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#### LIFE SELF-DETERMINATION OF STUDENT TEACHERS AS A STRUCTURAL COMPONENT OF PEDAGOGICAL PROFESSIONALISM

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#### *Abstract*

In modern conditions, adequate professional self-determination is the ground condition for the preparation of functionally literate, mobile professionals. The main components of life self-determination are: value self-determination of an individual (student's choice of his/her own position); goals and means of self-realization in concrete life circumstances; the main mechanism for acquiring and manifesting person's inner freedom. In the process of professional training of future teachers, it is also necessary to note that life self-determination is the process of personal formation of one's attitude to professional activity and the way of its realization through the coordination of individual, personal, social, and professional needs.

Life self-determination is closely connected with the process of individual professionalization: professional development, professional identity, and professional self-awareness. On the one hand, self-determination takes place in the process of professional development, and on the other, it is an important indicator of the formation of a professional personality. Professional identity is the most important outcome of life self-determination. The development of professional self-awareness stimulates student's activity in the process of selection and approval of professionally significant values.

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**Keywords:** Life self-determination, professionalism, teacher, professional training, professional development, self-actualization.



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## 1. Introduction

In modern conditions professional education is being increasingly considered in a series of global problems which solutions will significantly affect the development of an individual, the state and the entire human civilization. Attention to the problem of life self-determination is caused not only by the need to adapt to modern social and economic conditions, but also a natural need for young people to find their place in life. Processes currently taking place in the system of professional training of pedagogical staff in Russia exacerbate the problems of qualitative and professional training of future specialists. They are required to become competent and competitive specialists able to effectively interact in the field of professional communication. Within this framework the study of the dynamics of life self-determination of students (as a special age and social group) acquires special significance.

The analysis of theoretical approaches to the problem of life self-determination of future teachers demonstrates the need to search for new theoretical and methodological grounds, first of all, the scientific provision of the formation of life self-determination of future teachers as a structural component of pedagogical professionalism.

## 2. Problem Statement

As known, various issues related to life, professional, personal self-determination, have been repeatedly studied in psychological and educational literature. However, the problem becomes specific in the context of preparing students – future teachers (Durai-Novakova, 1983; Krutetsky, 1980; Krylova, 1990; Lukyanenko, 1991; Yakovleva, 1992).

Problems of integrity and continuity of life self-determination and professional and personal development of a person, as well as professional self-determination of an individual are considered in the works of Shukshunov, Vzyatyshev, Romankova, & Sergievsky (1995), Grishin & Lushin (1990), Shumilin (1989) and Krivosheyev (1991).

Taking into account these contradictions, it is necessary to study professional self-determination of an individual as a real phenomenon of the system of education and self-education. At the same time, in the process of becoming a future teacher, it is strategically important to establish regular relations and essential relations that promote the development of one's personality, to determine the pedagogical conditions of person's professional self-determination of a future specialist, connected with cultural and personal characteristics of the subjects of interaction.

## 3. Research Questions

The main factors influencing life self-determination of an individual are identified as the following: age and gender personal characteristics, individual orientation, a system of universal values, socio-economic conditions, the influence of "significant others", self-actualization and a level of aspiration, the prestige of the profession, a level of awareness, professional interests, inclinations, abilities, attitudes.

If the criterion is the nature of the impact of personal and professional self-determination on a subject, there can be identified:

- objective factors, the impact of which is equally manifested in homogeneous groups (the stage of training and the professional orientation);

- subjective factors reflecting personal characteristics of students (a degree of self-awareness, meaningfulness, purposefulness and motivation of their actions, features of intellectual activity);
- socio-psychological factors associated with the educational environment.

The main stage of the process of professional training and specialization, as well as changes in the intellectual and personal development of future teachers take place in the university. If earlier higher education was oriented toward "a university, a teacher and his professional knowledge," then the center of the modern paradigm of higher professional education is "the personality of a student and his needs for education." In this connection, it becomes necessary to study the integral individuality of a future teacher. Student days is the age of professional and personal self-awareness formation, which is an internal personal condition and a prerequisite for the student's active absorption of important spheres of activity, and the basis of self-regulation and self-management. Andreev (1988) emphasize that further development, complex restructuring of mental functions within the intellect, and change in the entire structure of a personality in the student age is due to the entry into new social communities. The analysis of scientific knowledge has made it possible to establish that life self-determination of a person is treated primarily in two aspects:

- 1) the process of personal own choice;
- 2) meaningfully, as the nature of this choice, which is no longer considered by itself, but in the context of life circumstances.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The process of self-determination is possible when a motivational sphere of a personality reaches a certain level of maturity and is characterized by a conscious understanding of the need to define oneself in accordance with the mastered meanings. A work of teachers to create such pedagogical conditions where the awareness of their own motivational sphere takes place, plays a huge role, becoming the starting mechanism of the process of self-determination.

The content of higher professional education should support and stimulate the process of students' life self-determination as a condition for the formation of a competent specialist. The actualization of personal meanings is a necessary condition for the self-affirmation of a student as a competent teacher, and the sphere of his/her self-determination in life and profession.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The main research method in this article is critical analysis of relevant literature.

#### **6. Findings**

##### **6.1. The essence and structure of life self-determination**

Life self-determination of students of a pedagogical university is a system of intellectual, volitional and emotional-evaluative relations to the world, to pedagogical activity and pedagogical reality, on the basis of which the individual professional position of a teacher is being established. This is a process of approaching a person to the image of the "ideal teacher". This phenomenon unfolds as the interaction of two processes: internal self-movement, in which personal and professional needs, motives, goals, tasks

arise and being realized; and learning process which is external in relation to the personality of a student, and conducts mastering professional values and meanings for a student.

The main components of the life self-determination are: value self-determination of an individual as a process, act and result of student's choice of own position, goals and means of self-realization in the concrete circumstances of life; the main mechanism for the acquisition and manifestation of a person's inner freedom, carried out on the basis of value orientations; and professional self-determination (as a part of life self-determination) which is the formation by an individual of his/her attitude to professional activity and the way of its realization through the coordination of individual, personal and socio-professional needs. We consider features of professional and personal self-determination of students, as during the years of study in a university personal life self-determination occurs in a professional orientation.

## **6.2. The direction of the process of professional-value self-determination on the formation of a professional identity of a future teacher**

Transformation of an individual into a professional is accompanied by the acquisition of:

- a professional identity, that is, the steady harmonization of personal qualities, carried out by an individual in a professional activity,
- a content of the profession which ensures the achievement of a subjectively realized level of professionalism that determines further professional growth and the ability to transfer the formed skills and abilities to changed working conditions.

Presence of a positive professional identity in graduate students is the result of the successful implementation of a process of professional-value self-determination in the period of education in a pedagogical university. For the provision of successful process of professional-value self-determination, it is necessary to observe a number of conditions: meeting students with a value-professional position in its real or ideal form; availability of a situation of free choice in the educational process and the opportunity to discuss emerging options for professional behavior and specific actions; development of the reflective position of students and other properties of a subject of the pedagogical profession.

Professional-value self-determination is not limited to choosing a profession. It manifests itself in finding the inner grounds of choice, that is, in self-consciousness, which is a factor that influences the success of life self-determination of an individual by realizing the meaning of a future profession, realizing oneself as a professional and finding goals and ways of life, self-development in a profession of an "educator".

Having studied psychological and pedagogical literature, we came to the conclusion that life self-determination is a fundamental factor in the formation of a mature personality. A person who realizes the need for self-determination is at a high level of development, as he wants and can take and express his own position in the structure of social and public relationships: professional, emotional, and social. Professional-value self-determination at its highest point of development is called upon to give answers to the questions "Who am I?", "What do I live and work for?", "What is the meaning of my profession?"

Professional-value self-determination of students - future teachers is seen as the interaction of two processes unfolded in time: internal, in which personal and professional needs, motives, goals, tasks arise and being realized; and learning process which is external in relation to the personality of a student. We consider professional training as a mechanism of purposeful pedagogical management of the process of

university students' professional-value self-determination. Whereby, pedagogical management is understood as support, mutual influence, assistance, joint activity of subjects of the learning process - students and teachers, which ensures the purposefulness, organization of efforts and actions to achieve results in the professional and personal growth of students.

University teachers have the task to help students understand that the purpose of their academic and then professional activities is not limited to mastering only specific subject knowledge, but involves the use of this knowledge as a tool for professional and personal self-realization. In connection with this, the values of pedagogical education are represented by personally significant values of existential design of student's personality and, then, teacher's personality (self-knowledge, reflection, acquisition of personal senses of pedagogical activity, revealing of creative potential, and personally oriented nature of a pedagogical process, self-improvement, and achievement of a higher level of personal professional identity).

In the formation of a sustainable individual professional "I-image", the result of this process is the formation of an active subject of professional development, capable of analyzing their life and professional goals, motives, personal opportunities and comparing them with the requirements of pedagogical activity.

There are three levels of life self-determination of students of pedagogical establishments in the process of professional formation:

1) high level: formation of professional interests, correspondence of personal qualities and the system of chosen profession values, a firm belief in the choice correctness, skilful diagnosis of own abilities and a developed skill of personal reflection, which allows to successfully regulate own educational and professional activities, both in the learning process and at the end of the university in the process of pedagogical work;

2) intermediate level: situational manifestation of interest in the chosen professional activity, doubts about the correctness of professional choice, however, in general, there is a tendency towards a steady reflection of oneself as a teacher, but the internal mechanism for managing one's personality and activities on this basis is not formed yet;

3) basic level: a situational display of professional interest, will and desire to achieve high results, no sustained activity in mastering professional knowledge, skills, experience, low professional self-esteem, low, fragmented and unstable ability for professional reflection.

## 7. Conclusion

Life self-determination of students of a pedagogical university is a system of intellectual, volitional and emotional and evaluative relations to the world, to pedagogical activity and pedagogical reality, on the basis of which the individual professional position of the teacher is being formed. This is the process of approaching the person to the image of the "ideal teacher". This phenomenon unfolds as the interaction of two processes: internal self-movement, in which personal and professional needs, motives, goals, tasks arise and being realized; and learning process which is external in relation to the personality of a student, and conducts mastering professional values and meanings for a student. First of all, self-determination of future teachers manifests itself in finding the internal grounds for choosing, that is, self-consciousness, realizing the meaning of a future profession, realizing oneself as a professional and finding goals and ways of life, self-development in a profession of an "educator". The content of higher professional education

should support and stimulate the process of self-determination of students-future teachers as a condition for the formation of a competent specialist.

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