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## **ASSESSING MASTER-DEGREE STUDENTS' PERSONAL READINESS FOR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND OCCUPATIONAL WORK**

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**Abstract.** *The paper aims to present the results of the survey focused on the assessment of personal readiness of master-degree students majoring in humanities and social sciences for research activities and occupational work. The experiment involved 300 master-degree students who were suggested to fill in 2 questionnaires aiming to reveal their personal readiness for work and research activities. According to the research outcomes, most of the respondents consider themselves to be ready for work in the field of their degree but their answers to other questions of the research questionnaire contradict with this statement. Most of the surveyed have chosen their profession not for their own will but upon their parents' recommendations. The majority of them are ready to change their job in the field of their degree for another one which is more prestigious and profitable. The master-degree students do not participate in domestic or international conferences, do not want to and do not plan to be engaged into research activities after graduation. Besides, the research results have shown that most of them have a low level of the English language, which is also considered to be a great problem under modern conditions in Ukraine. It can be concluded that modern higher education is faced with the problem of master-degree students' unawareness of the significance of professional development and socialization.*

**Keywords:** *master-degree students, social sciences and humanities, work, research activities, readiness.*

**Introduction.** Nowadays there are lots of higher educational institutions in the world in general and Ukraine in particular, which prepare professionals in all fields of sciences. Every year the number of specialists in every sphere grows, which leads to the increase of the competitiveness at the labor market and the unemployment rate. That is why it is important for every person not only to make a "right" occupational choice but also become a full professional in the chosen field to be able to work in the field of the obtained degree and be competitive at the labor market. It is referred to the professional development and professional socialization which implies that any student should dwell upon his/her future occupation and development, thus getting ready for work in the chosen field.

The essence and structure of future professionals' readiness for occupational work were considered by P. Hornostai, O. Kokun, L. Kondrashova, O. Moroz, O. Taranovska and others. The development and formation of students'

readiness for professional activities were examined by such Ukrainian scientists as N. Volkova, Z. Kurliand, O. Shpak, T. Zharovtseva and others. Besides, many international authors also dedicated their research papers to it (for example, Catherine Lissette Caballero, Arlene Walker, S. Hetzner, H. Gruber). Though, this issue still remains relevant because of the changing conditions in higher education throughout the world.

Some scientists (N. Kichuk, A. Linenko, V. Slastionin) consider work readiness as a complex socio-pedagogical phenomenon consisting of a set of individual psychological personal qualities, as well as the system of professional knowledge and skills which provide the successful professional activities performance [1].

We share the opinion of Z. Kurliand who interprets readiness for occupational work as an integral personality trait that involves emotional, cognitive and volitional personal mobility in the moment of joining the activities. She believes the personal structure of readiness involves the following components: motivational (inner orientation at a certain kind of activities), emotional (positive attitude to the activities), personal (ability for professional reflection), and professional (professionally important skills) [2].

In our research, we consider master-degree students as future post-graduate students and university teachers, that is why we believe that it is appropriate to investigate readiness for occupational work and research activities together.

The paper **aims** to present the results of the survey of master-degree students majoring in humanities and social sciences concerning their readiness for work and research activities.

The following **tasks** have been set:

- to analyze the respondents' replies concerning their readiness for work;
- to analyze the students' answers concerning their readiness for research activities;
- to analyze their real state of readiness for work and research activities.

### **Research methods**

The survey involved 300 master-degree students majoring in humanities and social sciences (specialties "English language and literature", "Ukrainian language and literature", "Psychology", "Management of educational institutions", "Preschool education", "Primary education") studying at Ushynsky University (pedagogical higher educational institution). They were suggested to fill in 2 questionnaires designed by us. The first one aiming to determine the respondents' readiness for research activities consisted of 13 general, 1 alternative, and 2 special questions. The second one was focused on the students' opinion about their readiness for work in their profession, dealing with some elements of professional socialization and consisted of 7 special, 4 general, and 2 alternative questions. The survey was anonymous, so that the

students could answer the questions truly, without being afraid to be criticized by their teachers or fellow students.

### **Research results and their discussion**

#### *The respondents' personal readiness for occupational work*

According to the research outcomes, most of the respondents consider themselves to be ready for occupational work (70%), though when they were asked about the specificity and peculiarities of their future occupation they were undecided. Besides, when we specified the question and asked them if they were ready to work as higher educational institutions teachers, the results were quite different: 45% were ready, 25% were not ready and 30% were undecided again. It shows either the respondents' unserious attitude towards the survey or their uncertainty about their future occupation.

Most of the surveyed (86%) noted that they were fond of their occupation but when we asked a question if they would change their job for another one which is more prestigious and profitable (but not occupational), 74% replied positively. The thing is that at the moment in Ukraine the profession of a teacher is not considered to be well-respected and well-paid, which leads to the conclusion that the respondents subconsciously think that they have made a mistake when choosing an occupation. Herewith it should be noted when they were suggested some variants for the question why they have chosen a profession in humanitarian or social sphere, most of the surveyed (69%) answered that they were advised by their parents, or that they had humanitarian mindset (21%). It shows that most of the respondents are not independent in making their decisions which may negatively affect their professional socialization and life in general.

When the students were asked to assess the impact of the university education on their level of professional maturity, most of them (59%) stated that their professional development was due to their own efforts and individual work, which indicates that higher education faces an important issue of improving the quality of teaching.

The respondents' answers concerning the kind of educational activities which most efficiently help them to adapt to their future occupation were quite various: 34% chose practical classes, 29% chose teaching internship, 20% selected lectures, and 17% chose individual work. It means that the students are all unique personalities with different mindsets and here we realize the significance of student-centered approach in education. Thus, all kinds of educational work contribute to the professional development of future professionals, so that the teaching tools cannot be used separately, but in common.

The students' answers to the question if they consider their fellow students as their future colleagues were quite surprising: most of them did not (72%), which can mean that they observe their fellow students' academic progress and

assess it as rather low and cannot believe that they can work in their degree field. The second variant is that they are either not going to work in their specialty or sure that their fellow students will not choose a job in their degree field. Both variants are discouraging.

The majority of the surveyed (85%) noted that they most profoundly mused on their future occupation when being 4<sup>th</sup>-year students and when passing enrollment master-degree tests. Also they stated that they consider the master-degree course to be the most important and crucial in their professional development as future specialists. It is very true because the last year at the university is the final step in their professional development as the students; after graduating everything will depend upon the graduates themselves and the university will not be able to assist in their professional development or socialization. That is why it is so important for university teachers to help master-degree students to fulfill their fullest potential and create the conditions for their successful professional socialization starting from the university and finishing with their retirement.

The last question concerned the respondents' understanding of the term "professional socialization" and its importance. Unfortunately, 85% of them could not determine its meaning and did not filled in the gap. It means that they do not dwell upon the key concepts regarding their future work and do not read the additional literature. Some of the students did not write the interpretation of this phenomenon but noted about its significance for the professionals. It shows their facetious treatment of a serious subject.

#### *The respondents' personal readiness for research activities*

92% of the surveyed master-degree students noted that they took part in research activities, though their further answers showed that it was overstated. According to the modern requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine [3], every master-degree student has to prepare a research paper according to the results of his/her graduation work. It is an essential condition for taking a master-degree course, so it cannot be considered as full-scale research activities. Herewith it should be emphasized that regardless of the respondents' positive answers concerning their research activities, the majority (84%) take part neither in international conferences and seminars, nor in Ukrainian ones. Moreover, most of them (81%) are not familiarized with the international requirements to research papers, though some of them (59%) are aware of the requirements presented by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Probably they have gained this knowledge due to the special course for Bachelors "The Foundations of Research Studies", which involves teaching students to prepare research papers, lists of references, etc. Herewith we want to emphasize that 80% of the students do not have annotating skills (which is taught in the framework of this course).

Remarkably, 93% of the respondents replied that they were not going to deal with research activities in the future, they are not going to continue they studying and take post-graduate course at the university, though master-degree students are considered mainly as future university teachers and scholars.

It can be concluded that the respondents are not quite aware of the essence and details of research activities and do not plan to be involved into them.

Our questionnaire also contained questions concerning the command of the English language as the international language of science. We strongly believe that every university graduate must have a good command of the English language, have good communication skills, and especially professionally-focused language skills.

Unfortunately, according to the research outcomes, the level of the respondents' English language is low. They do not read any literature in their specialty in English and do not try to improve their communication skills or enrich their vocabulary. It is worth noting that the students are quite aware of their low level but do not do anything to improve the situation, though they state that they realize the importance of having good communication skills in English for a modern professional in any field.

The respondents were also suggested a small test in order to check their level of English level competence (pre-intermediate level). According to the results, 76% of the students failed it. The master-degree students studying at the faculty of Foreign Languages were suggested another test (intermediate level) and 80% of them have successfully passed it.

**Conclusions.** Basing on the above mentioned, we have come to the conclusion that the respondents do not fully realize the importance of their professional development at this stage of their professional path. Taking into account the contradictions in the respondents' answers, we suppose that they tried to give the "right" answers, without going into the issue, not fully realizing the importance of the survey. Besides, when talking to the students, we noticed that they were not encouraged to take part in the experiment because they did not understand its general aim (the research was conducted in the framework of examining pedagogical conditions contributing to master-degree students' professional socialization). It is also confirmed by the fact that almost nobody could interpret the term "professional socialization" in the questionnaire.

We believe that it would be appropriate to elaborate a short course for master-degree students dealing with the issues of professional socialization and encouraging them to take part in university social and research activities in order to get more knowledge, skills and experience, as well as comprehend the importance of different stages of professional development and socialization.

Besides, we are fully aware of the fact that one cannot determine the level of readiness only according to the self-assessment results. That is why our further research studies are planned to be dedicated to the assessment of the level of the

respondents' motivation to study and develop in a professional field according to the selected psychological questionnaires of different scientists.

*References translated and transliterated*

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**THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE PERSONALITY-  
FOCUSED APPROACH TO TEACHING CHILDREN**

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**Abstract.** *The paper presents theoretical foundations of a personality-focused approach to teaching in the context of traditional teaching. It provides description and disclosure of the essence, principles of personality-focused teaching, the peculiarities of personality-focused lesson and recommendations for its preparing and conducting.*

**Keywords:** *personality-focused learning, personality-focused approach, personality-focused lesson, child's subjective experience, educational environment.*

Implementation of a personality-focused approach into learning is a priority area in modern didactics. Authoritarian teaching, which has developed in the school over many decades, depersonalizes the pupil, makes them dependent, weak-willed, uninitiative, i.e. erases those pupil's qualities that a highly educated, competitive, educated person should have. Therefore, more and more attention is currently being paid to providing in the school and at the lesson such