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**EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF FORMING
A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE OF THE FUTURE PUBLIC RELATIONS
SPECIALIST**

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The article is devoted to the organization of research work on forming professional image of the future public relations specialist. The purposes of the work were to study components of students' image, to test the concept of a professional image of the specialist, and also to process and evaluate the results. The author has presented three phases of experimental research: statement, formative and evaluative. As a result, a positive trend of forming a professional image was found. The conceptual model of forming a professional image of the future experts tested in the course of experiment has shown to be highly effective, while new methods of training (training, workshops, panel discussions, action games, etc.) have substantially improved the level of development of a professional image. The results can be used in the training and retraining of specialists of higher education and people whose profession related to communications.

Keywords: professional image, PR specialist, scientific and methodological support, system of resources.

ЭКСПЕРИМЕНТАЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО ИМИДЖА БУДУЩЕГО СПЕЦИАЛИСТА ПО СВЯЗЯМ С ОБЩЕСТВЕННОСТЬЮ

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Статья посвящена организации опытно-экспериментальной работы по формированию профессионального имиджа будущего специалиста по связям с общественностью, целью которой стало изучение сформированности компонентов имиджа студентов, апробация концепции формирования профессионального имиджа названного специалиста, а также обработка и оценка полученных результатов. Автором представлены три этапа экспериментального исследования: констатирующий, формирующий и оценочный. В результате была выявлена положительная динамика формирования профессионального имиджа. Апробированная в ходе эксперимента концептуальная модель формирования профессионального имиджа будущих специалистов показала свою высокую эффективность, а новые методы обучения (тренинги, мастер-классы, подиумные дискуссии, сюжетные игры и др.) позволили значительно повысить уровень сформированности профессионального имиджа. Результаты исследования могут быть использованы в процессе подготовки и переподготовки специалистов в сфере высшего профессионального образования, по специальностям, связанным с коммуникациями.

Ключевые слова: профессиональный имидж, специалист по связям с общественностью, научно-методическое обеспечение, система ресурсов.

Recently, the image and image competence takes on a special significance as an important professional quality public relations expert, that is only a creative, confident and successful professional communicator can realize the needs of society and to be in demand by an employer today. The currency of our study is clear even be-

cause the issues of forming a professional image of such specialists in the educational process of the university are insufficiently developed.

The problems of forming a professional image were studied by E.V. Emelyanova V.G. Kupcov, A.U. Panasiuc, E.A. Petrov, E.B. Perelygina, L.G. Popov, V.N. Cherepanov [3, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15], etc. The analysis of the literature showed an insufficient development of problems of forming a professional image of the future public relations expert in terms of training.

We have organized the experimental work on this problem in order to study the formation of the components of a professional image among students, test the conceptual model of professional image of the future professionals and to evaluate the results of the experiment.

The experimental basis for the study was: South Ural State University, Ural State University of Physical Education, Institute of International Relations (Ekaterinburg) and Chelyabinsk State Academy of Culture and Arts. 1,678 students and 256 professors participated in the experimental work. Experiment was conducted with the basic course of university education at the same time.

General methodology of the experiment was based on the works of J.K. Babansky, I.F. Deviatko, V.I. Zagvyazinsky, G.I. Ibragimov, M. Kendall, T.E. Klimova, V.V. Krajewsky, A.A. Kyveryalg [1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10], etc.

The experimental work was carried out in three stages: statement, formative and evaluative. The purposes of the state experiment were the development of criteria, indicators and levels of forming a professional image, conducting a diagnostic of a professional image level of students in the control and experimental groups, preparation for testing the conceptual model and a complex of pedagogical conditions of forming a professional image of the future public relations specialists.

To carry out the experimental work were formed four groups of students: three experimental and one control group. The experimental work was characterized by a focus on a variety of pedagogical conditions. In the first experimental group (EG-1), we tested the first condition: strengthening of interdisciplinary connections and intro-

duction of integrative modular course "Imagelogy" in the instructional plan of the university, work in the second experimental group (EG-2) was focused on the design and the saturation of the value of the educational environment, systematized on the basic parameters of professional image and implementation of information process resources, and in the third experimental group (EG-3) we examined the effectiveness of a complex educational environment. In the control group (CG) the training students was not focused on any one of the selected conditions in a special way.

We selected students with different levels of formed-raising professional image in these groups. In the experimental groups the problem of forming components of the image was solved by using a defined set of pedagogical conditions, developed technological support, information process resource. In the control group, this problem was solved by using traditional methods of working with students.

Pedagogical diagnostic methods were chosen methods such as observation, questioning, the method of peer review, interview, self-assessment, tests, analysis of the students' activity.

We defined the upper and lower bounds for each state of image formation. If the sum of scores is in the range of 4–16 points the state of image formation is negative; 17–32 – satisfactory; 33–48 – positive.

Based on these results we compiled three-point scale to determine the condition of a professional image formation, which was used throughout the experimental work.

The results of testing, questionnaires, observations and interviews allowed the student to assign a particular state of professional image formation. Following data were obtained: 36% of students have positive and satisfactory level, and 64% of the students have a negative level, indicating the insufficient formation of a professional image and supporting the assumption of the need for special pedagogical conditions and developing a conceptual model of imagelogy training.

Based on data from the state experiment the following conclusions can be done:

– If one's doesn't set a special goal to develop a professional image of the future experts in public relations and not to seek new approaches to solving this problem, it is formed spontaneously on an insufficient level in terms of higher education process;

– The need to build a professional image is relevant, it really exists;

– The educational process should be directed at identifying the level of formation a professional image and a subsequent increasing of this level in the learning process with the educational opportunities of different subjects;

– It is important and necessary to pay great attention to the image of the future public relations specialists.

The formative experiment took place as under natural conditions of the educational process as in the process of testing the specially created educational environments.

The implementation of pedagogical conditions, based on a specially selected range of methods, techniques and tools, on the main provisions of integrative competence-based approach, that ensures its effectiveness, is not an isolated selection of methodical mechanisms (methods, techniques and tools) for each condition. It is consist in building a holistic complex, which focuses on the development of each component of a professional image because the image of a specialist in public relations is a systemic formation and its development is possible only through a set of conditions, taking into account the development of each of its components.

Scientific and methodological support is a system of educational resources necessary for a successful formation of the future PR specialist's professional image, including the theoretical materials, experimental studies, their processing and results, training, software, and training materials. Scientific and methodological support involves the creation of a single information field, seminars, literature support, the acquisition of the necessary new instructional materials, screening techniques, forming a package of diagnostic tools, establishing links with academic advisors, program development, plans for different disciplines, teaching tools , study program, a collection

of guidelines, articles and other materials, processing the results in electronic version, the materials of the best teaching experience, speaking at conferences, etc.

The study of scientific and educational materials resulted:

– a development of teaching materials, teaching methods and programs for formation the professional image of the future specialist in public relations on the basis of integrative competence-based approach ("Introduction to Imagelogy", "Professional image", "Imagelogy"). Programs are an integrative and modularity that allows to create individual training course for each student;

– it allowed to make changes and additions to the educational program of the specialty in the context of a professional image of the future expert on public relations;

– based on analysis of the labor market requirements it allowed to intensify requirements as to the quality of professional training of the future public relations specialist as to educational programs in the specialty, to introduce into s special courses, to implement programs aimed at creating image competencies.

The structure of scientific and methodological support includes invariant and variant parts. Invariant part, general, reflects the fundamental idea of a professional image of expert on public relations, concepts, principles, underlying representations. The variant part involves the formation of the phenomenon in the process of developing additional educational programs. Invariant part contains training programs and scientific-methodical material on subjects of the state higher education standard. The variable part of the program includes training and research tools specifically designed for imagelogy training.

The implementation of scientific and methodological support in the educational process of the university has provided professional growth of teachers and positive motivation of students to create the image as an important characteristic and allowed:

– To introduce advanced scientific and educational developments in the process of training, this has helped to improve imagelogy training of future specialists in public relations;

- To provide students with the theoretical and practical materials for imagology seminars;
- To expand and strengthen the base of practice, establish a close mutually beneficial cooperation with practitioners and employers;
- To increase competitiveness and demand for the future public relations specialist in the labor market.

Evaluation stage of the experiment was aimed at understanding, synthesis and description of the experimental work and its results, the practical implementation of a new set of pedagogical conditions of formation a professional image of the future public relations specialists Stu.

According to the results of peer review in accordance with the criteria 55.6% of students have a satisfactory level of formation of a professional image, 44.4% of students – a positive level, no students have a negative level. In summary, the levels of formation a professional image are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

**Levels of formation a professional image of students
 at state and evaluation stages of the experiment**

Group	Phase	Levels						average	coeffi- cient
		Negative (low)		Satisfactory (middle)		Positive (high)			
		quantity	%	quantity	%	quantity	%		
EG-1 (76 people)	start	60	80	12	15	4	5	1,13	1,64
	end	21	28	39	51	16	21	1,45	0,81
EG-2 (82 people)	start	57	69	18	22	7	9	1,31	0,74
	end	18	22	39	48	25	30	2,08	1,16
EG-3 (86 people)	start	57	66	18	21	11	13	1,42	0,8
	end	3	4	33	38	50	58	2,61	1,46
CG (76 people)	start	27	36	36	47	13	17	1,76	–
	end	21	28	42	55	13	17	1,79	–

In the course of the experimental work we have carried out tracking the transition of students from the lowest level of formation of a professional image to the next level with the identified components of a professional image of students: competence, motivation, communication and activity.

To quantify and compare the data we have introduced a number of indicators: average, the rate of absolute growth, the coefficient of efficiency of the experimental procedure. The effectiveness of the developed concept tested by χ^2 – Pearson criterion [6]. For EG-1 – $\chi^2_{\text{fakt.}} = 0.148$, and for the EG-2 – $\chi^2_{\text{fakt.}} = 0.1642$, for the EG-3 – $\chi^2_{\text{fakt.}} = 12.61$, which is more appropriate value of 5.991 in the table with a probability of allowable error of 0.05.

Positive changes in the valuation of the experiment allowed recognizing the experimental work is quite successful while a complex educational environment, ensuring the effectiveness of the concept of formation a professional image of the future expert on public relations is a necessary and sufficient.

We can draw the following conclusions:

1. The state stage of the experiment revealed a low level of professional image of students and the urgency of the problem of self-making image in public relations.
2. The formative phase of the experimental work has allowed proving and testing the pedagogical conditions, implementing the model of image formation of the future specialist effectively and significantly increase the level of its establishment.
3. The evaluation stage of the experiment showed a positive trend of the studied process and confirmed the efficiency of the developed conceptual model of a professional image expert on public relations.

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