

# Features of professional identity of students “helping” occupations with different levels of self-efficacy

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**Abstract.** Professional identity is an indicator of the level of mastery of professional activity. One of the indicators for assessing the formation of professional identity is the attitude to yourself as a future and current professional. Here we can talk about both the real and the predicted of the professional self-rating. This study focuses on predicted self-esteem. Self-efficacy is a professionally important meta-quality, positively correlated with the results of professional activity. The problem of self-efficacy in the process of formation of professional identity of “helping” occupations specialists is important from the point of view of assessing professional maturity and psychological and pedagogical support of the formation of professional personality. The study sample consisted of 93 students of 1 course of study of psychological and medical specialties aged 17 to 21 years ( $M=17.9$ ,  $SD=3.2$  (41.5% men)). The methods of research were the method of determining the level of self-efficacy (J.E. Maddux, M. Sherer, modification of L. Boyarintseva under the direction of R. Krichevsky) and “Personal differential”. The study describes the features of the predicted self-esteem at different stages of professionalization of students “helping” occupations with different levels of self-efficacy.

## 1 Introduction

Considering the relevance of the study of the professional identity problem of students, it should be noted that this stage is the certain stage of professional development. Thus, entering to the University and university studies can be indicated as the professional education stage and preparation for professional activity (T. V. Kudryavtsev) [1], the stage of option/adaptation (E. A. Klimov, E. F. Zeer) [2, 3], the stage of pre-professionalism (A. K. Markova) [4]. At this stage, the ideas about the chosen profession are formed, the measure of possible success is evaluated, the ideas about the personality of the professional are formed, the conformity of these ideas to their own characteristics is checked, cognitive and professional interests are formed, life plans are formed [1-3].

Studies of the formation of professional identity are not new for psychological science. At the initial stage, the indicators of professional development were the criteria for the

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effectiveness of professional activity. However, later it was shown that this approach is insufficient to assess the level of professionalism [2, 3]. Determining the criteria for the effectiveness of professional activity is a complex process, as it requires taking into account numerous additional variables and dynamic ideas about the effectiveness of a particular professional activity. At now, the professional identity recognized as the indicator of the level of professional activity (E. P. Ermolaeva, D. I. Zavalishina, N. S. Pryazhnikov, V. I. Pavlenko), which is understood as the leading characteristic of the subject of labor [5-7].

It is the phenomenon of professional identity that allows separating a professional from a performer and a specialist [8]. According to Yu. P. Povarenkov, professional identity is realized in different forms at different stages of professional development, namely: as an integral emotional state or feeling; as a criterion of professional development; as a source of feedback for assessing the compliance of the results of professional development with subjective expectations [6]. Yu. P. Povarenkov notes that one of the indicators for assessing the formation of professional identity is the attitude to yourself as a future and current professional [6]. Here we can talk about both the real and the predicted self-esteem of the professional. This study focuses on predicted self-esteem.

The phenomenon of self-efficacy means a person's conviction that he can control his behavior so that it is effective, understanding that he can achieve his goals [9]. Often the concept of self-efficacy is considered in relation to the phenomena of resilience, locus of control, self-assessment [10, 11]. Self-efficacy is an extremely important determinant of human behavior, as it involves people's perceptions of their ability to organize and execute the chains of action required to achieve predetermined types of performance outcomes [10]. Self-efficacy determines the expectations of the subject [10]. Assessing the possibility of any action, the subject forms a level of confidence in their abilities, as the conviction is higher, as the level of claims is higher. Assessment of opportunities, confidence and level of claims form the image of the desired result, which will further regulate the level of claims [12].

It was found that the influence of self-efficacy applies to any human working and activity (D. Fadiman, A. Stajkovic and F. Luthans, T. O. Gordeeva) [10, 13]. In the literature it is also noted that self-efficacy is a professionally important meta-quality (K. M. Gaidar) [14], positively correlated with the results of professional activity (A. Stajkovic and F. Luthans) [10], decreases in periods of students professional crises (S. N. Gonchar) [15]. Thus, self-efficacy is significant in the study of professional identity, although the literature, to a greater extent, presents the study of self-efficacy in teenager educational activities (E. A. Shepeleva) [11] and the relationship of self-efficacy with coping strategies (A. A. Pogorelov) [16].

The specificity of "helping" occupations is determined by the fact that the person of a professional acts as a means of helping and knowing another [17]. The main characteristic of this group of professions is the high responsibility for the results of professional influences [17]. The competence of the specialists of "helping" professions, thus, will be determined first by the ability to help himself, and then the ability to be close to a person experiencing life difficulties [18]. The problem of self-efficacy, in the process of formation of professional identity of specialists of this group of professions, is important from the point of view of assessment of professional maturity and psychological and pedagogical support of formation of the professional personality.

The study of professional identity, described in this article, is aimed at the study of semantic features of ideas about themselves at different stages of professionalization of students "helping" professions with different levels of self-efficacy. This will complement the model of subjective ideas about the professionalization stages at its initial stage, as well as ideas about the dynamics of personal development at these stages

## 2 Materials and Methods

The study sample consisted of 93 1st year students (specialty 31.05.01 “Medical care” – 47.2%, direction 37.04.01 “Psychology” – 52.8%) aged 17 to 21 years ( $M=17.9$ ,  $SD=0.4$ , 41.5% men).

The research methods were: survey method, scaling, statistical methods (descriptive statistics, Kruskal-Wallis test, Friedman test). Methodological tools are presented by the following methods: method of determining the level of self-efficacy (J.E. Maddux, M. Sherer, modification of L. Boyarintseva under the direction of R. Krichevsky); the technique of personal differential (adaptation of the psycho-neurological Institute. V. M. Bekhterev). The scales of personal differential were filled by respondents with instructions to evaluate themselves according to the selected personality features in the positions “I – before entering the University”, “I – after graduation”, “I – professional”.

The test was subjected to the assumption that: 1) subjective aspects of ideas about the professionalization stages of students with different levels of self-efficacy may have differences; 2) self-esteem may be different in the positions of “I before entering the University”, “I after graduation”, “I – professional” students with different levels of self-efficacy.

## 3 Results and discussion

In the beginning stage, students were divided into groups by levels of self-efficacy in the field of subject activity and in the field of interpersonal communication. Confidence intervals to the sphere of subject activity were  $11.1 \leq x \leq 25.7$ , to the sphere of interpersonal communication –  $1.7 \leq x \leq 5.3$ . Frequency distribution by the level of self-efficacy is represented by data: 1) in the field of subject activity: high 34%, medium – 18.9%, low – 47.2%; 2) in the field of interpersonal communication: high 32.1%, medium – 34%, low – 34%. Further statistical analysis used the division into groups by levels of self-efficacy in the subject activity, as this indicator is more consistent with the study of professional development.

The results of statistical analysis of subjective ideas about the stages of professionalization of students with different levels of self-efficacy in the field of subject activity (table 1) show that:

1) There are differences in the factor Evaluation of students with different levels of self-efficacy in assessing the stage of professionalization “I before entering the University.” High rates on this factor are observed in students with a high level of self-efficacy, low – in students with an average level.

2) There are differences in factors’ Evaluation and Activity among students with different levels of self-efficacy in assessing the stage of professionalization “I after graduation”. High values of factor Evaluation are observed in students with a high level of self-efficacy, low – with low. Factor Activity has the highest values among students with a high level of self-efficacy in the field of subject activity, and the lowest – among students with an average level of self-efficacy.

**Table 1.** Subjective aspects of ideas about the stages of professionalization of students with different levels of self-efficacy in the field of subject activity.

Levels / statistics	«I'm before entering the University»			«I'm after graduation»			«I'm a professional»		
	E	P	A	E	P	A	E	P	A
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>

High level	7.1 (6.9)	1.7 (4.9)	1.4 (10.1)	7.5 (10.8)	5.7 (7.2)	5.6 (10.2)	10.3 (9.8)	8.1 (7.6)	2 (9.5)
Average level	3.5 (7.,5)	-0.6 (7)	-2.2 (11.1)	2.8 (13.2)	1.3 (6.7)	-1 (11.8)	9.3 (12.3)	9.1 (5.6)	1.6 (11.6)
Low level	5.2 (6.7)	3.8 (4)	2.1 (6.2)	0.8 (1.1)	2.8 (8.6)	2.6 (9)	10.3 (6.7)	8.8 (9.4)	7.9 (9.5)
H	5.402	3.828	1.044	6.839	2.752	7.057	0.408	0.347	6.352
p	0.044	0.147	0.593	0.028	0.253	0.017	0.816	0.841	0.039

*Notation: E – factor Evaluation, P – factor Potency, A – factor Activity.*

3) There are differences in factor Activity among students with different levels of self-efficacy in assessing the stage of professionalization “I’m a professional”. The highest values are observed in students with a low level of self-efficacy.

The results of the statistical analysis of self-assessment in the positions “I’m before entering the University”, “I’m after graduation”, “I’m a professional” for students with different levels of self-efficacy in the field of subject activity show that:

1) Students with a high level of self-efficacy have different indicators of factor Potency in assessing situations of professionalization “I’m before entering the University”, “I’m after graduation”, “I’m a professional” ( $\chi^2=11.373$ ,  $p=0.003$ ). The values of factor Potency consistently increase at the proposed stages of professionalization: “I’m before entering the University” (M=1.7), “I’m after graduation” (M=5.7), “I’m a professional” (M=8.1). That is, in the views of students with a high level of self-efficacy in the field of subject activity, the level of self-esteem, self-satisfaction, self-awareness of the bearer of positive, socially desirable characteristics increase as the mastery of the profession.

2) Students with a low level of self-efficacy have different factors’ Evaluation, Potency and Activity in assessing situations of professionalization ( $\chi^2=13.652$ ,  $p=0.001$ ;  $\chi^2=8.239$ ,  $p=0.016$ ;  $\chi^2=10.326$ ,  $p=0.006$ ). The highest values of factor Evaluation are observed at the stage of “I’m a professional” (M=10.3), the lowest “I’m after graduation” (M=0.8). The values of factor Potency change in the same way, namely, the greatest at the stage of “I’m a professional” (M=8.8), the smallest – “I’m after graduation” (M=2.8). Factor Activity is low at the stages of “I’m before entering the University” (M=2.1) and “I’m after graduation” (M=2.6), increases when assessing the position of “I’m a professional” (M=7.9). Thus, the subjective views of students with a low level of self-efficacy in the field of subject activity have the following features: the stage of professionalization “I’m a professional” attributed to the highest level of self-satisfaction and self-esteem, self-confidence and activity; stages of professionalization “I’m after graduation” attributed to minimal self-satisfaction, low level of self-confidence and low activity.

3) Students with an average level of self-performance indicators of personal differential factors in the positions of “I’m before entering the University”, “I’m after graduation”, “I’m a professional” do not differ.

## 4 Conclusion

The results of the study allow us to conclude that the features of professional identity of students with different levels of self-efficacy in the field of subject activity have some differences.

Factors’ Evaluation and Activity are different when comparing ideas about the stages of students’ professionalization with different levels of self-efficacy. At the same time, factor Evaluation differs in the positions “I’m before entering the University” and “I’m after graduation”, and factor Activity – “I’m after graduation” and “I’m a professional”. That is, the level of self-esteem and self-satisfaction is determined by self-efficacy within the

training period and does not mediate the idea of yourself as a professional. High activity in the views of students is determined by self-efficacy on the contrary at the stage of graduation and the beginning of professional activity. The values of the activity factor at the stage of "I'm a professional" are higher in students with a low level of self-efficacy. Here there is a delayed activity in obtaining a profession.

It is important, in our opinion, is the lack of differences in the views of students with an average level of self-efficacy in the field of subject activity in the positions of "I'm before entering the University", "I'm after graduation", "I'm a professional". While students with a high level of self-awareness of the carrier of positive, socially desirable characteristics increases with the mastery of the profession. And students with a low level of self-efficacy have the highest level of self-satisfaction and self-esteem attributed to the stage of "I'm a professional", the smallest – "I'm after graduation". That is, we can trace some discrepancy between the formation of subjective ideas about self-efficacy and positive ideas about themselves at different stages of students' professionalization, which requires further development and is a promising area of research of cause-and-effect relationships between these constructs.

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