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Professional Culture of the Specialist of the Future

**PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS FOR PROFESSIONAL
ACTIVITY OF FUTURE PSYCHOLOGISTS**

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Abstract

The article deals with the process of readiness formation of future psychologists to professional activity. Professional activity of consulting psychologist and preparation for it are considered from the position of humanistic and existential-humanistic approaches. The authors describe the possibilities of the phenomenological method for the study of the image of professional role and representation in the consciousness of value-semantic and motivational-volitional aspects of the activity. Based on the conceptual model of preparation for professional activity a technological algorithm of specialized training for professional role performance was developed. In addition, peculiarities of readiness formation among students with different level of training were studied. The study showed that a special procedural and professional form of study makes it possible to integrate the axiological and motivational-volitional aspects of psychological readiness, which is expressed by awareness and acceptance of themselves in the professional role of a consulting psychologist. The need to highlight psychological readiness in the context of training for professional activity is determined by its key factor in the process of becoming a professional.

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Keywords: Psychological readiness, professional roles, phenomenological method, intramural (IM), extramural students (EM), special procedural and vocational training (SPVT).



1. Introduction

Current market relations are characterized by the need to adapt to the increased dynamic of manufacture, a sudden change of employment or profession. In these conditions, graduates of the University need professionalism for the qualitative fulfilment of their professional activity, high proficiency, high level of competitiveness and willingness to build their own path of professional career and success. Thus, the creation of conditions for training, education, and development of the student as a future specialist in psychological readiness for building a successful professional career dominate in higher education and is the requirement.

The issue of training of specialists of the future in various areas to be successful in their professional activities has recently become a subject of many studies (Aimaganbetova, et al., 2015; Artyukhina, Velikanov, Velikanova, & Tretyak, 2018; Blikhar, Kashchuk & Marchuk, 2018; Busarova, 2017; Khrebina, Khrebin, Shapovalova, Terentyeva, & Yundin, 2018).

1.1. The problem of training in industrial psychology

In industrial psychology, the problem of training is solved, on the one hand, with the development of a system for the knowledge, skills and professional readiness for activity production, and on the other hand, as professional education, the organization of which is conditioned by the nature of the activity itself and is based on the analysis of its psychological content.

Analysis of the problem of training in industrial psychology suggested a multifacet interpretation of the term "training", one of the important aspects of which is psychological readiness.

A theoretical framework for the study of psychological readiness of future psychologists to professional activity is outlined by the conception of individuality and selfhood (Anan'ev, 2001), considering the person as a subject of work, communication and knowledge; conception of the unity of consciousness and activity laid down in the works of Russian psychologists (Abul'hanova–Slavskaya, & Brushlinskij, 1989; Leont'ev, 2005; Rubinstein, 1976; Vygotsky, 1956); and humanistic and existential-humanistic concept of personal growth and formation (Bugental, 1988; Maslow, 1954; Rogers, 1961; Schneider & May, 2012).

The methodological framework of the study is a systematic approach to the analysis of professional activity (Klimov, 2004), personality-motivational and structural-functional analysis of professionally important qualities and states of the subject of labor (Shadrikov, 2003).

1.2. Psychological readiness as an aspect of training for professional activity.

Psychological readiness to perform a professional activity is considered as a positive attitude to the value and meaning of the performed professional role and acceptance of its ability to implement it.

Seryapina (2018), considering different approaches to the concept of readiness, identifies two main aspects: readiness as a personal quality and readiness as a state. Seryapina (2018) also studies the motivational, psychological, cognitive and volitional components of readiness, proposes the concept of readiness for pedagogical activity, and describes the structure and factors influencing the formation of readiness for pedagogical activity.

Uhryn (2013) examines the components of readiness that contribute to self-development and self-realization in the professional sphere and presents the results of an empirical study of readiness to work in the professional sphere.

The results of Uhryn's (2013) study show that the readiness of students for professional activity is determined by the requirements of the activity in relation to mental processes, states, traits of the person, motivation in the profession, personal orientation, as well as life and professional experience.

There is experience in the development of the psychological readiness system of teachers for inclusive education, based on the positive experience of pedagogical practices in the preparation of Russian and French physical education teachers (Catellani et al., 2018).

Summarizing the views of various authors, it can be concluded that the active, dynamic nature of psychological readiness for activity is expressed in the subject's professional activity, which is inherent in the attitude to the profession, as well as to self, his or her abilities, and opportunities, in other words, the formation of professional consciousness. The correlation of potential and actual components in psychological readiness can be compared with the principle of self-actualization of Maslow (1954), who defined it as the desire for self-existence and actualization which constitutes the essence of the organism.

2. Problem Statement

Amid the helping professions, psychological counseling is a special type of professional activity that provides psychological assistance. The relevance of the training of a consulting psychologist is due to the increasing need of the population for psychological assistance and support. At present, further understanding of the professional specifics and possibilities of psychological counseling as a type of helping activity is necessary. A consulting psychologist, carrying out work to maintain a person in the process of his personal, social and spiritual and moral maturation, performs one of the most important social functions that contribute to the development of the personality and the prosperity of society as a whole. Consideration of the professional activity of the consulting psychologist from the position of the psychology of labor allows us to present a conceptual model of the psychology of training such a specialist.

2.1. Peculiarities of consulting psychologist preparation to the profession

The meaning of training a consulting psychologist is in mastering the totality of knowledge, skills, gaining experience, shaping an individual style of psychological counseling assistance, which is the basis for the development of the professional skills of a specialist in this field.

The noteworthy role of the subject of helping activity increases the necessity for his professional training in two plans. The first plan is about the formation of professional competence, i.e. awareness in the field of content, theory, methods and procedures of professional activity. The second is about the formation of psychological readiness for the development of a given profession and the realization of oneself in it.

2.2. Peculiarities of special procedural and professional training in readiness formation for professional role performance.

The conceptual model being the essence of preparation for professional activity, a technological algorithm has been developed for a special procedural-professional preparation for performing a professional role.

The essence of this technology is to refer to the inner activity of consciousness, to develop it through empirical experience of the manifestation of professional qualities and functions, in the formation of an individual style of professional activity. The process of preparing for professional activity in the literature on labor psychology and engineering psychology was initially interpreted as a certain way the organized process of influencing a person, as a result of which they are provided with the acquisition of necessary knowledge and the development of necessary skills. In the future, preparation for professional activities was also considered from the point of view of training that is included in the learning process as an applied side of learning. The learning process, that involves learning and training, is characterized by certain relatively stable levels, achieved in steps, resulting in a kind of “ladder of excellence.”**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

3. Research Questions

Professional activity of consulting psychologist and preparation for it are considered from the position of humanistic and existential-humanistic approaches. The humanistic principle extends to the psychology of work, and the study of individual experience is introduced into the context of preparation for professional activity.

3.1. A phenomenological study of the professional role image of the consulting psychologist

Formation of psychological readiness to perform a professional role in the preparation process is studied by the method of phenomenological analysis, where the emphasis is on the phenomenon of experiencing and cumulating the experience of the manifestation of professionally important qualities and functions.

3.2. Confirming the need for an individual approach in the formation of psychological readiness

Psychological readiness to perform a professional role is a conscious attitude to the value and meaning of professional activity in the context of accepting one's ability to perform it while maintaining the motivational and volitional state.

4. Purpose of the Study

The object of this research was to study the psychological readiness for professional activity of future psychologist role among students of various forms of study.

4.1. To reveal the possibilities of the phenomenological method for the study of the image of professional role and representation in the consciousness of value-semantic and motivational-volitional aspects of the activity.

4.2. To study the peculiarities of readiness formation to perform a professional role among students of various forms of study.

5. Research Methods

To study the individual characteristics of psychological readiness to perform a professional role, the phenomenological method was used (Husserl & Ingarden, 1968; Ricoeur & Ihde, 1989; Ulanovskij, 2016; Wolfram, 1996) as a way of understanding the direct experience of perceiving oneself in the profession.

The choice of a phenomenological approach to the study of the training of a consulting psychologist is justified by the fact that job-oriented approach, humanization and personal growth of future specialists in this activity is a system process that requires appropriate system and non-linear procedures for analyzing its results. The general scheme of the phenomenological analysis procedure is described by American psychologist Giorgi, Fischer and Murray (1975).

6. Findings

The findings of the research are presented correspondingly to the two main tasks formulated earlier.

6.1. The study of psychological readiness to perform a professional role among students of various forms of study

To measure the development of psychological readiness, students of various forms of study were asked to fill out a questionnaire “Questions at the end of classes.” As a result of cluster analysis of the obtained data, the vectors of value-semantic and motivational-volitional concept of students of various forms of study were determined:

- For students on an intramural form of study, a change in psychological readiness manifested itself in an increase in the motivational-volitional aspect expressed in the desire to continue studying the subject.
- Students on an extramural form of study showed awareness (“enlightenment”) of the value-semantic aspect of the activity of a consulting psychologist and the actualization of personal problems in a greater degree.
- A special procedural-professional form of study provided an opportunity to integrate the value-semantic and motivational-volitional aspects of psychological readiness, which were reflected in the awareness and acceptance of oneself in the professional role of a consulting psychologist.

For a deeper understanding of the psychological readiness of students of various forms of preparation for the fulfillment of the professional role of a consulting psychologist, projective techniques such as the Mandala Drawing and the Butterfly Drawing were used. The drawing allows manifesting the existential essence of the state, including readiness for a certain activity.

Among the variety of ways to work with imagination and fantasy, we have chosen a “Mandala-drawing” and “Butterfly-drawing.” The pictorial method as a psychotherapeutic can help in the awareness of the qualities presented in the inner subjective space, which are necessary for the professional activity of a consulting psychologist.

Mandala is a Sanskrit word meaning magic circle. The symbolic form of the mandala is found not only in the East, but there are also specific Christian mandalas. Jung (1986) noted that mandalas can be viewed as “tools” with which order forms itself in being. He interpreted the Mandala as an expression of the psyche, in particular, of the self, as a symbol of the center of personality.

The “Butterfly-drawing” shows a creature flying, moving independently, allowing reflecting the desire for development and transformation. According to mythological interpretations, “butterfly” symbolizes the soul, perfection, harmony, and self-integrity. The drawings help not only to realize the presence in oneself of certain qualities which are necessary for the work of a consulting psychologist but also to determine the value-semantic and motivational-volitional aspects of readiness for this type of professional activity. The work with the Mandala Pattern and the Butterfly Pattern was carried out in groups of intramural (IM), extramural students (EM), and also undergoing special procedural and vocational training (SPVT). To work with a drawing, students were asked to choose four qualities that are inherent in each of them personally, and reflect the idea of the image of a consulting psychologist, and mark them with color; draw in the circle on a sheet of paper with these four colors the image “I am a consulting psychologist” and give the picture a name. Next, the pictures were discussed as follows: what the drawing as a whole says, its individual details and colors; what is most important in a drawing, what could be changed, what feelings and associations it causes.

By the nature of the image, the pictures were divided into three groups: creative, abstract and naturalistic.

The creative ones include drawings with an unusual shape and plot, the abstract ones are drawings that do not have a plot and a clear form, and naturalistic ones are drawings with a predominance of a realistic image of nature. The percentage distribution by groups is presented in Table 01.

Table 01. Distribution of drawings according to the nature of the picture in groups of students of forms of study

№	Picture type	IM	EM	SPVT 2 nd stage	SPVT 4 th stage
1	Creative	28%	40%	35%	50%
2	Abstract	38%	36%	17%	0
3	Naturalistic	34%	24%	48%	50%

It can be assumed that the abstract image of professionally significant qualities and functions in the drawing reflects a superficial understanding of their significance. As can be seen from the table above, by the end of the SPVT, the drawings are extremely creative and naturalistic in nature, which indicates a deeper understanding of the professional role image of the consulting psychologist.

The qualitative and content analysis of the nature of the images, the names of the drawings, the selected qualities and a palette of colors that denote them, made it possible to identify three levels of the figurative representation of psychological readiness to perform a professional role:

Level I (21%) – "**Interested Look**": *diffuse image* with charisma, positive: "Beauty", "Cleopatra", "Doll", "Beauty."

Level II (46%) – "**Getting into Character**": *differential image*, image comprehension, motivational and semantic orientation: "Hope", "Good Luck", "Inspiration", "Intuition", "Spring", "Dream", "A Start."

Level III (32%) – "**Assignment**": *individually transformed image*: "A New Life is Ahead", "The Soul of a Consulting psychologist", "Everything is in your hands", "Clarity."

The professionally important qualities and functions of a consulting psychologist, identified by students of various forms of study, show that students of IM and EM who have not undergone special procedural and professional training have a common understanding of the qualities of a consulting psychologist.

The SPVT group is characterized by a higher understanding of the features of professional activity and the need for involvement in the process of its implementation through trust, reflexion, responsibility, presence, and intuition. Accepting responsibility at the final 4th stage comes in the first place, which reflects the formation of readiness to perform a professional role.

6.2. The impact of special procedural vocational training on the formation of readiness to perform a professional role among students of various forms of study

To study the readiness for psychological counseling, a comparative study was conducted on a specially designed questionnaire "Assessment of value-semantic and motivational-volitional readiness for psychological counseling."

The survey was carried out three months after the end of the classes for each group of participants (an intramural, extramural form of study and SPVT) and made it possible to evaluate the delayed result, which can be considered as the degree of readiness for psychological counseling.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part of the questionnaire included 12 indicators, each of which was evaluated on a ten-point scale. The average values of the results of the evaluation questionnaire for these three groups were compared using Student's t-test. As a result, it was found that the SPVT group compared with the EM group has significantly higher rates of general readiness, recognition of the possibility of self-improvement in the process of professional activity, reflexion and awareness of the real state of readiness for psychological counseling at the moment, desire to counsel and self-confidence as in the consulting psychologist. The SPVT group is also significantly different from the IM group in general readiness for psychological counseling and self-confidence as a consulting psychologist. The data obtained shows that in the SPVT group, a long-term value-semantic and motivational-volitional readiness for psychological counseling is more formed than in the groups of IM and EM. It should also be noted that the group of EM is significantly different from the group of IM by the sense of the need for theoretical and methodological knowledge and the desire to consult, which are more pronounced in the group of EM. The absence of significant differences in terms of the need for skills and practical experience, as well as various aspects of the social significance of the profession, suggests that for all forms of training, their relevance to professional activity is equally accepted.

In the second part of the questionnaire "Assessment of value-semantic and motivational-volitional readiness for psychological counseling", respondents assessed their current state of readiness for

psychological counseling on five professionally important functions: trust, presence, reflexion, awareness, and responsibility towards oneself as a consultant – the process of professional activity and potential people being consulted. The evaluation was conducted on a five-point system.

The difference between the compared groups of the SPVT, the IM and the EM in the second part of the assessment questionnaire showed that for the SPVT group, compared with the EM, the indicator of "presence" in relation to themselves, which is an important aspect of motivation and volitional readiness, is significantly higher than that of the EM students. This shows their greater willingness to be included in the counseling process. Compared with the IM group, the SPVT group has higher levels of "trust" (for themselves and professional activity), "presence" (for themselves and consulted people), "awareness" (for themselves and professional activity), and "responsibility" (for themselves). The data on the salary of EM group is significantly different from the IM group in terms of "trust" (professional activity) and "awareness" (professional activity).

Thus, we can conclude that the inclusion (immersion) in the process of special preparation for the professional activity of the consulting psychologist creates the most favorable conditions for becoming ready for it, including the motivational-volitional aspect expressed by the functions of trust, presence, reflexion, awareness, responsibility.

7. Conclusion

The results show that for students who have completed a SPVT, their attitude towards themselves as a consulting psychologist in all five professionally important functions is higher than that of students in other forms of study, which indicates their greater identification with their professional role and proves that special procedural-vocational training ensures the formation of psychological readiness to perform the professional role of a consulting psychologist at a deeper level.

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