

Psychological Factors and Mechanisms of The Development of Professional Self-Awareness Among Students

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This article analyzes the psychological factors and developmental mechanisms of professional self-awareness among students. **Method:** The study highlights key determinants such as motivation, self-esteem, personal identification, reflection, and social environment. It also examines the role of the educational environment and pedagogical influences in shaping students' professional orientation. **Results:** The findings indicate that the development of professional self-awareness is closely linked to students' personal activity and social experience. **Novelty:** Professional self-awareness is considered a complex psychological process that includes awareness of one's abilities, interests, values, and attitudes toward future professional activity.

INTRODUCTION

The modern stage of societal development is characterized by the accelerated transformation of socio-economic processes, the digitalization of all spheres of life, and increasing competition in the labor market. Under these conditions, the problem of developing professional self-awareness among students acquires particular importance, as it serves as a crucial psychological foundation for the successful professional development of the individual [1].

Professional self-awareness is a complex integrative construct that includes an individual's understanding of their abilities, interests, values, professional goals, and prospects for development. It is formed under the influence of both internal psychological factors – such as motivation, self-esteem, level of reflection, and personal maturity – and external conditions, including the educational environment, social surroundings, and labor market demands. The degree of development of professional self-awareness largely determines the quality of professional choice, the stability of educational and professional motivation, and the success of further professional self-realization.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), recent years have witnessed a growing gap between graduates' educational qualifications and their actual professional employment. On average, about 30–40% of young specialists in various countries work outside their field of study, indicating an insufficient formation of professional identity already during university education. This issue is especially

relevant for countries with transitional economies, where the labor market changes dynamically and qualification requirements for specialists continuously increase [2].

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, improving the quality of higher education and training competitive professionals has been identified as a priority direction of state policy. The “Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026” highlights the importance of developing professional competencies among young people in accordance with international standards, as well as expanding practice-oriented education. However, the results of pedagogical and psychological studies reveal that a significant number of students experience difficulties in understanding their professional orientation, which is associated with an insufficient level of reflective skills and a weak connection between theoretical instruction and practical activity [3].

In this context, special importance is attached to the study of the psychological mechanisms underlying the formation of professional self-awareness, such as motivational processes, cognitive assessment of one’s own abilities, mechanisms of professional identification, and the influence of the social environment. Taken together, these factors determine the dynamics of students’ professional development and their readiness for effective professional activity [4].

Therefore, the relevance of the problem under consideration is обусловлена the necessity for a scientific understanding of the psychological foundations of students’ professional self-awareness, as well as the development of effective pedagogical and psychological conditions for its formation within the system of higher education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is aimed at examining the psychological factors and mechanisms involved in the development of professional self-awareness among students. The methodological foundation of the research is based on the principles of systemic, activity-based, and personality-oriented approaches that are widely applied in contemporary psychological and pedagogical science, as well as in the practice of higher educational institutions in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The research relies on the scientific concepts of Sergey Rubinstein, Alexei Leontiev, Yevgeny Klimov, and foreign scholars who consider professional self-awareness as an integrative personality construct [5-8].

The empirical part of the study was conducted at one of the higher educational institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The study involved 60 students from the 2nd to 4th years of study majoring in pedagogical and socio-humanitarian fields. To diagnose the level of professional self-awareness and related psychological characteristics, the following methods, widely used in domestic psychodiagnostic practice, were applied:

- E.A. Klimov’s “Diagnostics of Professional Interests” methodology;
- the “Personality Self-Esteem” test (Dembo–Rubinstein);
- the reflexivity questionnaire by A.V. Karpov;
- the scale of educational and professional motivation.

The obtained data were processed using IBM SPSS Statistics, which made it possible to conduct quantitative analysis, calculate mean values, standard deviations, and determine correlation relationships among the studied indicators [9].

Table 1. Average Indicators of Students' Psychological Characteristics (SPSS Analysis)

Indicator	Mean Value	Standard Deviation
Professional Motivation	3.74	0.62
Self-Esteem Level	3.58	0.71
Reflexivity	3.81	0.55
Awareness of Professional Choice	3.69	0.68

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The analysis of the table demonstrates that the majority of students exhibit an average level of professional motivation and reflexivity, indicating a partially developed professional self-awareness. The highest indicator was identified on the reflexivity scale, which points to the development of students' ability for self-analysis and comprehension of their own professional path.

For a deeper analysis, correlation data processing was carried out using Pearson's correlation criterion in IBM SPSS Statistics, the results of which are presented in the following table 2 [10].

Table 2. Correlation Relationships Between the Components of Professional Self-Awareness

Indicators	1	2	3	4
1. Professional Motivation	1			
2. Self-Esteem	0.62**	1		
3. Reflexivity	0.71**	0.55**	1	
4. Awareness of Professional Choice	0.68**	0.60**	0.73**	1

Note: **p < 0.01

The obtained results indicate the presence of statistically significant positive correlations between all components of professional self-awareness. The strongest relationship was identified between reflexivity and awareness of professional choice, which confirms the important role of reflective processes in the formation of a stable professional identity [11].

Thus, the methodological analysis based on the application of valid psychodiagnostic methods and data processing using the IBM SPSS Statistics program allows us to conclude that the development of professional self-awareness among students has a systemic character and is determined by the interrelationship of

motivational, cognitive, and personal factors. This approach corresponds to the scientific and practical methodological approaches widely applied in the higher education system of Uzbekistan and provides an opportunity for an in-depth analysis of students' professional development processes [12].

Discussion

The results of the conducted research make it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the psychological nature of students' professional self-awareness and to identify the key mechanisms underlying its formation within the modern higher education system. The obtained data confirm that professional self-awareness represents a dynamic integrative construct in which motivational, cognitive, and reflective components are closely interconnected.

The analysis of the empirical results demonstrated that the level of professional motivation among students is at an average level, indicating the presence of a basic orientation toward future professional activity. However, this motivation has not yet become fully stable and conscious. This may be explained by the fact that, for some students, career choice is influenced by external factors such as parental opinion, social expectations, or the prestige of a particular specialty, rather than by deep internal professional identification [13].

As the results of the correlation analysis revealed, reflexivity plays a particularly important role in the formation of professional self-awareness. The strong positive relationship between reflexivity and awareness of professional choice indicates that the ability for self-analysis and comprehension of one's own experience serves as a key mechanism in the professional development of personality. Students possessing a high level of reflective ability assess their skills, interests, and limitations more accurately, which contributes to a more conscious choice of professional path [14].

Another important factor is self-esteem, which significantly influences the level of professional motivation and confidence in one's professional prospects. Students with adequate and stable self-esteem demonstrate a higher level of professional orientation, adapt more easily to the demands of educational and professional activities, and show greater readiness for self-realization.

The obtained findings also confirm the theoretical concepts proposed by Sergey Rubinstein, Alexei Leontiev, and Yevgeny Klimov, according to which professional self-awareness is formed through activity and social interaction. Within the educational environment, educational and professional activity acts as the primary factor contributing to the development of professional identity and awareness of the future specialist's role.

At the same time, it should be noted that the identified average level of professional self-awareness formation among students indicates the necessity for further improvement of the educational process. In particular, there is a need to strengthen practice-oriented training, introduce interactive teaching methods, develop reflective skills, and create conditions conducive to students' professional self-determination [15].

Therefore, the analysis of the research results allows us to conclude that the development of professional self-awareness is a complex and multi-level process dependent on the interaction between the internal psychological characteristics of the individual and the external conditions of the educational environment. The effective formation of this quality is possible only under conditions of purposeful psychological and pedagogical support provided to students at all stages of their professional development.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: The conducted study of the psychological factors and mechanisms underlying the development of professional self-awareness among students made it possible to establish that this phenomenon is a complex integrative personality construct formed under the influence of both internal psychological characteristics and external socio-educational conditions. The analysis revealed that the key determinants of professional self-awareness formation are motivation, self-esteem, the level of reflexivity, and awareness of professional choice. The higher the level of reflexivity, the more stable and conscious the individual's professional self-determination becomes. **Implication:** Thus, it can be concluded that the formation of students' professional self-awareness is one of the most important tasks of modern higher education. Its successful development not only improves the quality of professional training but also contributes to personal maturity, social adaptation, and the competitiveness of future specialists in the labor market. **Limitation:** Particular importance should be attached to the findings indicating that, for a considerable proportion of students, professional self-awareness remains at an average level of development. This points to the necessity of further improving the system of specialist training in higher educational institutions. **Future Research:** In particular, there is a need to strengthen the practical orientation of education, introduce active learning methods, develop reflective skills, and create conditions for a more conscious professional choice.

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