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**STRUCTURE AND CONTENT-RELATED PECULIARITIES
OF CAREER ORIENTATION ON THE EARLY STAGES
OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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This article presents description and analysis of such structural component of career as career orientation. The author gives a definition of this term, states its functions and peculiarities on the early stages of professional development – during the time of studying at higher education institution. Techniques, on the basis of which the data concerning structure and content peculiarities of career orientation on the early stages of professional development was received, are regarded. Comparative analysis of peculiarities of the choice of top-priority career orientations on the early stages of professional development and faculties is carried out in accordance with the results of the research.

Keywords: career, career orientation, higher education institution, early stages of professional development.

**СТРУКТУРНО-СОДЕРЖАТЕЛЬНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ
КАРЬЕРНЫХ ОРИЕНТАЦИЙ НА РАННИХ ЭТАПАХ
ПРОФЕССИОНАЛИЗАЦИИ**

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Статья посвящена описанию и анализу такого структурного компонента карьеры как карьерные ориентации. Дается определение данного термина, его функции и особенности на ранних этапах профессионализации, в студенческом

возрасте. В статье перечислены методики, с опорой на которые получены данные о структурно-содержательных особенностях карьерных ориентаций личности на ранних этапах профессионализации. По итогам диагностики осуществлен сравнительный анализ особенностей выбора приоритетных направлений в карьере на разных этапах профессионального образования и факультетах.

Ключевые слова: карьера, карьерные ориентации, студенчество, ранние этапы профессионализации.

In the course of Russian reformation the requirements for professionals have changed drastically. Nowadays there are certain qualities and skills which have become highly-valued and essentially important aspects concerning social security and professional self-defense of employers: flexibility, mobility, creativity when dealing with organizational tasks, interest, ability to plan career promotion and to make use of one's personal competitive advantages.

Problem of career planning and choice of professional development orientation acquires topical character during the time of studying at higher education institution. College years appear to be a very important period in life of a person, mostly because, in its general sense and according to basic objective laws, it represents the initial point of the adulthood rather than the closing one of the childhood (B.G. Ananyev, A.V. Dmitriyev, I.S. Kon, V.T. Lisovskyi etc.). Therefore it is the stage of the late adolescence when one gets some specific ideas about his future, career, definite requirements determined by the profession, and professional and personal identities. (L.S.Granovskaya, E.F. Zeer, I.A. Zimnyaya, Y.N. Kulyutkin, I.S.Kon, P.A. Prosetskyi, A.A. Rean, V.A. Slastenin, V.A.Yakunin etc.).

Considering one of the main lines of development in late adolescence period – that is professional development - it should be noted that career building process is one of its most important aspects (A.M. Sheveleva, V.A. Chiker). Psychological research in the domain of career is rather various. This domain includes the following investigation branches: career paths studies (Y.V. Ukke, 1971; P.Sinisalo, 1987; N.S. Pryazhnikov,

1996; A.K. Markova, 1996; L.M. Mitiba, 1996; E.A. Mogilevkin, 2007; L.B. Shneider, 2006; T.H. Nevstrueva, T.G. Gnedina, 2006; V.P. Osokov, 2003); gender studies (O.A. Gavrilitsa, 1988; V.G. Gorchakova, 2000; G.V. Turetskaya, 2001; M.V. Safonova, 1999; T.Y. Gainutdinova, 2003; S.T. Dzhaneryan, 1999, 2005; O.M. Razumnikova, 2004); management psychology and organizational psychology (A.Y. Kibanov, 1997; D.M. Ivantsevich, A.A. Lobanov, 1995; A.P. Egorshin, 1999; T.Y. Bazarov, 2002; V.A. Polyakov, 1995; E.G. Moll, 1999; P.V. Zhuravlev, 2007).

Our research is focused on the early stages of professional development – college years. There are many works on the early stages of career (I.A. Novikova, E.N. Polyanskaya, 2002; N.L. Kirt, 2000; A.M. Sheveleva, 2000; D.A. Tkach, 2004 etc.). Career studies of the past decade are marked by cross-disciplinary character and multifaceted analysis: S.V. Mityunina “Personal professional career models”, 2006; A.A. Zhdanovich “Career orientation in the self-concept structure of students”, 2008; E.V. Sadon “Professional competence as a factor of future specialist’s professional development”, 2009; A.S. Mironova-Tikhomirova “Psychological structure of career readiness of graduates”, 2006; E.B. Zadorozhnikova “Professional career of women: sociological analysis of the situation in the conditions of drastic changes”, 2003; A.V. Shapovalov “Processual analysis of careers of representatives of different socio-professional groups”, 2006; F.O. Semenova “Psychology of woman’s career: personal and ethnic modes”, 2011; N.R. Galiakberova “Woman’s status and career in a modern Russian society”, 2003; T.V. Mamina “Specificity of linguo-cognitive modeling of “career” scenario in the Russian language”, 2011; T.D. Sheret “Types and characteristics of the attitudes of the insurance company employees to the professional career”, 2006; M.A. Plotnikov “Career as an acmeological mechanism of professional self-realization of management personnel”, 2010.

Nevertheless, the topicality of investigation of this problem on the early stages of professionalization remains obvious: during studying at higher education institutions one chooses his own career orientations, which form the basis for career goals and plans determining the success of entire career and professional development.

We hold to an opinion that career is a multi-faceted socio-psychological phenomenon connected with the goal activities of a person and providing him with a feeling of successful professional self-realization. Career is formed on all stages of life through the processes of identity formation, self-organization, personalization and also depends on self-reflexion abilities. The choice of career implies to multivalued vision of one subject matter and conforms to the cultural and social peculiarities of a particular society. Thus, career represents process and result of the realization of the corresponding aspect of personality's potential in the socio-professional sphere of the society.

Career orientations in the career structure express the orientation of personality on certain norms and values in the career domain. Their function is based on the fact that they appear as inner source of career goals of a person, therefore rendering something which is the most important and meaningful in a sense of professional activity for him. Thus, career orientations system determines the paths of self-development and personal growth, including both their directions and the ways of realization.

Career orientations begin to build up during studying at higher education institutions, on the early stages of professionalization. Career orientations tend to manifest in the peculiarities of career goals setting and future career planning on the 4th-5th course year.

Theoretical value of our research consists in conducting system analysis of a psychological phenomenon of career orientations by the means of analysis of different approaches in Russian and foreign psychology with regard to modern socio-economic situation, enlarging the idea of career orientation phenomenon in the context of their specificity in studying age, expanding on determinants and conditions of career orientation formation.

Thus, the objective of this research is to investigate and analyze structure and content-related peculiarities of career orientations on the early stages of professionalization.

Theoretical analysis of the problem allowed to state the following thesis: career orientations have a range of specific structure and content-related peculiarities on the stage of studying at higher education institutions:

1. Students have typical career orientations which reflect socio-economic situations in the society and top priority career orientations which depend on the sphere, professional training period and gender characteristics of students.

2. Being a student, one doesn't fully recognize career orientations neither by their structure nor by their content, what is caused by age specificities of self-consciousness; level of awareness of top-priority career orientation determines the vector of professional development of the students.

The research was aimed at examining the following criteria:

1. career orientations of the students;
2. level of awareness of career orientations ;
3. intrapersonal tension connected with the specificity of career orientations;
4. gender characteristics of a person;
5. self-reflexion ability level;
6. career planning peculiarities.

Research methods used by us for the research of socio-psychological peculiarities of career orientations were taken from: questionnaire "Career anchor" by E.Schein, modified version of the methods of T.P.Maralova "Essay My life in 10 years", questionnaire "Style of self-regulation of behavior - 98" ("SSRB-98") by V.I.Morosanova, R.R.Sagiev, A.V.Karpov's methods oriented on to the diagnostics of individual level of development of self-reflexion ability, modified version of the methods of E.B.Fantalova "Diagnostics of intrapersonal conflict", methods "Psychological gender of personality" by S.Bem. All mentioned above methods allow both group and individual testing.

The participants were the final-year students of Orenburg State Pedagogical University. In the total sample of 210 students of the first and final year at the age of 17-21 there were 88 males and 122 females. The faculties were represented in the

following figures: psychology – 45, physics and math – 42, history – 25, natural sciences – 98 (geography – 22, economics – 35, biology – 24, chemistry – 17)

170 students of the first and final year from mentioned above faculties participated in the principal empirical part of the research procedure.

Description and analysis of the results

Data processing and analysis of the results of the research, aimed at establishing of the character of correlation between career orientations and level of awareness of career orientations, career planning ability, self-reflexion, intrapersonal tension and gender characteristics were carried out in the following order:

1. Analysis of career orientations of the students;
2. Analysis of the level of students' awareness of the career orientations;
3. Analysis of the results of testing under the following methods:

T.P.Maralova “Essay My life in 10 years”; questionnaire “Style of self-regulation of behavior - 98” (“SSRB-98”) by V.I.Morosanova, R.R.Sagiev; A.V.Karpov's methods oriented on to the evaluating self-reflexion ability, E.B.Fantalova's “Diagnostics of intrapersonal conflict”; “Psychological gender of personality” adapted by O.G.Lopuhova.

4. Analysis of the correlations between the leading career orientation and level of awareness of it, self-reflexion ability level, gender characteristics, intrapersonal tension and career planning peculiarities.

5. The scoring of the significant distinctions in the estimated indexes.

Within the course of research final year students of Orenburg State Pedagogical University represented their faculties as follows: psychology – 16, physics and math - 16, history – 16, natural science – 52 (including biology – 20, geography - 16, economics – 16; first year students: psychology – 17, physics and math – 17, natural science – 37 (including economics – 20, and chemistry – 17).

The results of Schein's “Career Anchors” method showed that final year students tend to choose “stability” as a career orientation (31% of total sample). We assume that it is connected with the specificity of modern socio-economic reality. Due to the

economic and political changes present-day situation can't be characterized as stable and predictable and it doesn't give any long-term prospects to young people, what was common for the previous historical periods. So in terms of such state of affairs final year students consider stability as the most valuable orientation in career and life. Apparently they strive to satisfy the need in security in order to make the future events in life more predictable. Thus, students prefer the work at the organization with determined work period, good reputation and reliability in its sector.

It's rather significant that none of the students chose professional competence as principal career orientation (0%). From our point of view, it can be explained by specific characteristic of studentship age, which forms at the final stage of education at the institution. It should be noted that the nature of this career orientation deals with the skills and talents in some certain sphere (research, engineering, financial analysis etc.) and striving for being a real expert in one's work, so this career orientation implies to the clear idea about future profession and the possibility to realize one's capacities in the given sphere. At the same time final year students still lack a proper understanding of their profession. This process is of random character and leads to the fact that students can't fully identify themselves with the subjects of professional activity.

The number of the students who chose "challenge" as their career orientation is insignificant. We think that it's caused by the general orientation of the university. In terms of its pedagogical orientation students focus more on the cooperation and teamwork rather than challenge. Thus, it's typical for students to pay more attention to some certain sphere of the activity rather than competition and achievements.

Besides, only 6 % of all students appeared to be autonomy-oriented. We also find it rather indicative, as autonomy refers to disengagement from the rules and regulations of the organization and striving to do everything on one's own account without focusing on the vertical career building. However, due to the lack of experience and confidence in own skills final year students don't regard this career orientation as top-priority one. Other career orientations saw rather even distribution of choices (from 10% to 19%).

In our opinion, comparative analysis of the distribution of the results concerning choice of the principal career orientations among the first and final year students is rather important.

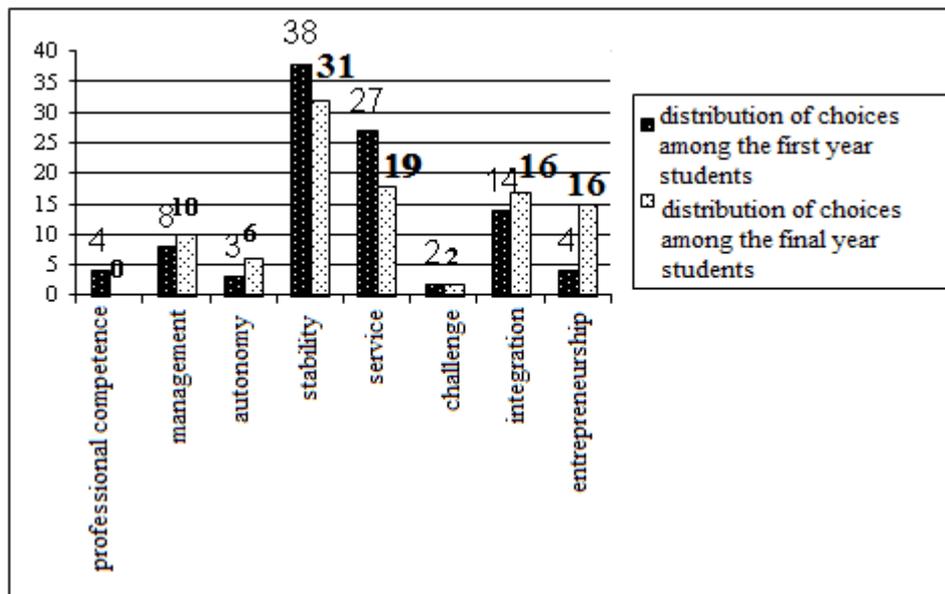


Figure 1. Histogram showing the distribution of choices of top-priority career orientation among the first and final year students

It's seen from the histogram that the choice of principal career orientation among the first year students differs from the one among the final year students. We consider the distribution of choices in the categories of professional competence and entrepreneurship rather illustrative. Orientation on the professional competence is found among the first year students, which means that they want to become an expert in their field and improve their skills, knowledge and abilities. Statistic analysis data confirm the significance of the differences at 1% level ($\varphi_{emp}^* = 2,5$, therefore, $\rho = 0,01$). The results can be explained by numerous investigations of the dynamics of changes of ideas about profession, according to which the first year students tend to be most satisfied with the profession. That's why the given results also show the orientation on becoming a real expert at the first year of studies. Further on the satisfaction by the profession lowers, due to both objective (level of teaching) and subjective reasons (learning about the dark side of profession). Final year students, in their turn, are more oriented on the

entrepreneurship (16%). Statistic analysis data confirm the significance of the differences at 1% level ($\varphi^*_{emp.} = 2,5$, therefore, $\rho = 0,01$). In other career orientations such significant differences are not found.

Moreover, we think that choice of the top-priority orientation depends on the chosen profession. Having analyzed the results of distribution of choices of top-priority career orientations in accordance with the orientation of the faculties, we've found out some obvious distinctions.

Table 1

**The choice of the principal career orientation in relation
 to the faculty orientation (%)**

Faculty orientation	Professional competence	Management	Autonomy	Stability	Service	Challenge	Integration of styles	Entrepreneurship
Humanities	0	9,3	3,2	31,25	31,25	3,2	12,5	9,3
Natural Science	0	8	5,5	48	5,5	3	22	8
Mathematics	0	12	9	16	19	0	16	28

According to the resulted distribution, students from the faculty of humanities tend to seek service and stability in their career equally (31, 25%). Those who study natural sciences want to achieve stability while building their career, what is generally typical for the final year students. As for the students of the faculty of mathematics, they strive to set p their own business, that is - to become entrepreneurs. Thus we suggest that choice of the career orientation depends on the specificity of the faculty and personal characteristics. Faculty orientation is likely not only to determine professional motives, values and attitudes, but also to reconstruct axiological and conative structure of student's personality radically.

The results of the distribution of choices of the principal career orientation with account for gender characteristics can be seen in the table 2.

Table 2

**The choice of career orientations in relation to gender characteristics
 of the students (%)**

Career orientations Gender	Professional competence	Stability	Management	Service	Challenge	Autonomy	Entrepreneurship	Integration of styles
Androgyny	0	39	7	18	3	3	16	14
Masculinity	0	18	27	10	0	0	18	27
Femininity	0	15	11	21	0	21	11	21

It's obvious that the distribution of choices of career orientations is different due to the gender characteristics. Students with androgynous characteristics put the orientation on stability first (39%), then follows service (18%), while orientations on challenge and autonomy were chosen by the insignificant number of students (3%). Students possessing masculine nature prefer orientations on management integration of life styles (27%) to orientations on stability and entrepreneurship (18%), whereas autonomy and professional competence are not represented in students' principal career orientations at all (0%). As for the students with typical feminine personality features, they choose orientations on integration of life styles, autonomy and service (21% each), meanwhile stability, management and entrepreneurship are rated second. According to the results of distribution of choices of top-priority orientations, we assume that certain gender characteristics determine career orientation: androgynous students are more stability-oriented, masculine students put management first, and feminine students choose orientation on service. Thus, it can be

Besides gender characteristics there is the level of awareness of career orientations on the stage of studies at higher education institution in comparison with

other stages of professional development which also matters. From our point of view, it's the level of awareness of principal career orientation which leads to the reasonable career planning and affects the level of intrapersonal tension. This statement is significantly important, as conscious hierarchy of career orientations plays a regulatory role in career, determining the paths of self-development and personal growth, including both their directions and the ways of realization.

To indicate the level of awareness of principal career orientation we used modified version of method "Essay My life in 10 years" by T.P.Maralova. The analysis of the essays allows seeing how the hierarchy of career orientations- that is principal career orientation - is represented in the mind of the students. The results of the essays were examined with the help of content-analysis which detected sense bearing units concerning the ideas about career aims, role of the university in career building process, terms of realizations of plans (duration of prospect), ways of attaining the goals, one's own efforts in building a career, and combination of career with other aspects of life.

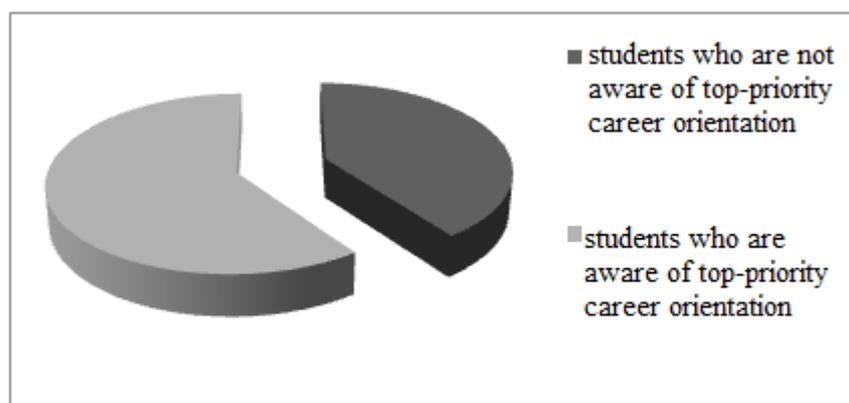


Figure 2. The awareness of principal career orientation among the students

On the basis of estimated results we can conclude that the number of students who are aware of their career orientations is less (40%) than the number of those who are unaware of them (60%). We think that such situation is conditioned by the fact that though it's currently important for students to search for the prospects of creative potential realization, to solve professional problems independently and to achieve success in their professional activities and career, they still have a need for development

of such range of interconnected skills of the motivational component of professional self-consciousness of personality as: reformulating of the needs and motives subjective system in accordance with the social needs, recognition of a new subjective system of needs and motives significant for personality. In Zinoviyev's opinion, for example, personal constituent of specialist model is provided within the high professional education rather poorly. As a result, final year students tend to make delayed plans, which, in their opinion, will come to realization after the graduation; set the vague goals, using such pronouns as "somebody", "somewhere", "someday"; strive to achieve a few goals at the same time, not being able to get the priorities right; and lack proper means for the realization of top-priority career orientation.

Having analyzed the data concerning the students who are aware of their career orientations, we can conclude that there is small variability in the level of the awareness of career orientations. It is evident that there is a tendency of the rise of the level of awareness of career orientations towards the final year of studies, however this fact doesn't confirm statistically. We can explain it this way: the duration of the studies doesn't necessarily make of the idea of profession more clear and doesn't improve the level of awareness of career orientation, as the given phenomenon depends mostly on the building of the teaching system.

On the next stage of our research the results concerning the self-regulation of behavior in career sphere were summarized and arranged in tables. For that purpose we used the questionnaire "Style of self-regulation of behavior - 98" ("SSRB-98") by V.I.Morosanova, R.R.Sagiev; A.V.Karpov's method when estimating self-reflexion abilities and E.B.Fantalova's methods.

Being the key element of career building, conscious self-regulation of behavior plays, along with other high psychical functions, in the course of development of a person and his adaptive capacities becomes recognizable, intellectualized and accessible for unrestricted control. Unlike other functions, self-regulation capacity acquires absolutely new peculiarity in the course of development, that is – own relative independence from the influence of principal determinants, natural or social, what

provides a person with a new feature – consciously controlled subjectivity (O.A.Konopkin, 1980; A.K.Osnitskyi, 1986).

Let's consider the results of the questionnaires, arranging them in groups, in accordance with the level of awareness of principal career orientation:

Table 3

**Indexes of self-regulation of behavior due to the level of awareness
 of principal career orientation (%)**

“SSRB” questionnaire scales	Recognizable career orientations			Unrecognizable career orientations		
	Level of development			Level of development		
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
Planning	50	48	2	33	27	40
Estimation of the results	40	58	2	22	67	11
Flexibility	62	28	10	43	50	7
Independence	35	52	13	37	48	15

On the basis of distribution of the results in two groups we can draw the following conclusions: in the group of students who are aware of their own principal career orientation (further on named as “group 1”) are more likely to have higher indexes in comparison with those students who are unaware of their principal career orientation (further on named as “group 2”). For example, 50 % of students in the first group have high “Planning” indexes, while the percentage of such students in the second group constitutes 33%. At the same time low indexes of this scale can be seen in 2% of cases in the first group and in 40% - in the second. Similar results can be noticed in other scales, except for “Independence” scale, where the results distributed equally regardless of the level of awareness of career orientation. Thus, it's obvious that the students of the first group tend to have high and medium indexes, while those of the second group – medium and low indexes.

The next stage in the research of the specificity of behavior regulation at studentship age was investigation of reflexivity. We regard reflexivity as synthesized psychological reality which can function as psychological process, psychological attribute and psychological state at the same time, and which can't be limited to one of them. Reflexivity is a unique feature typical only for a human, a state of realizing of something and a process of representation of one's own content the psyche all rolled into one. Basing on this theoretical construct, we suppose that the development of this feature is very important for realization of both principal career orientation and conscious behavior. Reflexivity as a feature comes out in the "organizational" quality image, the main function of which is to organize and integrate other qualities – secondary quality, or metaquality - in one respect. However, reflexivity also backgrounds differentiation, appearing to be not only a "secondary quality", but also a potential characteristic of psyche, which determines the level of complexity of its organisation. Within our research we focus on the distribution of the levels of development of reflexivity in relation to the level of awareness of principal career orientation.

Table 4

Distribution of the reflexivity level in the groups of students with different levels of awareness of career orientations (%)

The level of development of reflexivity	Group of students who are aware of their career orientations	Group of students who are not aware of their career orientations
High	10	0
Medium	80	52
Low	10	48

Basing on the given distribution of the results we can compare the results of two groups. For the students of the first group it's typical to have medium levels of development of reflexivity; high and low indexes are found to be equal in number (10%). The second group lacks high indexes; the difference between medium and low indexes in their distribution is insignificant and constitutes 4%. Thus reflexivity

capacities of the students in the first group are obviously higher in comparison with those of the students in the second group. In our opinion, it refers to and even shapes the level of awareness of principal career orientations.

The next stage of our research was to analyze *intrapersonal conflicts* typical for students *and their nature*. For detecting the presence/absence of intrapersonal conflict concerning one of the career orientation we used theoretical and methodological construct of E.B.Fantalova's method "Diagnostics of intrapersonal conflict".

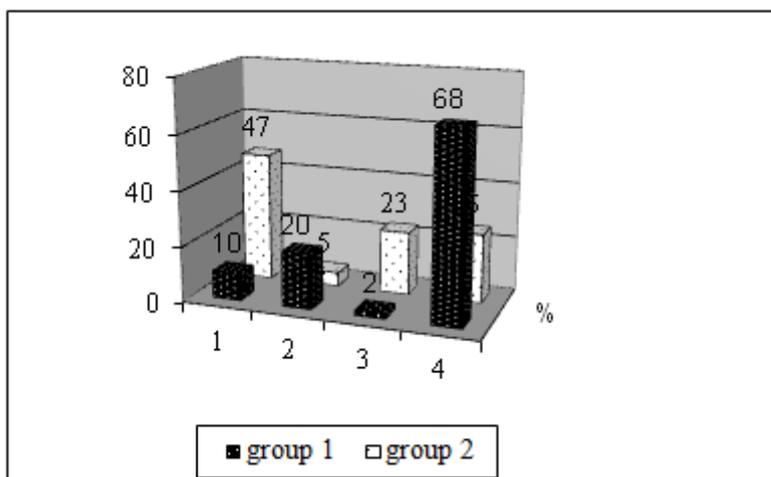


Figure. 3. Distribution of choices of students with intrapersonal conflicts in relation to the level of awareness of career orientation

Notice: 1 – intrapersonal conflict concerning the principal career orientation; 2 – intrapersonal conflict concerning family life; 3 – intrapersonal conflicts concerning both principal career orientation and family life; 4 – intrapersonal conflicts absent

It's seen from the diagram that significant number of students (68%) without intrapersonal tension refers to the group of those who are aware of their principal career orientation. The number of students who have intrapersonal conflicts concerning principal career orientations differs in relation to the groups: only 10% of the students of the first group have intrapersonal conflicts, while in the second group there are 47% of such students. Thus, we can conclude that the students who are unaware of their career orientations are more likely to have intrapersonal conflicts in comparison with those who are aware of them. Recognition of the career orientation leads to independent and

active way of career building, what reflects in the correlation between the categories of “value” and “accessibility” in different life spheres and career building directions.

According to the results of the methods performed we can mark out and describe several groups of students: the students who are aware of their principal career orientations – “conscious” students; and the students who are unaware of their career orientations – “unconscious” students.

Table 5

**Individual peculiarities of the students with different level of awareness
 of their principal career orientations**

Groups	Reflexivity	Planning	Estimation of the results	Flexibility	Intrapersonal conflict concerning career orientation
Levels					
“Conscious” students 40%	Medium	High-Medium	High-Medium	High	Intrapersonal conflicts absent
“Unconscious” students 60%	Low-Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Intrapersonal conflicts present

Let’s characterize each group that we’ve marked out.

Group1. The Students who are aware of their own principal career orientations clearly understand what results they want to achieve in their career, what reflects in the predominance if the high career planning level. Their plans are real, detailed and firm. It’s possible that in the course of career plans realization the aims will be transformed, however, in our opinion, clear idea about the priorities in the professional activity reduces the level of anxiety about future. Besides, students of the given group possess high abilities to track down the process of realization of their career orientations, what

provides them with adequate self-esteem. High and medium indexes of this scale show that the students can properly evaluate both the fact of disagreement of the results with the career goals and the causes leading to it, being able to adapt to the changing conditions. Conscious of their principal career orientations, students set the priorities properly, what is reflected in the absence of intrapersonal tension concerning career.

Reported results of this group are also integrated with reflexivity indexes, as reflexivity may not appear in the results of the activity. The influence of the reflexivity on the resultative side of the activity is determined by its ability to affect the ways of performing of the activity. The predominance of the medium level of this feature is manifested in the level of awareness and career planning.

Group 2. The students who are unaware of their own principal career orientations face certain difficulties when building a career. On the final stage of education each student plans his future professional/career path, so the more they are conscious of what they want to achieve, the more adequate and effective their goals and plans will be. The students of this group tend to have low level of career planning, what implies to weakly developed need in planning, their career plans are often changed. We assume that with such characteristics of career plans it will be difficult for them to achieve their career goals. Setting random goals, these students prefer not to think about their professional future. They also may have problems when evaluating obtained results, such as: the absence of criticism concerning their actions, instability of the subjective criteria for the success of career plans realization, what may cause poor performance. Not being conscious of their principal career orientations, they are likely to have intrapersonal conflicts concerning career. The predominance of the medium and low levels of reflexivity development integrate other characteristics, generating contradictions connected with the career planning and career goals setting. It's obvious that the level of awareness of principal career orientation determines the adequate career planning and reduces intrapersonal contradictions in the process of choosing of top-priority career orientation.

Thus, we marked out and described structural and content-related peculiarities of career orientations of personality on the early stages of professionalization. The most important condition for career plans realization is a consistent system of career orientations, which underlies the formation of the goals and plans coordinated in content and time. The given statement works in case of awareness of one's own career orientations and their correlation with individual capacities. The data of the research may be used in individual and group work with the students of different specialities, age and level of development.

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