

Socio-Economic Features of the Development of Human Capital (on the Example of Professional Identity of Students of Border Areas)

Características socioeconómicas del desarrollo del capital humano (Usando ejemplo de identidad profesional de estudiantes de zonas fronterizas)

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ABSTRACT:

The article considers issues concerning the consumption in the market of educational services, professional development of students of border areas in terms of the socio-economic transformation of society. Factors of professional selection in the formation of human capital are determined. The results of the author's empirical sociological study aimed at identifying features of social and professional orientations, intentions, plans of students as human capital of the border Kherson region are given.

Keywords: education market, college students, professional identity, human capital, the border area

RESUMEN:

El artículo considera temas relacionados con el consumo en el mercado de servicios educativos, el desarrollo profesional de los estudiantes de las zonas fronterizas en términos de la transformación socioeconómica de la sociedad. Se determinan los factores de selección profesional en la formación del capital humano. Se presentan los resultados del estudio sociológico empírico para identificar características de orientaciones, intenciones y planes sociales y profesionales de los estudiantes como capital humano de la región fronteriza de Kherson.

Palabras clave: mercado educativo, estudiantes universitarios, identidad profesional, capital humano, área fronteriza.

1. Introduction

Personal and professional development of Ukrainian youth is in difficult conditions of the socio-economic transformation of society when emerging market reforms that result in changing the socio-economic structure of life. Young people who live and study in the border areas, particularly in the Kherson region, which borders on the temporarily occupied territory

of Crimea, undergo particular influence. All this affects the life of the young generation in general and its professional development in particular.

Theoretical understanding of the process of the professionalization of personality was initiated in the writings of classics, including G.Becker, M.Weber, E.Durkheim, K.Mannheim, K.Marx, R.Merton, T.Parsons, H.Spencer, P.Sorokin T. Schultz. Philosophers G.Simmel, M.Heidegger are also famous for the consideration of cultural aspects of professional formation. In the process of interpreting the socio-cultural practices works by S.Freud, C.Jung, J.F.Lyotard, M.Foucault are gaining importance. Socio-philosophical works by P.Berger, P.Bourdieu, T.Luckmann, A.Touraine, J.Habermas, O.Spengler are characterized by the consideration of education as a factor in the formation of individual living space. Works written by A.Kovalova, V.Lisovskyi, V. Yadov are dedicated to the professionalization as part of the process of identity formation.

To the analysis of variety of social practices of students a significant amount of works written by domestic sociologists such as L.Aza, V.Arbienina, V.Bakirov, Ye.Holovakha, N.Kostenko, S.Makeiev, I.Martyniuk, B.Nahornyj, V.Nikolaievskyi, S.Oksamytna, N.Pobieda, V.Pylypenko, L.Sokurianska, L.Khyzhniak, V.Chornovolenko, S.Shchudlo, O.Yakuba is devoted. However, social practices of students in the border areas require a separate study since the professionalization is carried out under the influence of the processes caused by economic conditions of the region's development.

2. Presentation Of Basic Material

The researchers of human capital formation, in particular, the Estonian sociologist M. Titma (1975) identify four groups of factors of professional choice: social conditions, local factor (place of residence, membership in formal groups), internal structure (needs, interests, and life situation), and qualities of the individual (professional suitability). For I. Kon, essential for professional identity is the age when there is a choice of profession, the level of awareness and the needs of young people (Kon 1989). Russian researchers Ikonnykov and V. Lisovskyi (1969) include to the occupational orientation factors the social status, high performance, territorial component. Without going into theoretical works on the professional identity factors, their social nature is evident.

National sociologist V. Osovskyi distinguishes two points of view on the concept of "professional prestige":

- 1) as a way of moral compensation in the form of public recognition, authority, popularity, which are used in society when executing these professional duties;
- 2) as an integral assessment that synthesizes all the values attributed to this type of profession by public opinion. Social prestige is the result of the interaction of assessments of this type of professional activity by official institutions (reward), and assessments by individual (groups) (*Professional self-determination and career youth*, 1987). Thus, the professional identity is carried out throughout the professional life: a personality is always engaged in self-reflection, re-realizes his or her professional life and asserting him- or herself in the profession. It is an important characteristic of social maturity of a personality, his or her needs for self-realization and self-actualization. According to the researcher O.Piralova, "the core of professional identity is a conscious choice of profession according to one's characteristics and capacity, requirements of professional activity and socio-economic conditions" (Piralova 2011, p.131).

There are a number of approaches to the determination of criteria that affect the professional orientation of the young man. Summarizing them (Klimov 1984), it should be noted that in general the professional orientations are affected by: 1) socio-economic conditions; 2) position of senior family members, their education, professional status; 3) opinion of peers; 4) understanding of the profession prestige and the possibility of remuneration; 5) presence of educational establishments and the level of social and industrial infrastructure in the region; 6) level and quality of career guidance in schools; 7) mass media impact.

During the formation of the human capital of a new type a situation occurs in which young

people exercise their professional choices based on an unsteady occupational structure, the lack of employment guarantees and the need to compete in labour market. The above imposes a significant imprint on the logic of professional choice. However, the most significant social processes that transform the professional choice of modern Ukrainian youth are as follows:

Firstly, the strengthening of social differentiation, the emergence of the "rich" and "poor". By way of consolidation of these relations in society, a financial situation becomes an influential factor in determining the level of aspirations, educational and professional intentions, life strategies of young people.

Secondly, hopping popularity of new professions and specialities that serve the market economy (manager, advertising specialist, lending professional, banker), which is partly connected with the social attention to entrepreneurship.

Thirdly, the formation of adjustment for active personal identity of a young man, independent choice of professional activity and investment in obtaining a profession. The relevant processes are peculiar not only to young people who first get education, but also people oriented on constant retraining. However, such a situation increases the risk of errors of the subject concerning the vocational choice, and thus the risk of material losses.

Fourthly, the lack of central planning and system of graduates' redistribution complicates the employment of young specialists, which negatively affects the process of career guidance, but also enhances its value, because the right career choices based on individual abilities significantly increases the chances of effective competition.

Fifthly, the lack of priority sectors of the national economy development, the crisis of leading industries, underfunding of areas of science, culture, education (Zhivaga 2008).

Sixthly, acquiring a new status, although not official, by certain territories. We mean the zone of anti-terrorist operation (ATO) and those bordering on them; the border areas with temporarily occupied Crimea, the so-called "gray zone", from which young people go into higher education in educational institutions of Ukraine.

Seventhly, the activation of the process of academic mobility, when students from border areas actively participate in international educational programs and projects and, therefore, complete their education in neighbouring countries, in particular in the Republic of Poland.

Market and postmodern transformations have led to the displacement of values of the young generation, including the value of work. The work began to be perceived by young people as an instrumental value – "source of income". Such an orientation reflects the formation of a new "market" labour and consumer ethics. This ethics does not contain, in our opinion, a fundamental negativity, but its formation as an integral cultural phenomenon requires a relatively long period of time.

A need to solve this problem has led to the organization and conducting by the author of empirical sociological research aimed at identifying the features of social and professional orientations, intentions, plans of students as the human capital. The study covered 544 students of higher educational establishments of the border Kherson region. The quota sample proportionally represents the students of different types of universities and professions.

As the direct object of study, the students of full-time education of the higher educational establishments of the Kherson region are selected. The subject of the study is the professional orientations of the students.

The overall objective of the study was to examine the features of professional orientations of students of the Kherson region in order to determine the main directions of improving the system of vocational guidance of young people in the border region.

Directly this study allows solving a range of problems relating to the professional choice of students, such as:

- establish the motives for higher education and specific specialty;
- describe the impact of various social agents on the students' professional orientations;

- identify an attitude towards the quality of education;
- identify factors of choosing an educational institution;
- identify a contradiction when entering a profession;
- determine the chances to find a job;
- research professional plans of students after graduation in terms of their orientation to occupational work;
- find out factors that influence the choice of a particular job during employment;
- identify factors that determine the professional choice of students;

First of all, we have characterized the motives of student's choice of those specialties, which they learn in high educational establishments.

As this study shows, among the most attractive sides of the chosen profession students note the following: the prestige of the profession – 45.1%, creative nature of the work – 41.6%, wide range of communication – 40.3%. It should be noted that a high pay is in the fifth place in importance – 32.4%. Therefore, it is possible to state about the dominance of socially-oriented values when selecting a particular profession without taking into account the real situation in the labour market (only 16.4% of respondents select the item "easy to find occupational work").

Results of the study indicate that the greatest influence on the choice of students has their inner circle – parents and relatives (59.3%). In addition, the influence of such institution as the mass media is increasing (39.3%). At the same time, the school and vocational guidance centres have a significantly less impact (23% and 16.5% respectively). This indicates that in the absence of a comprehensive system of vocational guidance in the state provided by the educational institutions and public institutions of working with youth, the formation of the professional advantages of youth occurs spontaneously, without considering the real trends in the labour market, mainly within the family. At the same time, there is observed a serious share of emotionality when choosing a future profession, which is characterized by the level of media influence. Thus, this confirms the need for systematic working with youth at an early stage of professional development to ensure its effective entry into the working life taking into consideration the tendencies of socio-economic development of society and a particular region. Independently an average family is practically not able to solve this problem.

According to the data of our study, a majority of parents of the students have a high level of education (higher education – 38.7%, vocational – 46.5%, only 5.9% have completed secondary education). They are person, who mainly represent technical and creative intelligentsia, civil servants, businessmen, occupying high enough position in their profession (47.4% – chiefs of different levels of management in an organization or private businesses, 18.3% – specialists, 29.8% – working class). It is clear that these people have developed a motivation as well as more opportunities, which allows them to give their children higher education (even in terms of paid training). Thus, studying in higher educational establishments can be seen as a mechanism for transferring of parents' social status to children, whereas the "vocational work" on the higher education as a copying of parents' model of life is peculiar mainly to families with a higher social status.

Some interest represents the attitude of students to the quality of education. According to information received, on the whole 47.4% of students are satisfied with the quality of education, dissatisfied – 7%. Moreover, among the reasons for the dissatisfaction with the level of education respondents noted the following: insufficiently qualified teaching staff of universities – 38.2%, lack of full practice at enterprises – 32.6%, poor material and technical base – 25.3%.

As the findings of our studies testify, in the process of the institution selection the respondents were influenced by the following factors: the advice of relatives, friends – 32.6%, the high prestige of the university – 22,2%, chance and coincidence – 16.8%. Therewith, it is important to analyze the causes that affect the attractiveness of the universities. Thus, the higher education attracts students by the possibility to "obtain the

necessary knowledge for professional activities" (73.4%), "to reveal their intellectual qualities" (61.2%), "get a diploma of higher education" (58.5%), and 39.6% of respondents also noted an interesting opportunity to communicate. This gives grounds to talk about intellectual and pragmatic motivation of students to their study in universities, which result should be as objective (diploma) indicators and subjective (specific knowledge) indicators that in aggregate provide certain competitive advantages in the labour market.

However, to be a competitive specialist, some of these factors are not enough. As the survey data show, 40.6% of surveyed students have to work alongside their studies at loose hours. Herewith, for 16.9% it is an opportunity to gain experience in the specialty needed for successful employment. The combination of training and work is a common practice for most of the today's Ukrainian students. For 85.4% of the number of working students, it is a necessity to work for different needs. In other words, it is basically a forced employment, related to the need to be sustainably self-sufficient during the study. For many students, such a work is important as a means of paying for education (for data obtained, 64.5% of students are studying on a commercial basis).

It should be noted that 39.3% of the students work more than 20 hours per week, 30.6% of them – up to 10-20 hours. These data generally indicate a large enough engrossment of working students. Of course, this cannot but affect their performance and training. However, only 26.7% of respondents felt that employment negatively affects their performance, and 54.9% said it does not affect, and 18.4% of students believe that their secondary employment has a positive effect on their performance. At the same time, 50.3% of students have such a work that is in one way or another connected with the specialty they are studying in the university and 13.5% of students work to gain more understanding about the profession in practice. This fact is evidence of "compensatory" function of secondary employment that allows students in terms of poorly organized educational process to acquire professional knowledge and skills needed for successful employment.

In modern conditions of socio-economic transformations of Ukrainian society, the issue is very relevant that concerns the compliance of the structure of training specialists in higher educational institutions with the needs of the economy in the labour force (Shaposhnykova, n. d.). In order to realize the severity of the situation that emerged, it is important to note that student community is traditionally considered as already professionally oriented social group because it is assumed that studying at university – is an important stage in life, and every young person should have a responsible attitude toward the choice of profession. However, as we have seen as a result of the research, this is not always the case. As it turned out, the behaviour of young people when making decision about the education, there are also irrational elements: emotionality, focus mainly on "fashionable" specialties excluding trends in the labour market, desire to get only a diploma, but no specific knowledge, passive attitude toward studying, attempts to find a job away from regions that have become unattractive because of their proximity to the borders of the zone ATO and the Crimea, even to leave the country. Moreover, we know that many graduates do not work in the specialty, or have no idea about the specifics of the received specialty that does not allow them to effectively occupy a niche in the labour market.

That is why we tried to identify the existing contradictions in professional plans and intentions of the students that cause an expression of an imbalance of supply and demand for a certain type of human resources.

Thus, generally, 46.5% of students want to work in specialty (18.1% would not want to), while 10.3% would like to continue their studies in the chosen specialty. At least 18.1% of respondents are aware that they will not work in their specialty, almost every fifth student receives professional knowledge in vain because in his further work he does not intend to (will not) use them. Along with others, this fact negatively affects the motivation to the quality of knowledge that is gained. Moreover, such a study contributes to long-term job search after graduation. In fact, there is a search for professional alternatives and a process of social and professional maladjustment. Despite the fact that among the graduates of higher educational institutions the state employment service records a low level of unemployment, nevertheless, the graduates with such an attitude cannot be considered as

complete, mature professionals. These qualities are determined primarily by an effective and harmonious entry of the individual in the socio-professional structure of society, occupation of professional niche that suits the education. At the same time, these students waste their material and time resources that could adversely affect the formation of their social capital.

Asked about the chances to find a job in the specialty after the graduation, 53.7% of respondents said that such an opportunity exists, 31.3% responded answered that chances are small, and 1.2% marked "almost no chance". Thus for a successful job, in the opinion of students, first of all, it is necessary: to have real knowledge, skills, and abilities (62.3%), that there is a need for this profession in the labour market (59.7%), to have work experience (58.5%).

Guaranteed job will (expect to) have 18.7% of respondents, 27.7% of students answered that no and 53.6% could not answer the question. This indicates that the issue of employment is a problem directly for students. Besides, the hypothesis of no interaction between the higher education institutions and industrial organizations in the field of training is confirmed. That is, despite the fact that employers need qualified specialists, but they make no concrete orders to universities.

The practice, common in countries with developed economies, where employers "snap up" the most talented students already in the third year of their studies, is unfortunately not introduced in Ukraine. In our country, such a system of professional selection of staff is only beginning to take shape and now covers only universities in the capital city. As for the regions bordering zones of conflict, there are virtually no orders, and each student is counting mainly on its own strength in the job search (86.5% of the respondents in our study). In addition, students focused on job search mainly within informal connections and relations, counting on their friends, acquaintances, relatives to help, which imposes certain specificity on the professional socialization process as well as on the experience of competition in the labour market.

According to the survey, it is stated a loss of confidence in the existing institutions of the students about the ability to find a decent work in the specialty (only 21.5% of students look to employment agencies for help). Given the difficulty of finding work related to the lack of experience, competition in the labour market, the employment is a priority for the graduate. However, as our study shows, for the purpose of employment, the students focused, above all, not on work in the specialty, but those social and professional benefits, which provides a potential organization-employer.

The conducted researches indicate that students primarily focused on such factors as high wages (79.8%), opportunities for advancement (76.5%), creative nature of the work (46.9%), social benefits and guarantees that an organization provides (38.2%), the prestige of the company (34.9%). Such a factor as the opportunity to work in the specialty was chosen only by 27.1%. This fact can indicate that the students in the job search are focused on stable organizations, where the work is well paid and where are career prospects, while professional specialization is of secondary importance.

If we analyze the desired level of wages, 41.1% of students rely on wages to 2000 UAH, and only 12.4% from 3000 UAH, and therefore there can be diagnosed an objective desired level of wages among students. Importantly, almost half of students (49.1%) chose to work at state enterprises, 22.3% of students want to work at private enterprises and only 1.8% – in organizations engaged in social activities. That is, the results confirm that a private enterprise in market conditions is risky in terms of possible non-compliance by the employer of labour laws, lack of social security, uncertain prospects for personal and professional development.

All this suggests a significant role in the socialization system of transmission of experience, skills, special semiotic systems that broadcast program behaviour, the role of education systems (Aleynik 2008) operating on the principle of "do as I do". The role of behavioural information is represented by S. Kravtsov, who used the term "mimesis", explaining the reasons of civilizations' breakdowns (Kravtsov 2011). "Mimesis" is considered as a means and source of "mechanization" of human nature. The means, since it forms in people skills of imitation and subordination and it is a kind of social training. Its value in the process of

labour socialization we consider as quite high. The ability to imitate is inherent in human nature (in the form of carriers of behavioural information). Some researchers believe that the disadvantage of imitation ("mimesis") for society is that a person borrows a course of action that does not involve own initiative (Shaposhnykova 2014). According to Toynbee, "so the act generated by mimesis is unreliable because it is not self-determined. The best practical protection against the danger of breakdown – is a consolidation of skills learned through the imitation in the form of habit or custom" (Kravtsov 2011). However, mimesis does not create a threat to the work process (as opposed to professional). Instead, professional performance should be more conscious and based on a constant aspiration for improving performed function, which creates some inconveniences (and even threats) for success in the professional socialization. In a professional environment, the situation could change dramatically, especially when there are significant social transformations: "crystal of habit" begins to break down, causing considered disadvantages of "mimesis". There is a delicate balance when the destruction of traditions leads to uncertainty in the minds and actions of people. A major problem is the violation of the harmony between tradition and innovation, and (consequently) between those social resources (generations of people) that reproduce them.

3. Conclusions

Summing up the specifics of professional orientation of students of the higher educational institutions of the border area, including the Kherson region, the following should be noted:

- most of students focused on getting "fashionable" professions excluding own abilities to one or another profession, interests;
- in the choice of future profession, young people are guided primarily by thought of family members and relatives, while the school and centres of professional orientation slightly influence the choice of future students;
- there is some emotionality in choosing a specialty in universities, which is confirmed by significant influence of mass media on professional orientation of young people;
- in choosing a particular specialty, young people are guided primarily by such factors as prestige, creative nature of professions, as well as the possibility of a wide circle of communication with peers from other countries, including the Republic of Poland;
- 40.6% of students are forced to work, the cause of which is the need for financial independence and a desire to gain experience in the specialty;
- only 46.5% of students plan to work in the specialty after graduation (and 10.3% wish to continue their studies in their field);
- every fifth student make an irrational choice of career because he is not oriented to work in the specialty after graduation;
- majority of students will not have a guaranteed job after graduation, and during the job search they focused mainly on their own strength or help of friends (while the orientation on the employment services and employment agencies is insignificant);
- in the choice of future place of work, the following factors are important for students: high salary, career prospects, interesting work, social security and prestige of the organization, while the opportunity to work in the specialty is of secondary importance;
- almost a half of the students want to work at state-owned enterprises.

Thus, the conducted analysis made it possible to find out that there are a number of shortcomings in the process of professional choice and career guidance, which takes place in the modern system of training skilled personnel in Ukraine. They mostly are derived from the overall culture of the society, as are the results of transformations of value-normative orientations of modern society. In this context, the increase in the total cultural capital of the society, which will provide the transformation of value-normative structure of its members in accordance with the realities of social development, is gaining importance. The last thesis is particularly relevant in the area of labour activity.

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