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Vocational Guidance for School Youth under Contemporary Labour Market Conditions

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Theory and methodology of vocational guidance of children, youth and adults went through a complicated way of its formation. Its content and its functioning organizational system were always determined by social demands and scientific achievements in understanding the nature of professional formation and a personality development. The present-day specificity of the above indicated factors determines the need to modernize the traditional system of vocational guidance, to improve its organizational structure according to global challenges, to fill the content, forms and methods of career guidance by specific professional behaviour on the labour market, the specialist's innate desire to reach heights of professionalism and ensure suitable conditions for life and professional work.

The major problem that arises in the course of an essential, sometimes cardinal change of the social order for vocational guidance services is that its solution often results in: complete destruction of the system and denial of the previously accumulated experience in preparation of a personality to professional self-actualization; aspiration of researchers and practitioners for borrowing the experience of other countries and artificial transferring it to certain conditions without taking into account national and regional specificity of this work; attempts to expand research and practical vocational guidance activities on theoretical and methodological achievements of individual theories for solving urgent problems, partially or completely rejecting the previous achievements.

Solution of this problem, we believe, must lie in the plane of critical reinterpretation of the past, its improvement according to modern realities and enrich-

ment by the best examples of world science and practice. In other words, not to destroy the existing one, but to rethink and modernize it critically; not to borrow blindly separate and sometimes quite successful examples, but to enrich the experience by the best achievements; not to transfer the well-known and the efficient, but to adapt it to the mental and the social in relation of the personality to labour and profession.

It should be noted that the specificity of social demand for vocational guidance services has always depended on domination of a certain factor in the system of production (means of production, industrial resources, type of production, and human resources), which was a leading one for competitive production, goods and services. Depending on the specificity of these factors, we tentatively divide the formation of the theory and methodology of vocational guidance of children, youth and adults into three periods: before-industrial, industrial and post-industrial.

In the modern post-industrial development of the society the following factors are revealed: means of production are knowledge-intensive, since their forming requires, above all, huge investments in science and technologies; the primary productive resource is information which develops cooperation and competition in trade of goods and services on a world scale; production of knowledge-intensive and competitive products can be ensured only by professionals (level of professional training, personality development and education) in all fields of a person's professional activity who are able to generate new knowledge and information; the system of vocational guidance is aimed at creating conditions for a person's understanding of one's attitude to oneself as to the subject of professional labour and conduct, at development of one's aspiration to realize one's professional potential and reach heights of professional excellence in the timely chosen field of work, which involves realization of durable and relatively independent search for jobs based primarily on one's own interests and capabilities, and only later – on the labour market conjuncture.

The above outlined conventional division of formation the theory and methodology of the population's vocational guidance into three stages and emphasizing the main features in the post-industrial development of society enables to clarify the essence of the established among scholars and practitioners comprehension of a human's activity components on the labour market ("I want", "I can", and "is needed") and to determine whether only this is enough for a reasonable and conscious career choice and achievement of professionalism heights in the future.

It is well known that during the industrial period of development the orientation of the content, forms and methods of the population's vocational guidance to ensuring, above all, the needs of specific industries and regions in the relevant labour force dominated in the theory and practice of population's vocational guidance. At that time much less importance was attached to a personality's activity,

one's purposefulness and persistence, aspiration to excellence and ability to self-development. It was believed that to provide the production with specialists of mass, mostly working professions, only specially organized vocational guidance influence was enough to find an optimal agreement between the requirements of a profession ("it is needed", "it is of great demand", etc.) and a person's wishes and abilities ("I want", "I can", "I have", etc.).

Administrative command system of management the mass production during the industrial period was not able to use human potential as the most important source for production of goods and services competitive on the world market. This caused the complete collapse of the population's vocational guidance by the end of the 20th century. And it was natural because the content and peculiarities of a person's labour activity changed significantly under the conditions of global labour division. These changes are, for example, related to the fact that in the 60-80s of the 20th century it was considered that the manufacturer would succeed if the production was plentiful and cheap. At the end of the 20th century it became evident, according to I. Leonov and A. Aristov, that the quality, not the prices were competing on the market of goods and services. That is, only the produce with lower production costs and higher quality, *ceteris paribus*, can be competitive. We believe that only professionals in all fields of professional activity and on every workplace who can generate new knowledge and information, improve means and production techniques, etc. are capable to ensure the production of such products, goods and services.

The importance of human potential in today's economy can be confirmed by other analytical information. For example, the statistical data by Inozemtsev V. state that today the three main centres of the post-industrial world (USA, EU, Japan) produce more than 62 percent of the world gross product, more than 80 per cent of world trade flows begin or end on their territory, they ensure about 85 percent of the global volume of international investments. Finally, these countries concentrate almost 97 percent of the world intellectual potential, which ensures more than 90 percent of high-tech production.

This confirms the thesis that in the post-industrial period means of production become knowledge-intensive, and to form them, above all, huge investments in science and technologies are needed. To ensure the competitiveness of an economic entity in trade of goods and services on the world scale the information becomes an extremely important production resource. Of course, only professionals in all fields of human's professional activity and at every workplace can operate such a production.

The above outlined analytical findings which prove the importance of a human in the process of modern production of competitive goods and services confirm that unlike industrial society the post-industrial one is based on using a qualitatively different professional potential of a person. And to replace the use

of unskilled labour force or huge material resources and energy in production, high-techs are used requiring a personality to be a professional in one's field. The system of vocational guidance is aimed at ensuring conditions for a person's understanding of one's attitude to oneself as to the subject of professional labour and conduct, which involves realization of durable and relatively independent search for jobs based primarily on one's own interests and abilities, and only later – on the labour market conjuncture. That is, a person on the labour market in the post-industrial society is an active subject of professional self-determination and self-development who strives for reaching the heights of professionalism as a necessary condition for the security of life and professional work.

The above defined understanding of a person as the subject of professional activity and communication allows revealing collectively the integrity of all human qualities (natural, personal, social, etc.) required for one's activity on the labour market during the post-industrial development of the society. The novelty of principle of this theoretical statement is that not only the conscious attitude of a personality to the objective world, but also a conscious attitude to oneself (self-attitude) is necessarily taken into account. Namely this idea broadens the content of the personality's activity, one's professional self-development and self-improvement. Exactly within the terms "attitude" and "self-attitude" the personality's professionalism is revealed in all its importance as a dominant factor in the professional self-development determination, which ensures the passage of not only the processes of self-knowledge, self-appraisal and self-improvement, but also self-understanding and self-acceptance of own self-worth, self-value and uniqueness which is within the dynamic requirements of the labour market.

We emphasize that during the industrial development of the society the key means that shape a personality were considered to be regulations, requirements, rules and instructions as forms of social impact on a personality. That's why a person was regarded as the object of vocational guidance influence – through organization of restrictions or encouragements the purposeful vocational guidance management of the labour force movement was carried out. And the explanatory principle of such a movement revealed (based on identifying cause-and-effect relations) the objective laws of ontological promotion of a personality to the top of professional development. Such determinism was focused primarily on fixing shifts in the consciousness of a personality, which were determined by external conditions, social environment and purposeful training and education. The problem of a personality's professionalism, on condition of defining the cause-and-effect determinants of a person's psyche, was only within the category of consciousness through which the conscious person's attitude to the world of professions and one's place in it was ensured. The above defined statement led to understanding of a personality as a passive being responding only to external influences, is a product whose quantitative and qualita-

tive professional characteristics were defined by training and education system. It was believed that the society primarily affects the individual, but the personality as a member of society performs the functions and roles defined by it. That is, in the system of vocational guidance a personality was an object of impact, and the appropriately organized vocational guidance environment had to obligatory provide it with the predetermined level of knowledge, formed opinions, ideas, beliefs, etc.

The problem of studying a personality's professionalism and professional development was subordinated to the purpose of awareness of the importance of the environment requirements and conscious attitude to the society's ideological norms, rules and regulations in professional activities and communication. Therefore usually the problem of a personality's preparedness to professional self-determination was studied, which ensured a conscious attitude to the choice of the future profession ("I want", "I can", and "is needed") primarily based on the needs of the society ("is needed") and only later – taking into account the wish and abilities of a child ("I want", "I can").

In the post industrial society the point is not the formation of labour force suitable to perform certain well-defined and specialized labour operations, but the formation of a specialist with advanced intellect, high level of culture and work ethic. Therefore, the current theory and practice of vocational guidance should be directed towards the continuous movement to the personality as a subject of professional growth. Gradually the scientific understanding of the essence of the vocational guidance of children, youth and adults is transformed from the system of impact to the personality in creating effective conditions (organizational, informational, methodological, psychological, pedagogical, etc.) to help one in an active and conscious professional self-determination and advancement to the heights of professionalism. That is, the emphasis is shifted to the activity of a personality, freedom to choose the direction of professional development, strict adherence to legal and ethical rules of business activity and, simultaneously, full responsibility for the results and consequences of one's hard work and creative professional activity. Under such conditions the contents of a person's professionalism as the goal of professional development is enriched by the fact that it is not only the attributive function of a personality's consciousness, but also the core of one's self-consciousness, which ensures a person's self-reflection in the world of professions, forms attitude and understanding of oneself as the subject of professional activity and communication. That is the professionalism of a personality performs a structural, regulatory, prognostic, and estimating functions which harmonize one's attitude to oneself and to the outside world and thus ensure professional and personal development and growth.

This is natural since it is not possible to understand yourself only through mastering the environment and comparing yourself to others through a reflected

attitude to a situation and yourself in it. Exactly the image “Me-professional” which reveals a specificity of interaction “Me and profession” and “I am in the profession” ensures an attitude to yourself as to a personality who has a certain set of values and meanings of the professional activity. This self-attitude is based on the results of self-knowledge, self-analysis, self-understanding and self-acceptance. Owing to the image “Me-professional” a personality becomes a subject of activity with the developed volitional qualities and ability to take decisions and perform moral deeds. At that the identity is primarily a process through which a person perceives oneself, and its result (product) is the image “Me-professional” as a system of subjective evaluation and individual selective attitudes toward oneself and one’s place in the surrounding reality and professional environment.

Thus, the professional is able not only to answer questions about who he is and what is happening to him. His internal activity is not limited to the search for new knowledge about himself, but it is focused on perceiving the meanings of his activity, objective signs and subjective reasons of a particular deed. That is the process of coordination between knowledge about oneself obtained in the process of self-knowledge which leads a personality to a particular course of action, and the way a person should be in reality depending on the subjective understanding of social values and morals. Such a contradiction shows the person’s image “Me-professional”, which enforces to act one way or another, and the image “Me-ideal” – as how it was necessary to act. The inner work of a personality in the process of resolving the contradiction between “Me-real” and “Me-perfect” does not only answer the question “Who am I?” and “What I have to be?”, but also the question “Why do I have to be this way?”

We emphasize that the traditional approach which dominated during the industrial age envisaged only discovery of the specificity of a person’s professional activity on the basis of its external attributes, and therefore it did not ensure an effective fulfilment of professional tasks. That is, a person’s professionalism appeared as a product whose quantitative and qualitative characteristics were determined by the training and education system, and the image “I am a professional” as a standard or a model of a profession was determined by ideological norms and rules specified in the society, which a personality had to accept consciously. The components of a person’s choice a profession – “I want”, “I can”, and “is needed” – were focused on such a comprehension. They do not reveal and do not account for the fact that a person as a self-organized and internally active system and a reflection bearer through the analysis of the past, the present and the future regards actively and selectively not only professions, but also oneself. That is, he does not only reflect the environment in which he carries out his professional activity, but also reflects himself in it, the attitude to himself and understanding of himself as the subject of professional work that is revealed in such concepts as self-respect”, “self-esteem”, “self-value”, “self-sufficiency” and others.

Let's consider a classic example of recent years: the labour market felt acutely a durable and steady demand for worker professions ("is needed"). At the same time there was a considerable number of registered unemployed or those who were looking for job. Among them there were those who "wanted" and "could" work in that field. However, they stubbornly did not want to realize themselves in working professions. Why? In our opinion it is revealed here that the classic components of a person's professional activity ("I want", "I can", and "is needed") which until recently dominated in the system of vocational guidance of children, youth and adults, are not enough. We shall show this by the example of high school pupils who are choosing a future profession and who have their professional interests formed. There is a steady demand for worker professions, and a high school pupil likes, for example, to carpenter. This wish can be manifested in different situations (educational, industrial, of social utility, and household activities). He can carry out such a work better than others, and he dedicates a considerable part of his free time to his favourite occupation. A diagnostic study of professional interests (intentions, preferences, abilities, etc.) and academic achievements by a vocational guidance consultant confirms the statement that the child should plan to gain proficiency in a worker profession in the future. However the child, for the most part with his parents, plans to continue studying at the Humanities Department of a university. It would seem: what else is needed to be competitive at the market of blue-collar workers and always have a job? We believe the most important thing here is that the senior pupil does not "accept" his "I want" and "I can", though he realizes that it "is needed".

Such examples are numerous, and not only with high school pupils. There are objective and subjective reasons for a personality's behaviour on the educational services market and the labour market. The objective reasons are grouped around the undefined yet ideological and social attributes of professions, norms and rules of conduct which the personality has to accept consciously. The subjective reasons are grouped around the problem of the personality's attitude to oneself as a professional entity with a certain system of values and meanings of one's activity that define the content and form of the subjective-evaluating and individual-selective attitude of the personality to oneself and one's place in a professional environment. Solving of such problems is achieved through restructuring the image "I am a professional" towards an adequate reflection of the specificity of the profession ("Me" and profession). It is implemented during the personality's coordination between the issues "I want", "I can", and "is needed" and the formed through the analysis of the past, the present and the future attitude to oneself in it ("Me" in the profession), which ensures a "self-acceptance" of what he "wants", "can", and "is needed".

It should be noted that the formed "self-attitude" of a person not only allows him to answer questions about who he is and what he strives for. His internal ac-

tivity focuses on perceiving the sense of his occupation, objective signs and subjective reasons of a deed that brings him to the heights of professionalism. That is we observe the process of agreement between the obtained in the process of self-knowledge information of oneself as a subject of future professional work, which prompts to a particular course of action, and the way he should be in reality depending on the subjective idea of values and ethics of professional work. The image “Me-real” of a personality that prompts to act one way or another, and the image “Me-professional” – how it was necessary to act – become evident in such a contradiction. Herewith the questions, for example, “Who am I?” and “What kind of person should I be?”, “Why do I want to be such a person?” and “Why should I be this type of person?” traditionally remained beyond the researchers’ attention. The essence of the issues “I can” and “is needed”, which were regarded as the comparison of the identified individual peculiarities of a personality with the requirements of the profession that were recorded in a professionogram and a psychogram has not been completely revealed either. It means that to create a conscious and proved professional self-determination and the future activity on the labour market it was sufficient to form an adequate reflection of the dichotomy “I” and future profession by a person, and self-attitude to it (“I” in the future profession) remained beyond the researchers’ attention.

Therefore no coincidence that scientists and practitioners focused primarily on the study of one of the components of professional self-determination (“I” and the future profession) and this determined the approaches to organization of career guidance. That’s why the traditional system of vocational guidance turned out to be not completely capable. The comparison (overlay, projection, etc.) of individual- psychological peculiarities of a personality identified in the course of professional consultation and the requirements of the desired or chosen profession did not solve the problem of one’s professional self-determination and self-development, taking into account the dynamics of growth of both the individual and the variability of the labour market.

So, in order to create high-tech production facilities and to manufacture high quality products the post-industrial world requires specialists capable of generating new knowledge and information. In these strict and unstable conditions of competition in the global distribution of labour to support the desired conditions of vital activity a personality aspires to self-actualization in a particular profession and in general in various spheres of life through reaching the heights of professional excellence in the timely chosen field of labour activity. That’s why the main emphasis in the theory and methodology of population’s vocational guidance should be shifted to the activity of a personality, the freedom to choose the direction of one’s professional growth, awareness of one’s attitude to oneself as the subject of professional work and conduct. This anticipates the implementation of

a prolonged and relatively independent search of professions including, above all, one's own interests and capabilities, and only later – the conjuncture of labour market. Vocational guidance as a system of measures to support a personality in a situation of professional choice and growth is aimed at creation of the vocational guidance environment for self-coordination of one's dynamic contradictions between the demands of the profession and the achieved level of development (professional and personal) within the desired or already selected type of work. Above we defined the approach which should ensure the competitiveness of a person on the labour market. The system of vocational guidance is the environment in which a personality can get the necessary professiographic information and use the assistance rendered.

Poradnictwo zawodowe młodzieży szkolnej we współczesnych warunkach rynku pracy

Streszczenie

W artykule zaakcentowano zależności pomiędzy treściami i technikami prowadzenia poradnictwa zawodowego dla młodzieży szkolnej a potrzebami społecznymi. Rozpatrywane są w nim zwłaszcza negatywne skutki poradnictwa, nieuwzględniającego zachodzących zmian cywilizacyjnych.