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PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AS A LABOR RELATIONSHIP FACTOR

SUMMARY. The article describes the main conditions concerning the emergence of the phenomenon and formation of identity. It considers the scientific approaches to the identity. Authors analyze professional identity influence on the quality of labor relations.

KEY WORDS. Identity, profession, self-concept, professional identity.

Modernization of labor conditions presupposes changes which are not only related to the technological side of the issue, but are also connected with the personality of each individual worker. The pace of modern life requires greater involvement of employees in the professional process. Every day, millions of people are being employed. No matter what they are and how they work, one thing connects them all — sooner or later they will face the problem of identifying themselves as professionals according to their professional self-concept. When we say “a professional”, we do not mean a specific person, but a certain image which a person associates himself with. Acquisition of the professional image for some will ultimately mean the loss of career values; others, however, will find themselves as professionals. That is what we call professional identity.

The problem of identity is largely interdisciplinary. We believe that it is difficult to accurately determine which areas of knowledge the term “identity” belongs to. It is located at the junction of different sciences. A new branch of psychology deals with identity in general and professional identity in particular. It is the psychology of identity. The concept of identity is widely used in sociology, philosophy, and psychology. We are interested in this topic from the point of view of sociology. According to A.A. Yashina, «sociologists tend to view identity in terms of society and its institutions. For sociologists identity is a set of roles and statuses, organized in accordance with the social system. Occupation, socio-economic status, gender, race, educational level, etc. are the indispensable parts of identity in the social sense» [1; 15]. It can be concluded that the issue of identity is much wider from the standpoint of sociology than from the standpoint of psychology.

The experience of identity occurs within the global issue of existence of the human race. Modern people change and improve the world around them faster than they change themselves, and therefore, people do not have time to fit into the world and thus become, according to E. Shostrom, “entirely problematic”. It happens perhaps because modern man does not regard himself highly and only tries to pretend to be valuable» [2; 1]. The analysis of the existence of the phenomenon is associated with the traditions of functioning of its verbal image in the language. The word «identity»

has Latin roots: "identificare" — to identify; late Latin "identifico" — I identify, which both mean correlation of something outside oneself with oneself, and this correlation exists in consistency and continuity with its own volatility, and it is conceived as such by an observer who describes this correlation to himself and others in order to confirm its equivalence. It is likely that when developing a definition of "identity", I. Cohn relied on the etymological meaning of the word. In his view, identity is a polysemantic general scientific term which expresses the idea of permanence, equivalence, continuity and self-awareness of the individual [3; 65].

Fundamental aspects of identity formation were studied both by international (S. Freud, C. Jung, E. Erikson) and Russian (L.S. Vygotsky, S. Rubinstein, K.A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaia, L.B. Schneider and other) scientists. Ultimately, the study of professional identity was formulated as the following sequence: «consciousness — self-awareness — self-image — I». It should be noted that the phenomenon of identity has been studied only since the 1970s. Prior to it, the problem of self-identity did not exist in the humanities. The issue of identity was formulated in the course of development of general psychological and socio-psychological studies of personality [4; 188]. Since 1980 has arisen a necessity to make the concept of identity universal and to break down the interdisciplinary «partitions» in the post-structuralist and post-modern perspective. From the standpoint of logic a tradition has formed (going from G. Frege and B. Russell) to use the term "identity" in the context of designation (naming), identifying the name with the object (in different versions: denotation, designatum, objective meaning, referent), and advocating the principles of uniqueness (the name refers to only one subject, eliminating homonyms), thingness (the name refers to a thing/object), and interoperability of two names that denote the same thing.

Going back to the origin of the term "identity", scientists have traditionally linked it with the name of E. Erikson. Erikson defines personal identity as internal «continuity of the self-experience of the individual», «perpetual internal equality within oneself», the identity of the person, the most important characteristic feature of his/her integrity and maturity, integration of human experiences concerning identity with certain social groups [5]. The origin of this concept, however, can be found in the works of S. Freud. He used this term in his book «The Interpretation of Dreams», published in the late 19th / early 20th century. By "identity" Freud understood a person's unconscious identification of himself in relation to others and considered identity an indispensable part of the super-ego, which is the result of behavioral patterns that a child learns from others [6].

It should be kept in mind that in modern psychology, one is to distinguish between two different concepts — «identification» and «identity». If by identity we mean the state of self-identification (understanding oneself and one's place in the world), identification is a set of processes and mechanisms that lead to the achievement of this state [7].

It is important to note that E. Erikson believed W. James to be the founder of the concept of identity. Although W. James did not use this term and used the word «character» instead, it was he who first described in detail the acute sense of sameness, similarity and integrity which in modern psychology is called identity, having asked the famous question, «Can a man who has woken up in the morning safely say that he is the same person who went to bed yesterday?». The major

contribution to the development of the theory of self-identification was made by E. Fromm. He defines "identity" as a result of the individualization of a person due to his/her isolation from the forces of nature and other people [8]. E. Erikson, in turn, considered the process of identity development in terms of integration and differentiation of various interrelated elements (identifications). Whenever there are any changes in the environment, one's ego integrates and restructures all necessary identity elements. Development and enrichment of the self-image is closely related to reflection on one's own emotional experiences and desires, with clear-cut distinctions between figments of one's imagination and reality, evaluation and self-esteem, etc. The development of identity is the interaction of the three types of processes: biological, social and ego processes [9; 21].

If one turns to the works of Russian authors, one may notice a lack of accord among the views of different scientists studying the problem of identity. V.L. Abushenko writes that the concept of identity is closely linked with the development of the concept of «the individual» in various scientific contexts, as well as with the evolvement of the discourse of «difference», «otherness», «authenticity» and «the other» in the European tradition [10]. Accordingly, three independent but interconnected notions of understanding of identity were formulated:

- in logic (non-classical);
- in philosophy (non-classical and mostly post-classical);
- in the social sciences and the humanities (sociology, anthropology, psychology).

Unlike the above-mentioned author who believes that the phenomenon of identity is associated with the adoption one's internal self-image, another Russian scientist, I.E. Grigorovich, claims that identity is understood as identification of oneself with other people, a person's awareness of a degree of identity with the object [11]. But we believe that identity is not a simple identity to oneself or others; it presupposes certain correlations between «I and others», a kind of middle ground, being a phenomenon that springs from the dialectical relations of the individual and society.

In the study of self-identity the most important question is what determines the unity and consistency of the individual's behavior and mental processes, and to what extent and in what forms they are represented in different contexts and situations and at different stages of a person's life. In other words, how are these views consistent with the objective dialectic of stability and variability of the individual? Scientists tend to distinguish 3 types of identity's modality:

- *Psychophysiological* — represents the unity and continuity of the physiological and psychological processes and the properties of the body, that is why it distinguishes between its own and foreign cells, which is clearly manifested in immunology;

- *Social* — it is an experience and an awareness of belonging to certain social groups and communities. Identification with certain social communities turns the person from biological to a social being, allowing him/her to assess social ties and identities in terms of «we» and «they»;

- *Personal or self-identity* — is the unity and continuity of life, purpose, motivation and values of a person who views oneself as one who acts and changes the environment. Identity is found not so much in a person's behavior and the

reactions of other people, but in a person's ability to maintain and develop a narrative, a story of his own "I"; in a person who retains his integrity despite the change of individual components of his personality. These structural changes in the inner world lead to the problem of making the most of oneself as an individual. Scientists call this state an «identity crisis».

While studying turning points of the process of human identification, E. Erikson came to the idea of the existence of identity. As a result of his discovery, he placed the study of the phenomenon of identity into the field of psychology of development, showing that the identity crisis is a normal stage in human development [12; 13-16]. We also believe that the identity crisis has a significant influence on the personality formation. In our view, the peak of self-identity occurs during adolescence, when young people are faced with a series of social and personal choices. Studies of youth self-identification gave scientists empirical data which became the basis for the classification of the following types of identity:

- *Inadequate identity* is formed when young people fail to promptly resolve problems related to self-identification;

- *Diffused or blurred identity* is a condition when the individual has not made a responsible choice of occupation, or world view, which makes his/her self-image vague and uncertain;

- *Unpaid identity* is a condition when a young person has a certain status. Having been through a difficult and painful process of self-analysis, he/she is already included in the system of adult relationships, but this choice was made not consciously, but under some external influence, or on the basis of ready-made standards;

- *Delayed identity*, or identification moratorium is a condition when an individual is in the process of professional and ideological self-identification, but he/she keeps postponing the final decision until later;

- *Achieved identity* is a condition when a person has already found their identity and entered a period of practical realization.

At present this classification is recognized by most scientists because of its versatility. The types of identity specified therein cover all possible experiences related to self-identification. Sociologists in their studies often resort to such classifications. However, psychologists are not satisfied with this knowledge, for it is not sufficient to study the basic aspects of the personality. In their opinion, the origin of forms of identity represents the key value. Ultimately, E. Erikson formulated the reasons/origins of identity:

- *External* (based on sex, age, race, nationality, citizenship);

- *Acquired* (based on professional status, freely chosen social connections, attachment and orientation);

- *Borrowed* (learned as defined by some external sample taken under the influence of others).

In our study, it is appropriate to focus on the acquired or professional identity. According to N.A. Golikova, «the most important factor in professional development and longevity is the formation of professional identity. Identity is a complex phenomenon, a «multilayered» psychological reality, including different levels of consciousness, individual and collective, based on ontological, genetic and social grounds» [13; 129].

Professional identity is defined by researchers in different ways. Thus, L.B. Schneider identifies the mechanism of awareness as its central component, defining it as «a psychological category related to awareness of belonging to a profession and to a particular community» [14; 113]. Y.P. Povarenkov uses a similar criterion of values considering professional identity as acceptance by an individual of a number of normative professional values on the social and psychological levels. In this vein, he rightly refers to it as a subjective criterion of professional development [15]. From our point of view, E.P. Ermolaeva gives the most general definition of professional identity, maximizing the scope of the term. When considering this term in the system of «man-profession-society», she argues that professional identity is the basic structure of the psychology of labor. This position allows her to define professional identity as a systemic characteristic of a person and his social activity. Thus, professional identity should not be treated as acceptance of labor values, but as a harmonious identification with the activity (instrumental identity), society (external identity) and oneself (internal identity) [16]. We, in turn, believe that professional identity is a complex construct that includes the relationship of cognitive, motivational and value components that provide orientation and interaction in the world of professions, allowing a person to fulfill his/her personal potential at work and in the professional community. «The basis of professional identity consists of man's knowledge of his place in the professional world (cognitive components), the adoption of the values of the professional community and the corresponding system of motivation (value-motivational components)» [17; 3]. As we see, Russian scientists agree with one another and with the fact that professional identity is a complex construct and a key factor of the system «subject of labor — profession — society».

Stating the problem of professional identity, its structure, genesis and psychological grounding is, in our view, an important task of modern man. Acquisition of the structure of professional identity is a dynamic process based on the opposition «identity — alienation», which provides a process of professional socialization and the development of existential-conceptual and operational-technical aspects of one's personality. This phenomenon, in turn, provides a process of professional self-identification and self-organization of a person [18; 129].

If one delves into the psychology of the individual, it can be seen that professional identity is manifested on the emotional and behavioral levels:

- *On the emotional level* situational self-identification in the structure of one's professional identity takes place. It reflects one's preference to work with certain types of customers and certain types of problems, to choose certain methods and means of emotional and evaluative attitudes to professional beliefs, knowledge and to oneself as a professional;

- *On the behavioral level* professional identity can be viewed as a result of the process of dealing with professionally significant challenges.

In this case, every decision concerning oneself and one's career, which includes interaction and relationships with other people, in behavioral terms will be expressed in the form of an action [15]. According to L.B. Schneider, the problem of professional identity, i.e. human self-realization in professional activities, must be related to issues of professional suitability and willingness to work [2; 45].

We can say that professional identity is not limited to self-presentation at work (in professional and business community). It should also be understood that the main characteristics of professional identity, besides integrity, are position, reflexivity and accountability. Moreover, in the modern world, external distinguishing features of a profession are «blurred» as a result of unification and standardization of professional activity. And consequently, internal factors such as position, responsibility and reflexivity, which are more important for achieving true professional identity, come to the fore [2; 50-52].

These sources are, without a doubt, the «three pillars» upon which professional identity rests, but we intend to further explore the reasons for professional identity formation. They include:

- Objectively existing educational and professional components;
- A subjectively manifested system of expectations and preferences, the ideal images of occupation;
- Recognition of a person as a professional by people of importance;
- Professional self-presentation;
- Professional norms (values) and attributes (lexicon, myths, stereotypes);
- A positive emotional background in which initial information about one's profession is received;
- A positive perception of self as the subject of professional activity;
- Emotionally positive recognition of oneself as part of a professional community;
- Successful learning of rules and regulations of professional activity;
- Responsibility that an individual can take on;
- The level of personal development;
- Motivational readiness for self-realization in the chosen professional field.

Despite the fact that these characteristics are of an abstract character, they can give a full picture of professional self-image. It should be noted that L.B. Schneider also presented features of professional self-identity, which are very similar to those described by J. Marcia [2; 65-68]:

- *Achieved identity* is formed on the basis of a number of personally important goals, values and beliefs, experienced as personally significant, i.e., providing a meaningful life. It manifests itself in a positive assessment of one's own qualities and one's interaction with the community;
- *Moratorium* is the status of an identity crisis. It is characterized by a high level of personal anxiety and a high level of intelligence and vital interests, as opposed to the less developed status of self-identification;
- *Premature identity* is characterized by the absence of independent life choices and, as a consequence, a lack of awareness of identity;
- *Diffused identity* is defined by an absence of clear-cut goals, values and beliefs, as well as by an absence of attempts at their formation. A person at this stage can go to the «moratorium stage» and later to «the achieved identity stage» or he can permanently remain at the stage of «diffusion». Being at this stage leads to the formation of a certain degree of dissatisfaction (doubts about the value of one's personality), bordering on indifference to one's own self;

- *False identity* is a stable rejection of one's uniqueness or, on the contrary, exaggerated emphasis of one's personality, combined with rigidity of the self-concept, rejection of criticism, low capacity for reflection, etc.

The study of works related to professional identity has allowed us to make a conclusion that the phenomenon of professional identity is an emerging branch of science that requires special attention from scientists. To date, professional identity as a social and psychological phenomenon has only begun to be explored. At the same time we realize that work in this area is of great scientific and practical interest. Keeping in mind the fact that many studies concerning identity are still chaotic, we can safely say that the knowledge held by scholars on the subject is only the «tip of the iceberg» of professional self-concept. We can predict that in the near future, with the increasing number of scientific publications related to professional identity, there will be major changes in society associated with an increase in the number of professional workers, which will possibly lead to a change in the whole picture of labor relations.

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