

The Cognitive-Affective Component of the Formation of a Social Work Specialist

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Abstract: *The article presents the results of the study of the cognitive-affective component of the professional development of the social work personality. The purpose of the study is to determine the socio-psychological characteristics and the level of formation of the cognitive-affective sphere of social work specialists. According to the results of the research, there is an insufficient level of awareness and understanding of the peculiarities of the formation in the field of social work: most social work specialists understand the formation in the field of social work as a professional help to different categories of the population. Insufficient awareness of the system of indicators of formation of a specialist (professionally important qualities) has been established. The basic beliefs of specialists, the creative potential and its indicators, which turned out to be quite underdeveloped in social work specialists, are investigated. A high level of positive self-esteem was found in only about half of the subjects; less than half of those surveyed have low levels of psychological well-being, resulting in low levels of empathy.*

Keywords: *social work specialist; understanding; experiences of positive feelings; psychological well-being.*

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1. Introduction

In times of crisis, it is difficult to imagine reforming and modernizing the social sphere in accordance with European social standards without awareness and understanding of the content and multi-vector of social work as a sphere of humanitarian activity aimed at providing social services, guaranteeing social rights to the population, ensuring a high standard of living and so on. Accordingly, it becomes especially important to become a professional person in professional activity, to understand oneself and other people, to experience positive feelings about professional activity and to become one's own personality as a professional in the field of social work.

O. Eldyshova, a scientist (2006, pp. 101-102) states that a person's perception of himself as an employee, a carrier of professional culture, including certain professional norms, rules, traditions, inherent in the professional community, characterize a person the success of its activity is shaped by the professionally important qualities that individual-psychological properties and the attitude of a specialist can play. It is also an understanding and awareness of the content of this process, due to the multidimensional and multifunctional nature of the professional activity, the formation of relatively stable cognitive-affective complexes in the process of acquiring personality experiences, models, through which the person indirectly analyses and reproduces the information he/she perceives.

Describing the social work specialist in our country, a researcher O. Karpenko, considering the positions of different social work schools, has distinguished the following groups of knowledge that an employee should possess: methodological, theoretical, methodical and technological (Karpenko, 2011, p. 93). At the same time, he/she must master and be able to apply the relevant skills and abilities of individual work, representation and mediation, record keeping, evaluation, preventive work and service (Semygina et al., 2005, pp. 135-136). The specialist must have the cognitive skills (to analyze the scientific concepts, practical experience, study and identify problems, etc.), skills of cooperation and communication, constructive, organizational and others. Therefore, in our opinion, the formation of the personality of specialists at different stages requires appropriate professionally important qualities, knowledge and skills that will promote both self-determination in professional activity, and the design of the professional path, self-regulation, self-affirmation and self-improvement, as well as professional activity, moreover, the self-realization of a specialist as a professional, achievement of "acme", reflection of professional

experience and self-creation of the meaning of a further life path (Balakhtar, 2018, pp. 303-314; Kowalczyk-Waledziak et al., 2019).

2. Objective and methodology of the research

The object of research: the degree of understanding and experience of positive feelings towards becoming a specialist, a profession and oneself as a social work professional and specialist, cognitive neoplasms, purposefulness and meaningfulness of the professional path, self-acceptance, knowledge of the ways of transferring one's own experience as a specialist-master, satisfaction with professional activity, etc.

The research aim identifies the main indicators of understanding and awareness of the process of becoming and experiencing positive feelings about becoming a specialist.

To study the cognitive-affective sphere, we used the World assumptions scale (Janoff-Bulman, 1989) technique, adapted by O. Kravtsova (Soldatova et al., 2008), which allowed us to investigate the basic beliefs of social work specialists who make up the nucleus subjective world of the personality of the specialist and characterize the optimistic attitude to the world, people around and him/herself. The study also examined: a) the awareness and understanding by specialists of the essence and content of both social work and their formation in professional activity, professionally important qualities necessary for a specialist to realize the social work by the author's methods like: "Awareness and understanding by specialists of the process of becoming professional activities", "Occupationally important qualities of the personality of a social work specialist" (Balakhtar, 2019); b) the questionnaire "Your creative potential" (Nikiforov et al., 2003); c) modality of the specialist's attitude (positive, ambivalent, negative) to social work by the author's modification of the unfinished sentence methodology; d) self-esteem as an emotional component of self-consciousness, *emotional-value attitude* to oneself according to the method of V. Pantileev-C. Stolin (Bodalev & Stolin, 1987); e) the Ukrainian-language version of K. Riff's Scale of Psychological Well-being was used to find out the indicators of psychological well-being in the adaptation of S. Karaskanova (2011). Statistical data processing and graphical presentation of results were performed using the SPSS statistical software package (version 23.0).

3. Analysis of the research results

3.1. Social and demographic characteristics of the research sample

The main group of respondents consisted of 625 social work professionals from different regions of Ukraine. The respondents were divided into groups according to: 1) gender (23.8% male & 76.2% female); 2) living place (24,3% of respondents live in the village and 75,7% persons live in the city); 3) stages of professional formation (vocational training - students under the age of 23 (31.0%); professional adaptation - young professionals under the age of 30 (15.0%); formation of professional competence - specialists aged 30 to 40 years (16.3%); formation of professional skills - specialists aged 40 to 50 years (11.3%); improvement of professional skills and transfer of experience - specialists aged 50 to 60 years (14.7%); post-labour stage - specialists aged 60 years and older (11,7%).

3.2. Cognitive and affective aspects

On the first stage of the study, the basic beliefs of the social work professionals were identified, thus the formation of a system of vocationally significant (cognitive) and personal components, which depends on the basic beliefs of the social worker, in particular on the knowledge of the cause and effect relationships that underlie the management of events of one's life, finding ways to realize one's goals, the presence of the strength of the person in the personality for their realization, confidence in the prospect of the chosen path of life and the commitment of the surrounding world (Balahtar, 2019). In our opinion, this is closely related to the basic beliefs and creativity of social work professionals. Thus, according to the methodology of the "Basic Beliefs Scale" by R. Yanov-Bulman, only a small number of respondents are characterized by a high level of self-control (44.3%), confidence in the commitment of the surrounding world (35.4%), beliefs in the justice of the world as a whole (26,1%), controllability and fairness of events (23,5%), values of own "I" (Table. 1).

Table. 1. Indicators of the basic beliefs of social work professionals

Indicators of the basic beliefs of social work professionals	Levels of basic beliefs (the number of respondents, in %)		
	Low	Average	High
SC (self-control)	27,8	27,8	44,3
R (coincidence)	44,2	15,4	40,5
L (luck)	26,4	36,2	37,4

BW (commitment to the world)	36,8	32,0	31,2
C (controllability of the world)	34,2	39,0	26,7
BP (kindness of people)	41,0	33,0	26,1
SW (values of own "I")	34,2	44,3	21,4
J (justice of the world)	55,4	32,8	11,8

Source: Authors' own contribution

Despite the predominance of the average level of the "I" value scale, which indicates adequate self-esteem and criticality towards one's self, only a third of the respondents (33.6%) do not believe in their value as a professional, unable to manage events in this world and do not believe in luck, the ability to control the world and justice in the world ($p < 0.01$). There is a view of personality values as a systemic trait, reflecting "the functional aspect of personal value in the process of activity, characterizing specific axiological relationships on the part of the individual, aimed at realizing both personal needs and interests of the system to which a particular person belongs." Values have social (conditioned by the system of education, training, formed and adjusted by the interests and demands of society) and individual (depends on the individual characteristics of the individual, his/her life experience, interests, needs, ideals) character (Kornienko, 1998; Karpenko Z., 2009).

The level of awareness and understanding by specialists of the essence and content of both social work and their formation in the professional activity, professionally important qualities which are necessary for a specialist to realize the essence of social work by the author's methods of incomplete sentences "Awareness and understanding by specialists of the process of becoming professional" The professionally important qualities of the personality of a social work specialist "(Balakhtar, 2019). To the question "Becoming a social worker means a possibility for me as a specialist ..." we received the following answers presented in Table. 2.

Table. 2. Distribution of the studied social work specialists by understanding the essence of becoming a professional

"Becoming a social worker means a possibility for me as a specialist..."	Amount %
to help professionally people of different categories: elderly, lonely, in LLL and others.	67,4
career growth, professional self-actualization, self-realization and self-development	22,2

interact with people, make new contacts, work as a team	18,1
understand yourself and others, follow a code of ethics	14,7
be useful, involved in solving social problems of the population	13,6
change the world for the better, do good, fight conservatism	10,4
implement the social policy of the state	8,5
to work in a specialty, to become a professional	6,9
difficult to answer	0,3

Source: Authors' own contribution

According to the data from the Table 2, more than half of social work professionals understand the emergence of social work as professional help to different categories of the population: elderly, single, in difficult life circumstances, etc. (67.4%). A much smaller number of respondents associate formation with career growth, professional self-actualization, self-realization and self-development (22.2%), establishing new contacts, working in a team (18.1%), understanding themselves and others, adhering to the code of ethics (14.7%), the opportunity “to change the world for the better, to do good, to fight conservatism” (10.4%), to “implement the social policy of the state” (8.5%), “the desire to work in the speciality, to become a professional” (6.9%).

Regarding the specialists' understanding of the most urgent tasks of social work, the cause-and-effect relationships that underlie their professional activity, the question “What do you think are the most relevant tasks of social work?” we received the following answers (Table. 3).

Table. 3. Distribution of the studied social work specialists by understanding the most relevant tasks of social work

"What do you think are the most relevant tasks of social work?"	Amount %
to assist people in solving various problems (psychological, socialization, physical, etc.)	63,5
social protection of the unprotected rights of the population, asserting their rights, implementation of the social policy of the state	50,7
improve the quality and efficiency of social service delivery	40,29
to provide a wide range of services to different categories of population	30,7

to promote the restoration of social contacts and connections	20,8
democratization of society, social justice, avoidance of negative consequences of ill-considered implementation in the field of social work	19,4
to solve various problems concerning employment, prevention of unemployment, etc.	16,3
do not clearly understand the tasks of social work	12,5
humane attitude towards the client, altruism	10,1
development of ethical standards, own potential of specialists	4,2
difficult to answer	1,3

Source: Authors' own contribution

Experts consider (Table. 3) the most important task of assisting people in solving various problems (psychological, legal, physical, social, etc.) (63.5%), promoting social security of unprotected rights of the population, upholding their rights, implementing the social policy of the state (50.7%). Much fewer specialists are aware of the importance of providing a wide range of services to different categories of the population (30.7%), assistance in the restoration of social contacts and relationships of clients (20.8%), humane treatment of clients, development of ethical norms, own potential (10, 1% and 4.2% respectively). Among those surveyed, those who do not clearly understand the tasks of social work and find it difficult to respond in general were identified (12.5% and 1.3%, respectively). The results obtained indicate a certain fragmentation of the ideas of the researched about the peculiarities of becoming in the field of social work, lack of awareness and understanding of its tasks, multifunctionality and multidimensionality of the range of services.

Besides, there is a lack of awareness of the system of indicators of becoming a social work specialist for a considerable part of the subjects. Specialists have some sense of professional and personal achievement (status, merit, etc.), which is the characteristic of individuals in the later stages of becoming. Also, personal and professionally important qualities, which form the personality and professional characterization of social work professionals, are necessary for the successful self-realization of a specialist as a professional at different stages of becoming (Balakhtar, 2019).

This is evidenced, in particular, by an analysis of the professionally important personality traits, that respondents believe those qualities should be inherent in social work professionals (Table. 4).

Table 4. Distribution of the researched on the awareness of the professionally important qualities of the personality of a social work specialist

"The professional qualities of a social work professional are ..."	Amount %
emotionally volitional	78,9
cognitive	62,2
communicative	58,6
motivational	43,2
intellectual	34,4
spiritual and moral	34,1
organizational	31,8
reflexive	25,1
creative (creative)	19,0
difficult to answer	5,4

Source: Authors' own contribution

Thus, as Table 4 shows, the most popular experts consider emotional-volitional (78.9%), which contribute to the manifestation of empathy, self-control, endurance, perseverance, as well as provide high emotional tone, confidence in the goal, restraint, stress resistance, responsibility, patience, flexibility, advanced adaptive properties of the nervous system and other qualities that are necessary for the conditions of today. At the same time, cognitive (62.2%) and communicative (58.6%) qualities are quite important for the professional activity of the specialists. Much fewer experts are aware of the importance of the motivational qualities (43.2%) associated with having a positive attitude to oneself as a professional, to the profession and success in it (e.g. commitment, willingness to risk, etc.), intellectual (34.4%) (developed intellect, flexible creative thinking, high mental capacity, analytical mind, prognostic ability, active perception, good memory, steady attention, developed imagination, erudition, intellectual flexibility, creativity, observation, etc.), spiritual-moral (34.1%) (humanism, respect for human, selflessness, honesty, high morality, charity, kindness spirituality, developed sense of dignity and respect of the dignity of others, etc.), organizational (31.8%), reflexive (25.1 %) and creative (19.0%) qualities. This, in our opinion, leads to the uniformity of decisions and lack of motivation to find innovative methods of professional activity.

As for creativity, determined by the appropriate test (Nikiforova et al., 2003), a high level of creative potential was found in only 9.4% of people

(Table. 6). Most experts are characterized by an average level (73.7%) of creativity.

Table. 6. Distribution of the studied social work specialists by levels of creative potential

Stages	Number of respondents, in %	
	creative potential	self-alignment
low	16,9	22,3%
average	73,7	34,2
high	9,4	43,5

Source: Authors' own contribution

At the same time, the most advanced specialists are (Table. 6): curiosity (9.9 points on average) and self-belief, strengths (7.7 points on average). Consistency and persuasiveness (4.3 points on average), ability to think abstractly, "auditory memory", ambition, visual memory, desire to be an independent personality, focus on affairs were significantly lower (on the average 3,9; 2,5; 2,4; 2,2; 2,1 points respectively).

Table. 6. Indicators of the creative potential of social work professionals

Indicators of creative potential of specialists	Average value	Standard deviation
Curiosity	9,9	1,54
belief in yourself	7,7	1,35
sustainability and persuasiveness	4,3	1,10
ability to think abstractly	4,0	1,12
"Auditory memory"	3,9	1,15
Ambition	2,5	0,80
visual memory	2,4	0,77
the desire to be an independent person	2,2	0,83
focus on affairs	2,1	0,96
Overall score	39,15	4,06

Source: Authors' own contribution

The results obtained show rather poorly developed skills: the ability to learn, the ability and skills of independent creative activity, to generate creative ideas, to go beyond the given situation, etc. Therefore, it is important to develop creativity as a resource of human creativity, the ability of a particular person to perform creative activities, creative activity as a

whole. Thus, in the field of social work, creativity is shown by sensitivity to problems, open attitude to new ideas and the ability to destroy stereotypes due to creating new, unusual solutions to life's problems.

An important structural component of becoming a specialist on the path to self-realization in the professional activity in the field of social work, along with the formation of the value position of the individual, value orientations, cognitive development consider self-presentation as a professional-personal neoplasm, which is a "component of self-consciousness" for "or" against "oneself, specific internal evaluations, such as self-praise, self-praise, self-condemnation, self-condemnation, etc." (Bondarchuk, 2008, p. 140; Clipa & Clipa, 2019). Self-esteem is known to be a personally emotionally valuable judgment about what a person learns and understands, "opens up" to him/herself (Chesnokov, 1977, pp. 108-109), for which he "consciously assumes responsibility as an author and the Creator" (Pantileev, 1991; Stolin, 1983, p. 5, 7, 8, 9, 15, 18). Thus, the author's modification of the incomplete sentence technique establishes a modality of attitude (positive, ambivalent, negative) towards social work, himself as a specialist and professional, his/her personality and his formation (Balakhtar, 2019). Only slightly more than half (58.6%) of them are ready to work in the field of social work or to choose a related speciality, 41.4% of respondents do not imagine themselves as a professional in the field of social work and are ready to choose any other profession. In this case, according to the method of V. Pantileev - S. Stolin's high level of positive self-esteem was found in only 43.5% of the respondents, who are characterized by relatively higher rates of positive self-esteem, self-esteem, autosympathy and others. Indicators of low self-esteem signal the possibility of destruction of self-identity, the subjective nature of the professional activity, the bias in the perception of other people (employees, clients), etc.

The dissatisfaction with one's own life, professional activity and becoming a whole is evidenced by the indicators of psychological well-being of social work specialists as a multidimensional construct, which covers the cognitive and emotional spheres of the individual, determines comfort and satisfaction (dissatisfaction) with life, the level of happiness in the process of assessment, the level of happiness, self-development, self-improvement, meaningfulness and purposefulness of professional formation (Volynets, 2017, pp. 7-17).

Psychological well-being is viewed as a person's existential experience of attending to one's life (Shevelenkova & Fesenko, 2005, p. 95), in connection with self-regulation of personality, the meaningfulness of life, etc. Thus, only 33.3% of those surveyed found a high level of psychological well-being and a low level in 47.2% of the persons, which indicates an

amazingly low level of satisfaction with life and professional activity in the field of social work. (Table 7).

Table. 7. Distribution of the studied social work professionals by levels of psychological well-being

Indicators of psychological well-being	Stages of psychological well-being, number of respondents, in %		
	low	average	high
positive relations with others	40,0	22,4	37,6
autonomy	39,7	31,4	29,0
environmental management	39,8	26,6	33,6
personal growth	38,7	29,6	31,7
purposefulness and meaningfulness of life	39,5	20,3	40,2
self-acceptance	41,0	28,8	30,2
Psychological well-being	47,2	19,5	33,3

Source: Authors' own contribution

As it is shown from the Table. 8, the respondents found a low level of positive relations with others (40.0%), which indicates difficulties in establishing trust, honesty, concern for other people; autonomy (39.7%), which involves regulating one's behaviour in a standardized manner, but also have some dependence on the opinion and assessment of others; environmental management (39.8%) - inability, powerlessness in environmental management; personal growth (38.7%) - lack of desire for self-realization, interest in life, inability to enter into relationships, interaction, etc.; purposefulness and meaningfulness of life (40.2%) - uncertainty, lack of goals from specialists, orientation, perspectives, etc.; self-acceptance (41.0 %) is dissatisfied, disappointed with life.

Thus, the generalization of the obtained results by the criterion of understanding by the specialists in social work the essence, indicators, factors, ways of becoming their personality in the professional activity testifies to the most characteristic level below average, and the experience of positive feelings towards becoming a personality of social work could reveal 2,4% of respondents, above the average - in 34,1%, the average - in 33,1%, below the average - in 29,3%, low - in 1,1% of people. According to the results of empirical study of personality development of specialists in social work in the cognitive-affective sphere revealed an insufficient level - below average (39.5%) (Table. 8), high level of its development in only 0.8% of the studied, above average - in 29.7%, the average in 29.0%.

Table 8. The distribution of subjects by levels of understanding and awareness and experiencing positive feelings about becoming a social work professional

Stages	Components of formation, %		
	cognitive	affective	cognitive-affective
Low	4,8	1,1	1,0
Below average	39,5	29,3	39,5
Average	37,4	33,1	29,0
Above average	18,1	34,1	29,7
High	0,2	2,4	0,8

Source: Authors' own contribution

Based on the research of scientists Pavlenko (2016), Vishnyakova (1999), Leskov (2016), Magadley (2012) and other scientists who note that creative potential, cognitive knowledge and emotional experiences influence the process of becoming a specialist as a whole and forming individual personality traits, in particular, statistically significant differences were found regarding the cognitive-affective component of social work professionals depending on gender and stages of professional development (Fig. 1).

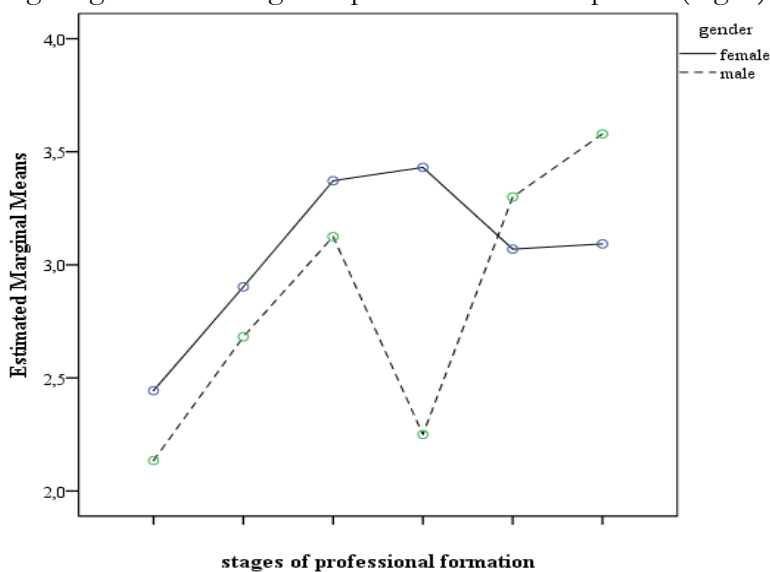


Fig. 1. Features of cognitive-affective component of personality development of social work professionals depending on gender and stages of professional development

Source: Pavlenko (2016), Vishnyakova (1999), Leskov (2016), Magadley (2012)

The indicator of the cognitive-affective component undergoes constant changes at different stages of personal and professional formation, and also depends on the gender of the specialist. Thus, according to the

analysis of variance, the level of manifestation of the indicator of understanding and awareness and the experience of positive feelings towards becoming a person of social work specialists is the lowest at the stage of vocational training in the representatives of male and female sex and makes an average of 2.13 and 2.44 points, respectively ($p \leq 0.01$). In other stages, women increase to the stage of professional skill formation, peaking (average 3.44 points), and then decline over the life course (average 3.09 points). In men as a whole, there is a positive upward trend throughout the formation.

4. Discussions and conclusions

The obtained results are consistent with the data of other researchers regarding the level of development of cognitive knowledge in the process of professional and personal formation of specialists and can be explained by the peculiarities of their interaction, value-semantic aspect, the productivity of professional activity, features of perception of their psychological security, work efficiency and stability etc. (Bondarchuk, 2014; Lebid & Breus, 2013; Prikhodko, 2013; Witkin, 1974).

The analysis of the peculiarities of basic beliefs, understanding of the essence and content of specialists in both social work and own formation in professional activity, professionally important qualities, emotional-value attitude towards themselves and other indicators of the cognitive-affective component of becoming specialists in the field of social work revealed awareness and understanding of the content and multiple vectors of social work and the process of becoming a person, as well as understanding oneself and other people, experiencing positive feelings to professional activity and becoming a personality as a professional in the field of social work.

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