). Similarly, Mynbayeva, Vishnevskaya & Sadvakassova (2016) in their study search the creativity in relation to the motivation of Kazakh university students: 65% of the students are characteristic by motivation for success; 3.3% are motivated to fail in their activity (they try to avoid a mistake, and weakening of trust a person who is authority to them) and 31.7% expressed both motives. Know flows from the study of Hrbackova & Suchankova (2016), performed on a sample of 286 Czech university students: if students perceived the studied discipline as significant and useful in practice, their motivation is then also greater towards the intrinsic type of motivation (p. 694). When relating these results to our survey, a simple comparison confirms a high importance of appropriate motivating the students, and empathy may be the key in this effort.

Mentioned suggestion can be confirmed also by results of Fayombo's study (2012) performed on the sample of 151 Barbados students: findings show significant positive correlation between academic achievement and the attending the emotions, positive expressivity, empathic concern, emotion-based decision making and responsive distress (p. 47). On the contrary, several studies found no significant association between empathy score and academic performance, e.g. study of Benabbas (2016) in a case of 459 investigated students of Iran University of Medical Sciences. Author himself explained this result by specific cultural differences in Iran – the mean score of empathy was lower than reported score of American, Mexican, Portuguese and Japanese students (pp. 440–441). But a majority of studies confirm the positive association between the empathy and academic results: "The students who were high on empathy and other dimensions of emotional intelligence, were also very good in their academic achievement," (Raj & Chandramohan, 2015, 128).

From the opposite searching viewpoint, study of Comedis (2014) was focused on searching what social skills are applied by students of De La Salle University in Philippines. "Among the social skills surveyed, students most often use empathy, followed by cooperation, self-control, assertiveness," (p. 4). Multicultural study of Kumpikaite-Valiuniene et al. (2016) searched the importance of individual factors concerned with the motivation of students from seven countries (Lithuania, Turkey, Iran, Spain, Portugal, Estonia, and Poland) in their future workplace. The group of five most valued factors consist of: 1. Good work atmosphere; 2. Possibility to use students' skills and knowledge; 3. Attractive work conditions; 4. Attractive salary; 5. Self-expression (p. 199). Results of both presented studies serve also as a support for our further suggestion, that is, in a situation the student is not fully sure of his or her study's importance and future contribution and job satisfaction, the empathic facilitation from the teachers and advisers can become a great help and can be considered also as a 'return of energy' for the academicians.

4. Conclusion

Results of theoretical knowledge analysis in the field of empathy and its implications for teachers' academic behavior and students' academic performance, accompanied by the results of our two surveys confirm that empathy has a firm place in the modern university education. Students' opinions prove that they recognize the importance and positives of empathy in the higher education, and at the same time, think about the options how to respond to empathetic versus dis-empathetic behavior of teachers versus students. This means that the management of universities and faculties would not

only allow to empathetic teachers to continue in their empathetic behavior. Through their managerial action, they even should inspire also other teachers and staff to more often and more consistently apply (at least basic) elements of empathetic understanding of the others (students, colleagues, and partners) in their behavior. This effort is so important and complex at the same time that it should be tackled systematically and integrally: **'systems of academic empathy'** should be formed and applied at the universities

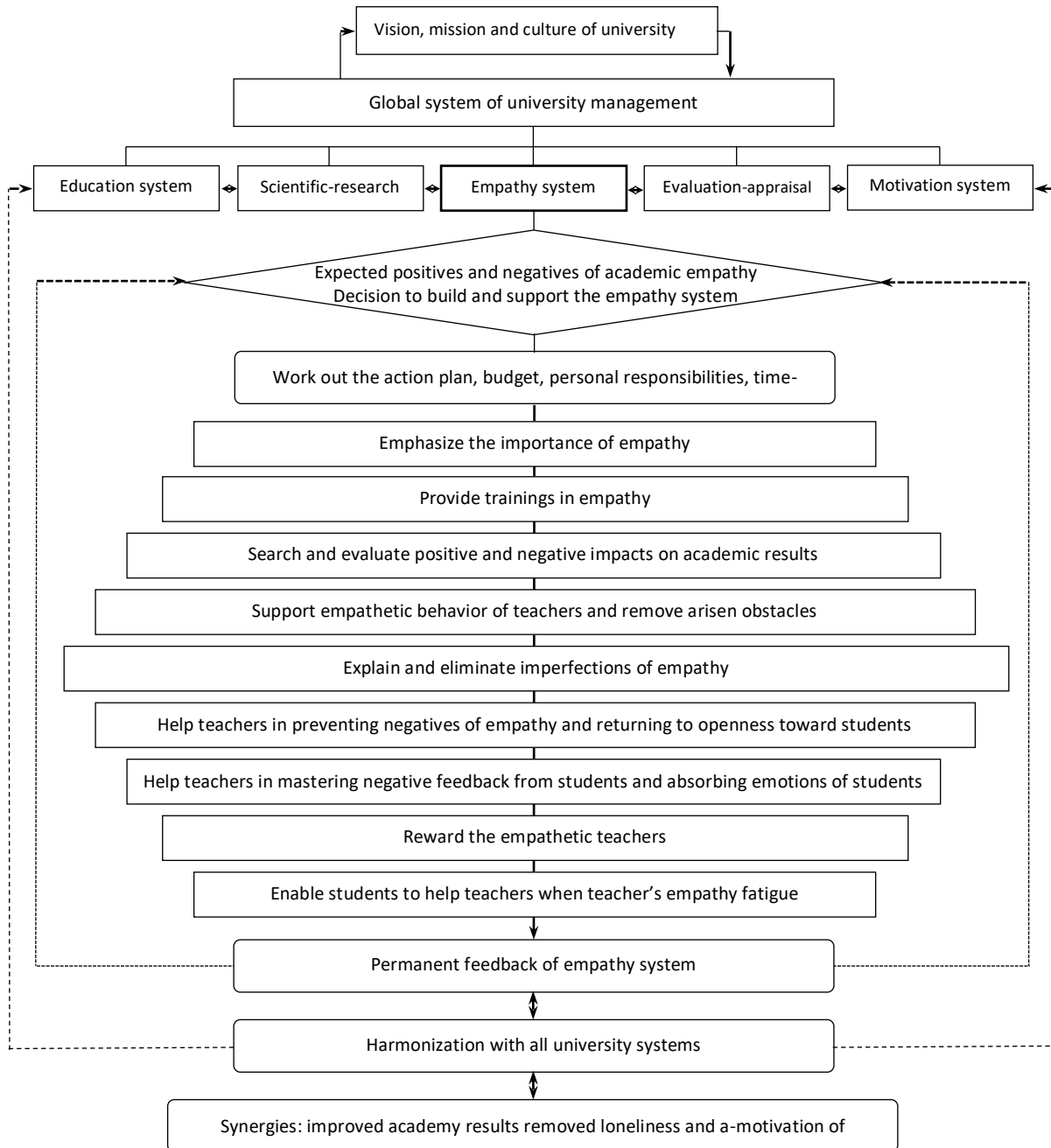


Figure 1. Application and content model of academic empathy system

In a more specific setting, each emerging system of the academic empathy should include the following activities:

- In close cooperation with renowned partner universities, in addition to a bench-learning to build also a 'bench-empathizing'.
- Underline the importance of empathy, namely based on demonstration of students' improved performance in a case the teacher applies the empathy in his or her educational activity.
- Provide focused trainings of the empathy (decryption of nonverbal communication as a basis for empathy, good practice in empathy, dosage and decomposition of empathy, correct responses to tension situations, coping with empathic fatigue, etc.).
- Monitor continuously and evaluate the positive and negative effects of empathy for the academic results of both teachers and students.
- Encourage the teachers' empathic effect on colleagues and students and eliminate obstacles and barriers arisen in empathy at the university.
- Explain and remove imperfections of empathy incurred by the overwork of teacher, examine the consequences of empathic impatience or attenuation on students, and achieve the desired status among students with the help of consultants (facilitators).
- Help empathic teachers to prevent negative impacts of occasional moodiness on the students, eliminate the consequences of the negative emotional transfer, and handle the re-return to openness and friendliness towards the students.
- Help empathetic teachers to handle on one side the negative feedback and ingratitude from the part of students, and on the other hand, help to successfully absorb and utilize positive emotions from the students (especially when faced with new students who are full of conflicting emotions and reactions).
- Reward financially and non-financially the teachers who succeed in attaching students' interest in learning through the empathy and contributed to enhance the learning outcomes and more cultivated behavior of students.
- Allow students, whose the empathetic teacher cooperated for a long time with and got them on his or her side just by the empathy and humanity, to help reciprocally this teacher just in the moments of his or her empathic fatigue.

It is important to note the application of the empathy system into the academic environment will not certainly be easy and inexpensive. It is necessary to consider all the pros and cons. The academic empathy system must be harmonized with all other systems at the university: educational, scientific-research, evaluation-appraisal, motivational, developmental and the like. Only the harmonious integration of all university systems can yield the expected benefits and synergies. In other words, if the university executive wants to respond to relational uncertainty and loneliness of students and/or their motivation in the right way, the empathy and strong motivation are really the appropriate keys.

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