Characteristic aspects of professional self-determination in students of pedagogical college

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Abstract—Creating optimal conditions for professional self-determination is the most important task of professional development. The intention to study the process of professional self-determination formation in students of a pedagogical college was motivated by its social importance and the necessity to create optimal conditions for professional self-determination and a personal fulfillment in private and professional lives. The purpose of the study was to examine such characteristic aspects of professional self-determination in students, as their life plans and the level of professional motivation; the specificity of self-evaluation of their professional interests. The study was based on works regarding professional self-determination in the context of personal development and on the educational concept of professional orientation. We used a questionnaire to determine the professional readiness developed by L.N. Kabardova and a method of studying the profession's attractiveness and its factors modified by N. Kuzmina and A. Rean. Three groups of professional self-determination criteria were chosen (life plans, a level of professional motivation, self-evaluation of professional interests). The study found changes in life plans and specificity of self-evaluation of professional interests and decrease in professional motivation in students from the first year to last.

Keywords—individual, student, professional self-determination, professional readiness, life plans, professional motivation; professional interests.

I. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary literature considers the problem of self-determination in students in many aspects and analyses social, professional, moral, family, and religious identities.

From an early age an individual gradually forms a specific attitude to different kinds of labour, becomes aware of professions and personal capacities and, to some extent, sets some possible career choices [1, 8, 10, 11].

During all stages of growing up, an individual's characteristic aspects of professional self-determination are influenced by a number of factors, among which are selective treatment of professions, personal characteristics, professional requirements, constant self-identification, realisation of the process due to other events (graduation, change of residence, and others), the approach to self-determination as personal fulfilment and social maturity [17, 7].

The process of professional self-determination consists of two levels: gnostic level - reconstruction of consciousness and self-consciousness; practical level - real changes in a social status of an individual [12].

In a general structure of self-determination modally appears the formation of a professional identity, which includes awareness of belonging to a specific professional community; understanding and assessing own compliance to professional standards and finding a place in society based on social roles; awareness of own level of acceptance in a social group; awareness of own strong and weak points, deciding on ways of self-improvement; vision of own future [6, 18, 14].

A professional identity here also functions as a statement of an individual's position in an intrapersonal conflict situation [15], which is caused not only by the acquisition of a profession, but also by the maintenance of the chosen direction. Self-determination is crucial, as it serves as a basis for self-affirmation in society and personal acceptance.

The purpose of the study was to examine such characteristic aspects of professional self-determination in students, as their life plans and the level of professional motivation; the specificity of self-evaluation of their professional interests.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The study was based on works regarding professional self-determination in the context of personal development and on the educational concept of professional orientation. We used methods of ascertaining experiment, a diagnostic technique of studying the profession's attractiveness and its factors modified by N. Kuzmina and A. Rean, and a questionnaire to determine the professional readiness developed by L.N. Kabardova. Three groups of professional identity criteria were chosen, according to which levels of professional self-determination in students were identified (life plans, a level of professional motivation, self-evaluation of professional interests). The Chelyabinsk Pedagogical College No. 2 was chosen as an experimental base.
III. RESULTS

The outcome of the testing based on the method of studying the profession's attractiveness and its factors modified by N. Kuzmina and A. Rean and on the questionnaire to determine the professional readiness developed by L.N. Kabardova showed that third-year students generally doubt their choice of profession and wish to acquire another one. First-year students, however, feel more enthusiastic to receive the chosen profession.

First-year students generally have a high level of professional self-determination in comparison with third-year students: they have clear and precise goals, a prepared personal professional plan or a basis for it, a motivation in their choice of profession, connected with personal or family interests.

Third-years students generally have an average or low level of professional self-determination; for them an inadequate selection of goals in a professional area, lack or uncertainty of plans, external motivation (family, friends), a low interest in the chosen profession are common.

Many factors explain such characteristics. A sufficiently big role for some students in choosing a profession was played by family members. Such students sought to live up to the hopes of their families and chose a pedagogical profession as they were expected to since childhood.

A significant factor was capacity for teaching not only in the sphere of education, but also in many other kinds of activity, although during studies in college a student started to realise the lack of pedagogical skills.

The opinion of friends was another strong factor that influenced a choice of profession. A friendship is built on common interests, trust, and imitation of even future-related things. Thus, 10% of students got into a pedagogical college to be next to a friend.

Almost half of the students had personal professional plans as a factor of their choice. Their personal perception of future played a significant role in choosing a profession, and therefore the success of their professional self-determination generally depended on their own efforts and on an already formed social position, as other authors also concluded [3]. Other students in the course of education have opportunities to learn different social roles and make their choice. In education perception of the world is established and a position in life and a plan of action are chosen, which in turn contribute to a formation of a system of values and personal direction of the youth and determine the professional development prospects [16, 9] and psychosomatic health [2, 5, 20].

Besides college education, failures to establish a personal identity in early youth can be corrected later, although with time the achievement of personal objectives becomes more challenging, as stated in other works [13, 19]. Supporting professional development of students is the hardest responsibility of the entire teaching staff in college [4]. To achieve its highest effectiveness it is necessary to build an organized system that will provide consistent and dedicated work of all participants of the educational process.

The study identified changes in life plans and specificity of self-evaluation of professional interests, and decrease in professional motivation in students from the first year to last.

IV. CONCLUSION

Accordingly, the intention to study the process of professional self-determination formation in students of a pedagogical college was motivated by its social importance and the necessity to create optimal conditions for professional self-determination and a personal fulfillment in private and professional lives. The research questions concern possible changes in professional self-determination in students of a pedagogical college, their life plans, professional motivation, and professional interests from the first year of study to last. The study identified changes in life plans and specificity of self-evaluation of professional interests, and decrease in professional motivation in students from the first year to last.

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