

Developing the Professional Culture of Future Service Sector Specialists within Vocational and Technical Education Institutions

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the issue of developing the professional culture of future service industry workers within the context of vocational and technical education institutions. Based on the analysis of scientific literature on the topic, the essence of the concept of professional culture for service sector specialists has been clarified, its main components—motivational, knowledge-based, and activity-related—have been identified, and the key indicators of its development at various levels (low, medium, and high) have been established. Drawing on current theoretical understandings of professional culture in the service sector, an original program for the professional and cultural development of students in vocational and technical education institutions has been designed and presented. This program, implemented through the study of humanities subjects, aims to increase the proportion of cultural studies topics in the overall curriculum and to foster a deep awareness of the cultural aspects of professional activity in the service sector through a system of specially developed tasks. The results of the experimental evaluation of the program for developing the professional culture of future service industry workers in vocational and technical institutions in the Lviv region confirmed its effectiveness in enriching students’ professional and cultural experience. Specifically, students in the experimental group, who studied according to the program, demonstrated a higher level of motivation for professional and cultural self-improvement, greater knowledge of cultural and ethical norms of professional behavior in the service sector, and stronger skills and attitudes for applying this knowledge in both typical and non-standard professional situations, compared to the control group. Based on the results of the experimental work, it is concluded that the broad implementation of this program for developing the professional culture of future service industry specialists through the study of humanities subjects is both feasible and advisable in the practice of vocational and technical schools.

Keywords: vocational education, service sector specialist, culture, professional culture, structure, components, levels of formation, programme, humanities disciplines.

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Introduction

As the spiritual and cultural level of society grows, so does the need for quality services, and, accordingly, for specialists who are able to provide them in a qualified manner. Dynamic changes in the service sector put forward new requirements for the training of specialists in vocational education institutions of the relevant profile. Today, it should ensure the formation of not only professional knowledge, skills and abilities, but also the development of general and professional culture. We fully support the position of scientists (L. Korotkova, A. Uher, M. Fisher, C. Josol, G. Vasianovych, V. Onishchenko) that against the background of current trends in the development of the service sector, the formation of professional competence of its employees is absolutely impossible without their mastering the components of professional culture at the proper level [12; 17; 18].

Such requirements for a service sector specialist – a salesperson, waiter, hairdresser, guide, cook, cashier, etc. – are primarily due to the pronounced social and interactive nature of his or her professional activity. A service sector employee should take into account the psychological and physiological qualities of the service consumer to maximise the satisfaction of his/her requests and preferences, both individual and ethical, which contributes to the establishment of constructive business relations between them, encourages the employee to solve not only professional tasks, but also, and no less importantly, professional and communicative functions. Successful performance of professional duties of a service industry specialist will be impossible if the consumer of his/her services is not heard and understood, his/her wishes are not taken into account, and contact is not established.

In the course of professional activity, a service industry specialist inevitably enters into certain social relations with other people, which are conditioned by the social and cultural macro- and micro-environment. In this regard, the future worker needs to develop culturally appropriate professional qualities, knowledge and skills based on the cultural and historical heritage of the chosen profession, and thus ensure his/her self-awareness as a subject, a carrier of professional culture. At the same time, in the current practice of vocational education, the professional cul-

ture of future specialists (the service sector is no exception) is formed mainly in fragments, assessed subjectively, since the regulatory framework for their training does not fully take into account the cultural aspects of their future professional activities.

Literature Review

The phenomenon of culture, including professional culture, is the object of a number of domestic and foreign scientific studies, which has resulted in the accumulation of a system of theoretical ideas about its various facets. In particular, from the social perspective, professional culture is justified as a product of society that accumulates historical professional experience, traditional professional values, established business relations, production processes, etc. As a social phenomenon, it is a systemic formation that emerges in specific socio-economic conditions of professional macro- and micro-environments [3; 7; 8]. Instead, from an individualistic-personal perspective, it is presented as a personal construct, an indicator of the personal and professional development of a particular specialist. As an individual formation, professional culture reflects a holistic personal and activity characteristic of a particular specialist as a subject of professional activity [1; 13; 15].

In our research, we share the approach of scientists to the interpretation of the concept of professional culture as a specific culture of a particular professional community, on the one hand, and as a specific culture of a particular person in a given profession, on the other. At the same time, in this article, we focus on the individualistic interpretation of professional culture as a personal characteristic, which, according to scholars (T. Atroshchenko, M. Yatsura, G. Bloor, P. Dawson, V. Grinova), is formed as a result of mastering the key elements of the professional culture of the community – historically established norms, values, rules, traditions of professional actions [2; 5; 10]. In this context, we consider the professional culture of a service industry specialist to be the highest level of his/her professionalism.

According to the conclusions of scientists (J. Caldwell, M. Thakor, A. Kumar), the professional culture of a service sector specialist is manifested in the system of knowledge about the norms

of cultural and behavioural etiquette, attitudes to their observance in their own professional activities, as well as in a set of value orientations, moral and volitional qualities that determine the attitude of a specialist to the subject of activity, the customer of his/her services, work results, etc. [6; 16]. Therefore, the main indicators of its formation are knowledge of culture at the interdisciplinary level, its functions and content, ability to carry out cultural analysis of various situations, to act constructively in different situations of professional activity and motivation, as well as awareness of the need for continuous cultural and professional self-development. Based on this, researchers (M. Kabachynskiy, O. Zhuk, L. Rudenko) identify the main components of the professional culture of a future service industry specialist, namely: motivational, reflecting the desire for professional and cultural self-improvement; cognitive, including a system of knowledge about the cultural aspects of professional activity; behavioural, covering a set of practical skills of professional activities in accordance with cultural and ethical norms [11; 14].

In compliance with the conclusions of scientists (Y. Bezruchenkov, G. Shechuka, L. Rudenko), the development of professional culture of a service industry specialist can be manifested at different levels, in particular: low, which is characterised by superficial, fragmentary knowledge of the basics of professional culture, inability to establish relationships with clients, colleagues, administration in line with professional ethics, poor speech etiquette skills, lack of desire to improve the own level of professional ethics; average, characterised by comprehensive knowledge of the basics of professional culture, ability to comply with the requirements of professional ethics in standard situations of professional activity, good speech etiquette skills, desire to improve the own level of professional ethics; high, which is characterised by a thorough knowledge of the basics of professional culture, the ability to correctly and effectively establish contacts in a team and with clients, colleagues, administration in standard and non-standard situations of professional activity, the ability to use speech etiquette, the desire to improve the level of professional culture [3; 14].

Despite the sufficient theoretical development of the problem of forming the professional culture of a specialist, substantiation of its essence, structure, levels of development, today we observe few methodological studies that would reveal effective tools for enriching the cultural experience of future representatives of various fields of professional activity, including the service industry. In this regard, based on the above theoretical provisions on the formation of professional culture of specialists of various profiles, the identified components, levels and indicators of their development, this article attempts to fill this gap and present the results of the practical testing of the author's programme for the formation of professional culture developed for students – future service industry professionals.

Purpose

In view of the above, the aim of our article is to experimentally assess the effectiveness of a program for the professional and cultural development of students in vocational and technical education institutions—future specialists in the service sector—through the study of humanities subjects.

Methodology

The basis of our experimental work was the authorial program for the formation of the professional culture of future specialists in the service sector through the study of humanities subjects at a vocational and technical education institution. The program is designed for three years of study: during the first year, students acquire cultural knowledge within the framework of disciplines such as Ukrainian language and literature, world literature, history of Ukraine, world history, and geography; during the second year, students' cultural experience is enriched through the study of subjects including business Ukrainian, sociology, political science, cultural studies, religious studies, a professionally-oriented foreign language, fundamentals of law, and philosophy; in the third year, students systematize their cultural knowledge and integrate it into the professional context, particularly during their pre-graduation internship.

The programme outlines the content of the formation of professional culture of future service professionals in vocational education institutions, co-

vering a wide range of topics integrated into the content of humanities disciplines. For example, in the first year of study, the course of foreign literature covers such issues as fiction as a basis for the formation of personal culture, the influence of fiction on the formation of language culture, the role of books in human life, etc. At the same time, using examples of world literature ("The Financier" by T. Dreiser, "Pygmalion" by B. Shaw, "Martin Eden" by J. London, "Three Comrades" by E. M. Remarque, "The Red and the Black" by F. Stendhal, "Hobbesque" by O. de Balzac, "The Old Man and the Sea" by H. Hemingway, etc.), the course is planned to introduce the cultural ideals of different eras and develop the general and professionally significant values of future service professionals.

Active methods and interactive forms of learning, such as role-playing games, debates, conferences, discussions, etc., are subordinated to the mastery of the relevant topics, which allow to artificially simulate professional situations in which the student must quickly orientate and choose the most optimal way of behaviour among many possible options in accordance with the requirements of the professional culture of a service sector specialist. They are implemented through a system of educational tasks for the development and assimilation of values, principles, and norms of professional and ethical behaviour, for example: 1. Analyse the manner of behaviour of a service professional based on the following qualities: politeness; tolerance; listening skills; manner of speaking; movements, gait. 2. Identify the shortcomings that are unacceptable, in your opinion, in the service sector today. 3. Describe the specialist's manner of communication according to the plan: a) culture and purity of the specialist's speech; b) knowledge of national flavour; c) knowledge of foreign languages and traditions; d) knowledge of professional terminology; e) advertising communication skills. 4. Describe the moral limitations of a service professional: communication with people with special needs; communication with representatives of different religious denominations; respect for other people's national traditions; ability to respond adequately to human shortcomings; adequate response to non-standard human preferences. 5. Analyse

popular public catering establishments in your city (hairdressing services, trade, etc.) and describe the style and professional culture of their employees, etc.

To assess the effectiveness of the program for developing the professional culture of future service-sector specialists through the study of humanities in vocational and technical education institutions, an experimental research methodology was employed (pretest-posttest design) involving both an experimental group and a control group. A two-stage testing of both groups of students was conducted to diagnose their professional-cultural knowledge and skills: first, before the implementation of the program in the experimental group, and second, after the completion of the program. Comparing the pre- and post-test data of the experimental and control groups allows for identifying significant differences, thus evaluating the impact of the program as an additional tool for enhancing students' cultural experience.

The participants of the study at the ascertaining stage of the experiment were 432 first-year students from 6 vocational education institutions of Lviv region. To conduct the formative stage of the experiment, two groups (control and experimental) were selected from the total number of students who participated in the ascertaining stage of the experiment with results as close as possible to the average ascertaining data. Each group consisted of 100 students who were enrolled in the same courses and followed identical curricula. The choice of participants in the experimental and control groups was based on the results of comprehensive testing, as well as the fact that the training and final tests were conducted by the same teacher, whose approaches to assessment remained unchanged; groups with approximately the same number of students of the same year of study were selected.

To diagnose the level of professional culture formation of students of vocational education institutions – future service professionals, we have developed a questionnaire with different types of questions. Thus, to identify the motivational readiness of students to master professional culture, we have compiled closed multiple-choice questions, for example: 1) in your opinion, are cultural knowledge and skills neces-

sary for a service sector specialist? (suggested answer options: a) unnecessary; b) sometimes necessary; c) often necessary; d) constantly necessary); 2) how important, in your opinion, is the formation of professional culture of service sector specialists? (suggested answer options: a) not important; b) rather unimportant than important; c) important; d) 4 fundamentally important), etc. To find out the level of students' cultural knowledge, the questionnaire includes 20 closed questions with an alternative answer (yes/no), for example 1) tact is a set of rules for manifesting attitudes towards people; 2) tact is an innate human trait; 3) the content of the concepts of etiquette and professional culture is identical, etc. To identify the professional and cultural skills of students, we have compiled a set of situational questions with an open answer, for example: 1) indicate the actions of an employee during a fight between visitors to a service establishment; 2) name the actions of an employee in case of suspicion of theft by a client when visiting a service establishment; 3) describe the actions of an employee of a service establishment in case when the client is dissatisfied with the quality of the service, etc.

To ensure the reliability of the data obtained in the experimental study, a statistical analysis was carried out to determine the main task, whether there is a significant difference in improving of professional and cultural knowledge and skills of students – future service professionals before and after the experimental intervention, in particular, using the t-Student's criterion. As a result of all the calculations, the data were analysed, interpreted and generalised. This sequence of actions allowed us to objectively and promptly process the entire amount of data obtained in the course of the study.

Results and Discussion

Prior to the experimental implementation of the program for the formation of professional culture in future service industry specialists at vocational education institutions, a diagnostic assessment of the initial level of its development among students in the control and experimental groups was conducted using a specially developed diagnostic tool. The results of this assessment are presented in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1

Distribution of Experimental Participants by Level of Professional Culture Formation (in %)

Levels of professional culture development	Experimental group	Control group
Low	23	22
Average	22	24
High	4	5

According to Table 1.1, about half of the students (45 %) demonstrate a low level of professional and cultural knowledge and skills, are not focused on the requirements of professional culture and cultural competences, and do not realise the

need to work on their own self-development. The low level of professional culture development is particularly evident in its motivational and behavioural components in both the control and experimental groups (see Table 1.2).

Table 1.2

Distribution of Experimental Participants by Level of Formation of Professional Culture Components (in %)

Components of professional culture	Experimental group			Control group		
	low level	average level	high level	low level	average level	high level
Motivational	49	55	6	47	44	9
Cognitive	39	49	12	33	52	15
Behavioural	51	42	7	53	39	8

The data in Table 1.2 show the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups in terms of the formation of the professional culture of their participants in general and in terms of its key components – motivational, cognitive and behavioural. Therefore, the preliminary pre-experimental test proved the absence of a statistically significant difference between different groups of participants in our study.

In order to determine the level of development of professional culture of the research participants, after the intervention work in the experimental group on the basis of the programme during the first year of study, a final diagnosis was carried out. Its results show positive dynamics in the development of students' professional and cultural knowledge, skills and the needs for its further self-improvement in both

the experimental and control groups compared to the results of the pre-test. At the same time, this dynamics is significantly higher among the participants of the study from the experimental group, which is confirmed by the relevant quantitative data for each of the key components of professional culture – motivational, cognitive and behavioural.

Thus, after the intervention in the experimental group, there were positive changes in the motivation of students – future service professionals for professional and cultural self-development: the number of students with a high level of motivation increased (6 % – before the experiment and 17 % – after its completion) and the number of students with a low level of motivation decreased (49 % – before the experiment and 25 % – after its completion) (see Table 1.3).

Table 1.3

Level of Formation of the Motivational Component of Professional Culture of Future Service Sector Specialists in Vocational Education Institutions (in %)

Levels of professional culture development	Experimental group		Dynamics	Control group		Dynamics
	At the beginning of the experiment	At the end of the experiment		At the beginning of the experiment	At the end of the experiment	
Low	49	25	–16	47	36	–9
Average	55	58	3	44	54	10
High	6	17	11	9	10	1

Positive changes are also observed in relation to the cognitive component of the professional culture of students – future service professionals in the experimental group: the number of students characterised by a high level of its development has

increased (12 % – before the experiment and 18 % – after its completion) and the number of students with a low level has decreased (39 % – before the experiment and 24 % – after its completion) (see Table 1.4).

Table 1.4

Level of Formation of the Knowledge Component of Professional Culture of Future Service Sector Specialists in Vocational Education Institutions (in %)

Levels of professional culture development	Experimental group		Dynamics	Control group		Dynamics
	At the beginning of the experiment	At the end of the experiment		At the beginning of the experiment	At the end of the experiment	
Low	39	24	–15	33	38	5
Average	49	58	9	52	50	–2
High	12	18	6	15	12	–3

Positive changes are evident in the behavioural component of the professional culture of students – future service professionals in the experimental group: the number of students with a high level of its development has significantly

increased (7 % – before the experiment and 19 % – after its completion) and the number of students with a low level has decreased (51 % – before the experiment and 23 % – after its completion) (see Table 1.5).

Table 1.5

Level of Formation of the Activity Component of Professional Culture of Future Service Sector Specialists in Vocational Education Institutions (in %)

Levels of professional culture development	Experimental group		Dynamics	Control group		Dynamics
	At the beginning of the experiment	At the end of the experiment		At the beginning of the experiment	At the end of the experiment	
Low	51	23	–22	53	38	–15
Average	42	58	16	39	50	11
High	7	19	12	8	12	4

The results of the three professional culture components' development and their dynamics in the control and experimental groups are presented in Table 1.6 below. The data from Table 1.6 show a significant advantage of the participants of the experimental group over the participants of the control group in terms of the development of their professional culture. In particular, in the expe-

rimental group, the number of students with a low level of its formation decreased by almost half, while in the control group, a rather significant proportion of students (37 %) still demonstrated a low level of its development. In the experimental group, the number of students with an average level increased by 12 %, while in the control group it increased by only 6 %.

Table 1.6

Dynamics of the Level of Formation of Professional Culture of Students – Future Service Sector Specialists in Vocational Education Institutions (in %)

Levels of professional culture development	Experimental group		Dynamics	Control group		Dynamics
	At the beginning of the experiment	At the end of the experiment		At the beginning of the experiment	At the end of the experiment	
Low	45	24	–21	43	37	–6
Average	46	58	+12	47	52	+5
High	9	18	+9	10	11	+1

The dynamics of growth in the number of students with a high level of professional culture in the experimental group is also almost twice as high as in the control group. These results give grounds

for concluding that the programme for the formation of professional culture of future service industry specialists in the process of studying humanities disciplines developed by us is effective

and recommends its active use in the practice of professional training of future specialists in the relevant field in the system of vocational education.

Conclusions

As a result of the conducted study, the essence of the professional culture of future service sector specialists has been defined as an integral personal-activity characteristic of the subject of professional activity, reflecting the degree of mastery of knowledge, norms, behavioral rules, techniques, and methods for solving specific professional tasks and assignments. Based on this understanding, we developed a program for the formation of professional culture in students of vocational education institutions—future service sector specialists—through the study of humanities disciplines, considering their significant potential in the overall cultural development of the individual. Its implementation involves the integration and enhanced emphasis on cultural studies topics within the content of humanities courses, including foreign literature, Ukrainian language and literature, history, sociology, law, philosophy, and others, as well as the application of a set of practical tasks aimed at reflecting on the cultural, moral, ethical, and value-based aspects of professional activity in the service sector. Expe-

rimental testing of the program in vocational education institutions in the Lviv region demonstrated its effectiveness in developing students' professional culture at the level of motivation for further enrichment of their professional-cultural experience, at the level of knowledge of cultural and ethical labor norms in the sector, and at the level of corresponding behavioral orientations in various professional situations.

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**Розвиток професійної культури
майбутніх фахівців сфери обслуговування
в умовах закладу професійно-технічної освіти**

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Анотація. Статтю присвячено проблемі формування професійної культури майбутніх працівників сфери послуг в умовах закладу професійно-технічної освіти. На підставі вивчення наукової літератури з означеної проблеми уточнено сутність поняття професійної культури фахівців галузі обслуговування, визначено її основні компоненти (мотиваційний, знаннявий та діяльнісний), виявлено основні ознаки її розвитку на різних рівнях (низькому, середньому та високому). На основі актуальних теоретичних уявлень про професійну культуру фахівця галузі обслуговування розроблено та представлено авторську програму професійно-культурного розвитку студентів закладів професійно-технічної освіти у процесі вивчення гуманітарних дисциплін, що націлює на збільшення частки культурологічних питань в загальному обсязі їх навчального змісту та глибоке усвідомлення культурних аспектів професійної діяльності у сфері послуг через систему спеціально укладених завдань. За резуль-

татами експериментальної перевірки програми формування професійної культури майбутніх працівників сфери послуг на базі закладів професійно-технічної освіти Львівщини констатовано її ефективність у збагаченні професійно-культурологічного досвіду студентів. Зокрема виявлено вищий рівень розвитку мотивації до професійно-культурного самовдосконалення, знань про культурно-етичні норми професійної поведінки спеціаліста галузі обслуговування та установок і вмінь її реалізації в різних типових і нестандартних професійних ситуаціях у студентів експериментальної групи, що навчалися за програмою, порівняно зі студентами контрольної групи. На підставі результатів проведеної експериментальної роботи зроблено висновок про доцільність широкого впровадження програми формування професійної культури в майбутніх фахівців сфери обслуговування у процесі вивчення гуманітарних дисциплін у практику професійно-технічної школи.

Ключові слова: професійно-технічна освіта, фахівець сфери обслуговування, культура, професійна культура, структура, компоненти, рівні сформованості, програма, гуманітарні дисципліни.