

## **The Model of the Psychological Readiness of Students to the Professional Activity: Theory and Practice**

Leonid Mikhaylovich Popov and Irina Mikhaylovna Puchkova  
Kazan (Privolzhsky) Federal University, Kremlevskaya Str. 18, Kazan, Russia

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**Abstract:** The urgency of the issue stated is determined by the necessity of development of the uniform principles by assessment of psychological readiness for professional activity in students of higher educational institutions regardless of their future specialization. Psychological readiness for professional activity allows the recent graduates to quickly adapt to the working conditions, influences the performance, promotes to the professional and personal development. The objective of the study is to substantiate the choice of the main components of the theoretical model of psychological readiness for professional activity. The study presents different approaches to analysis of the psychological readiness for activity and its structure. By design of the model of psychological readiness for professional activity at the stage of vocational training there have been used the conceptual provisions of B.F. Lomov on the structure of the human psychology as an integral organization incorporating the cognitive, regulatory and communication subsystems. On the basis of theoretical analysis of researches related to the study subject the definition of the psychological readiness as a system attribute of educational-professional activity has been formulated. The content of the model of psychological readiness for professional activity in students and its structure have been presented. The structure includes the units of professional “I-concept”, motivation, personal qualities and properties and practically relevant properties and qualities. The substantiation of the empirical study of the specified model has been provided, the results have been described. The results obtained may be used by the practical psychologists in the sphere of education.

**Key words:** Psychological readiness, professional activity, subject of the educational-professional activity, model, structure, diagnostics

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Today the sphere of education represents a dynamic system that is being constantly improved. This process is accompanied by changes in the requirements to the university graduates: the need for young specialist increases that are ready to successfully solve the professional tasks and increase the performance of their professional activity. The improvement of quality of professional training is related to professional development of a person. The national researchers Klimov (1998), Povarenkov (2002), Zeer (2003) and Markova (1996) and foreign researchers Super (1957), Super and Bahn (1971), Holland (1963), Dawis and Lofquist (1984) and Collin and Young (1986) dealt with the study of the professional becoming of a person. The question arises: which psychological formations established during the process of education at a higher educational institution may promote to a quick and easy introduction to a labor sphere. In opinion of a number of researchers Dyachenko (2003), Druzhinin (2001), Derkach (2004) and Pryazhnikov (1996) and in our opinion this

factor is the psychological readiness to activity. This readiness allows the young specialists to quickly adapt to the conditions of professional activity is an important factor determining the performance and promoting to the professional development.

There are different approaches to analysis of psychological readiness to activity the main of which are the functional, personal and personal-pragmatic ones. In our case, we have taken the personal-pragmatic approach for the basis which allows representing the readiness as demonstration of individual, personal and subjective properties and qualities in their entirety that promotes to efficient performance of functions by a person.

Readiness of a person for professional activity was considered from different perspectives. Levitov was one of the first who defined readiness for work as a mental condition specifying that along with the general and long-term readiness for research there is temporary state that may also be called as pre-starting condition.

Platonov described readiness for research by means of three terms with different meanings: in the wide sense as the result of labour education expressed in the wish to

work; “a more specific one” as the result of professional education, development, both professional and personal and “the most specific one” as the state of psychological mobilization under particular conditions.

Dyachenko and Kandybovich (1976) believe that readiness for activity is the targeted expression of a including its beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motives, feelings, willing and intellectual qualities, knowledge, skills, mental sets, orientation to particular behaviour”.

Zabrodin distinguishes the operational readiness related to organization of the direction of professional activity; motivation as a system of professional interests and inclinations; functional one as a complex state of a person.

In the opinion of Druzhinin (2001), readiness is a mental state characterized by mobilization of resources of the labor subject for performance of the activity.

By studying the issue of readiness for professional activity Derkach (2004) determines it as integral demonstration of personal qualities including the cognitive, emotional and motivation components.

Thus, the readiness for professional activity shall be understood to mean the state and professional experience and motivation orientation and unity of psychological characteristics. At the same time, psychological readiness is an important component of the readiness for activity (A.A Derkach, I.I. Dyachenko, Y.M. Zabrodin, etc.).

They also distinguish the general (preliminary, long-term) and situational (temporary) readiness (Dyachenko and Kandybovich, 1976).

General readiness includes a positive attitude to a particular kind of professional activity, experience, motivation, abilities and professionally relevant qualities and volition processes.

The state of psychological readiness for execution of current tasks (situational readiness) arises on the basis of general readiness and reflects the peculiarities and requirements of the forthcoming situation. “Situational readiness is a dynamic intact state of a person, internal aiming for specific behavior, mobilization of efforts for active and reasonable actions.

By determining the components of the model of psychological readiness of students for professional activity, we focus on the general long-term readiness.

Psychological readiness for professional activity has a dynamic structure and may be represented as a whole including interest in the activity, need for achievement of the result (motivation characteristics of a person), understanding of functional duties, tasks of the professional activity, evaluation of its relevance for achievement of the activity purpose (cognitive) characteristics of a person, sense of the professional and

social responsibility, confidence in success, self-control, concentration on execution of the task (emotional volitive characteristics).

The review of the literature does not provide a decisive idea of the structure of psychological readiness for professional activity. The structure of psychological readiness for activity in whole and its separate components are described by Dyachenko and Kandybovich (1976) and Zeer *et al.* (2004). In the general case, we distinguish the following personal characteristics in the structure of psychological readiness for professional activity: motivation (interest in the activity, need for achievement of the result); cognitive (understanding of functional duties, tasks of the professional activity, evaluation of its significance for the achievement of the activity purpose); emotional-volitive (sense of the professional and social responsibility, confidence in success, self-control, concentration on execution of the task).

In their researches Dyachenko and Kandybovich (1976) pay much attention to formation of psychological readiness for activity during the process of professional education. They believe that formation of psychological readiness for professional activity suggests formation of the attitudes, personal properties allowing a student (a subject of educational professional activity) to be consciously involved in the labor activity and perform it successfully. At the same time, much attention shall be paid to the compliance of the results of professional training with the requirements and conditions of the future professional activity of graduates.

Readiness is the result of the targeted development of a person, formation of different psychological peculiarities of students (Dyachenko, 2003). Druzhinin (2001) notes that the process of formation of psychological readiness for activity includes understanding of the tasks and goals set the achievement of which results in the execution of the task set, evaluation of the task solution, forecasting demonstration of the own intellectual, emotional, motivation and volitive processes, evaluation the relationship between the own abilities and ambitions and the necessity of achievement of a particular result.

The solution of the problem of formation of psychological readiness for professional activity is also related to the evaluation of conditions of professional education, forecasting the motivation, volitive, intellectual features of a student, the probability of the result achievement. This is why, it is important to assess the education performance as the condition of actualization of the student’s potential, development of his professional readiness.

We believe that by designing the model of psychological readiness for professional activity at the stage of professional education one should rely on the conceptual provisions of Lomov (1984) according to which they distinguish in the structure of the human psychology the cognitive, regulatory and communication subsystem.

On the basis of these provisions and theoretical analysis of researches on the study subject the definition of psychological readiness has been formulated and the theoretical model has been designed.

Psychological readiness for professional activity is the system attribute of a subject of educational professional activity including regulatory, cognitive and communicative characteristics and promoting to successful mastering of the activity.

In the theoretical model of psychological readiness for professional activity characteristics of a subject of educational professional activity were combined into the following units: motivation (interest in the profession and professional orientation); self-regulatory (the components of which are expressed in the ability to efficiently use the own resources for solution of professional tasks); emotional (significant attributes of emotional attitude of the subject to the activity chosen); the unit for evaluation and self-evaluation of professional readiness.

The solution of the problem of formation of readiness for professional activity is related to assessment of conditions of professional preparation, forecasting the motivation, volitive, intellectual of a student; probability of the result achievement. This is why, it is important to assess the education performance as the condition of actualization of the student's potential, development of his professional readiness.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Organization and performance of an empiric research:**

Based on the model of psychological readiness for professional activity the researcher's questionnaire (Puchkova Petrik) has been developed. The proposed questionnaire allows evaluating the actual level of psychological mindedness of a student for professional activity and determine the intensity of separate components (emotional, motivation and self-regulatory). Within the frameworks of the pilot study by the example of the sample of 158 (62 representatives of humanitarian direction, 47 of natural-scientific and 49 of engineering one) all necessary stages for approbation of this questionnaire have been completed.

As an additional tool of assessment of the students' psychological readiness for professional activity as well

as analysis of conditions of formation there the researcher's questionnaire has been designed which includes the questions on the following sections:

- Motives of the profession selection
- Professional ambitions
- Attitude to the future professional activity
- Satisfaction with the process of education at a higher educational institution
- Successfulness of education
- Assessment of interpersonal communication during the process of education

Approbation and standardization of the questionnaire was performed by the example of the sample of 820 persons. Along with the questionnaire specified above we used as additional diagnostic tools: test-questionnaire "Motivation to educational activity" (T.T. Ilyin); test-questionnaire "Motivation to success and fear of failure" (A.A. Rean); short selection test "KOT" (V.N. Buzin, E.F. Vandelick); 16-PF Cattell's questionnaire.

The total sample made 700 persons. The study participants were the students-chemists, philologists and radio physics. Thus, participants of the study represented the natural-scientific, humanitarian and engineering directions of professional education.

The correlation analysis of the total sample (by all directions) and the factor analysis showed the following: Successfulness of professional education is determined by such characteristics as: common intellectual faculties ( $r = 0.31$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ), motivation towards gaining of knowledge and (or) mastering of the profession ( $r = 0.23$ ,  $p \leq 0,01$ ), striving for achievement of the result ( $r = 0.43$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ), independency ( $r = 0.18$ ,  $p \leq 0,01$ ), satisfaction with the university education ( $r = 0.75$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ). This structure also includes the average performance grade as an objective indicator ( $r = 0.16$ ,  $p \leq 0.01$ ).

The structure of readiness for professional activity (according to the factor analysis data) for the total sample includes: formedness of the knowledge of profession (0.627), idea of the conditions of the future activity (0.490), self-estimation of the professionally relevant qualities (0.458), formedness of the idea of the content and importance of professional education (0.672); satisfaction with the university education (0.735), successfulness of education (0.659); determination (0.703); independence (0.256) and self-control (0.474).

The structure of psychological readiness for professional activity in representatives of humanitarian direction does not include formedness of the idea of content and importance of professional education. The

structure of psychological readiness for professional activity in representatives of natural-scientific direction does not include the idea of the conditions of future activity. The structure of psychological readiness for professional activity in representatives of engineering direction does not include pragmatism.

By comparing the samples of different directions by the degree of intensity the following statistically significant differences have been specified. In the samples of humanitarian and natural-scientific direction by level of motivation towards gaining of knowledge ( $t = 42.9$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) (higher in "humanitarians"), self-estimate ( $t = 13.3$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) (higher in "naturalists"), independence ( $t = 32.1$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) (higher in "naturalists"), conservatism ( $t = 7.24$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) (higher in "humanitarians"). In the samples of humanitarian and engineering directions by level of motivation towards profession ( $t = 6.2$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) (lower in "humanitarians"), self-esteem ( $t = 7.42$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) (lower in "humanitarians"), anxiety ( $t = 14.13$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) (higher in "humanitarians"), conservatism ( $t = 18.7$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ) (higher in "humanitarians"). In the samples of natural-scientific and engineering directions ( $t = 56.4$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) (lower in "naturalists"), autonomous work ( $t = 25.3$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) (lower in "naturalists"), independence ( $t = 10.17$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) ((lower in "naturalists").

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the basis of the study performed the general model of psychological readiness of students for professional activity has been designed. This model consists of the following units:

- Professional section: "I-concept" includes such characteristics as attitude to specialization selected, idea of the future profession and working conditions, self-evaluation of and practically relevant qualities
- Motivation section: motivation towards gaining a profession in the conditions of education; motivation towards achievement of success, working according to specialization
- Section of personal qualities and properties: intellectual (common intellectual faculties), emotional-volitive (emotional stability), independence, discipline, determination, ability to self-control, communicative, moral-ethical ones
- Section of practically relevant properties and qualities: intellectual (analytic thinking, creative thinking, flexibility of thinking); emotional-volitive (tending to empathy, psychic stability, initiative, determination); communicative (tending to dominancy, independence from the group, social courage)

Components of the sections of professional I-concept, motivation and personal qualities and characteristics that are universal in regard of the specialization and required for formation and development of psychological readiness for professional activity. The components of the section of practically relevant properties and qualities are determined by the content of the future professional activity and may have different intensity in representatives of different directions of education.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, on the basis of theoretical analysis of the existing approaches to the definition of the content of psychological readiness for professional activity and empirical research there has been presented the model of psychological readiness of students for professional activity.

The model presented complies with the concept by B.F. Lomov regarding the three component psychological structure of a person (in our case as a subject of educational professional activity) and includes the cognitive, regulatory and communication components.

There have been distinguished psychological characteristics lying in the heart of formation and development of psychological readiness for professional activity in the conditions of professional education. Such characteristics are first of all, motivation and goal-setting.

It has been defined that the condition of formation of psychological readiness of students for professional activity is the professional I-concept. The results obtained may be used by practical psychologists in the sphere of education.

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