

Self-Definition in a Chosen Professional Field as a Measure of Specialist's Competence Level

Pryazhnikov N. S.*

Doctor of Education, Professor of psychological faculty of Lomonosov Moscow State University, Professor of the Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation

Tsahaeva A. A.

Doctor of Psychological Sciences, Professor, Dagestan State Pedagogical University

Latipov Z. A.

Kazan Federal University

Litvishkov V. M.

Senior Research Associate Federal State Institution "Research Institute of the Federal Penitentiary Service", Professor of FSIN of Russia Academy, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor

Vilkova A. V.

Leading Researcher of the Federal State Institution "Research Institute of the Federal Penitentiary Service", Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor

Sannikova N. I.

Doctor of Education, Professor, Yugra State University

Abstract

The aim of the study is to examine the factors influencing Vocational guidance of self-definition as a measure of specialists competence level via document analysis as a qualitative research method. In order to determine the factors of Vocational guidance that influences self-definition as a specialist's competence, we first compiled Vocational guidance perspectives on self-definition in three categories: as a phenomenon of public consciousness, as a problem of self-determining personality and as a psychological and pedagogical practice. The results showed that these factors are classified into two groups of external factors and internal factor. Internal harmonization was primarily aimed at reconciling different views between representatives of this aspect and external harmonization was aimed at convergence of people's positions representing different aspects. In conclusion, scientists and practitioners simply have to work, on the whole, and contribute to the development of human and labor resources at the level of the whole society, and help concrete people to find a worthy place in the economical and social life of the country.

Keywords: Self-definition in profession; Vocational guidance; External and internal harmonization; Specialist's competence level.



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1. Introduction

If we turn to the history of practical psychology and vocational guidance, the views on the matter changed from assistance in finding employment on the basis of testing to the creation of psychological and pedagogical conditions for the person's development in professional and personal self-definition (Micheeva *et al.*, 2017; Mukhin *et al.*, 2017b; Neverkovich *et al.*, 2018; Sergeeva *et al.*, 2018b; Sergeeva *et al.*, 2018a; Tatarinceva *et al.*, 2018a; Tatarinceva *et al.*, 2018b). At the same time, it is possible to single out a general tendency in the development of ideas about career-guidance related to the need for a longer and more thorough preparation of the individual for self-definition under the conditions of freedom (Sergeeva *et al.*, 2018c).

In particular, the more real freedom there is in society (i.e. the availability of attractive and accessible alternatives to career choice), the more in demand is the system of training a person for effective action under conditions of freedom. For example, referring to the history of Russia, the greatest flourishing of career guidance was associated with a certain increase in freedoms (in the 1920s, during Khrushchev's "thaw" and Gorbachev's "perestroika" ...), and vice versa, under the rule of Stalin scientific career guidance was almost under the ban.

Today an interesting tendency is observed: the theory of vocational guidance is usually better developed than the vocational guidance practice, which is often explained by the strong limitations of the professional advisors with pragmatically elementary requests from clients and various "customers" (Sergeyeva *et al.*, 2018). Thus, we can talk about "career-oriented pluralism". We are more inclined to see a positive meaning in this "pluralism" reflecting the direction of career guidance for development through comparing different approaches, analyzing them and underlining more effective and promising ones.

In the meantime, the following destructive moments of such inconsistency in the understanding of vocational guidance should be noted: 1) disregard of valuable experience in other approaches, emphasizing the successes only of their views (especially against the background of competition between scientists and practitioners for financial and administrative support); 2) the aggravation of the situation for potential clients (schoolchildren and their parents) in choosing career counseling centers and specific consultants in solving their career issues.

2. Research Methods

The research method was documental that examines the factors influencing Vocational guidance of self-definition as a measure of specialists competence level. Along with surveys and ethnography, documentary research is one of the three major types of social research and arguably has been the most widely used of the three, throughout the history of sociology and other social sciences. Documentary research method refers to the analysis of documents that contains information about the phenomenon we wish to study. The documentary research method is used in investigating and categorizing physical sources, most commonly written documents, whether in the private or public domain. This research method is just as good as and sometimes even more cost effective than the social surveys, in-depth interview or participant observation.

3. Research Results

In order to determine the factors of Vocational guidance that influences self-definition as a specialist's competence, we first compiled Vocational guidance perspectives on self-definition in three categories:

Vocational guidance as a phenomenon of public consciousness: Although in social psychology (especially foreign) much attention is paid to the peculiarities and patterns of "mass consciousness" (Mukhin *et al.*, 2017a; Sergeeva *et al.*, 2017a; Tatarinceva *et al.*, 2018a) but as applied to modern Russian conditions, this issue still needs to be understood (Sergeeva *et al.*, 2017b; Sergeeva *et al.*, 2018a). In the context of multicultural Russian society, this problem becomes quite important, since it involves the consideration of regional and national-ethnic characteristics of professional and personal self-definition. We note that there is a possible conflict not only between psychologists and their clients, but also between a self-determining person and his/her closest associates.

Vocational guidance as a problem of self-determining personality: It is important for us that every person has got his/her own ideas about the future professional life and ways of achieving success (Mukhin *et al.*, 2017b; Sukhodimtseva *et al.*, 2018; Wang *et al.*, 2017). These conceptions themselves can change during life, and then we can talk about the development of the future subject of labor and professional self-definition (Mukhin *et al.*, 2017a; Sergeeva *et al.*, 2018c). Unfortunately, with elementary career guidance a person may not be formed as a right agent of self-definition, or his/her intentions and skills of self-definition can be socially doubtful, for example, when he/she builds personal success on the sufferings of other people (Milovanov *et al.*, 2017; Sergeeva *et al.*, 2018a). Therefore, it is simply not enough to take into account the career intentions of the individual: it is still necessary to adjust his/her development as an agent of self-definition and as a future citizen of the country.

Vocational guidance as a psychological and pedagogical practice: Professional counselors have to take into account the expectations of their customers, as it has already been noted, but the requests on their part may be imperfect. And then professional consultants have to devote a lot of energy to psychological education of their clients. In addition, the professional counselors have to take into consideration the expectations, and sometimes the instructions of their leaders (in schools, psychological centers), and we must admit that these guidelines are not always reasonable. In these cases, psychologists-practitioners have to either dedicatedly carry out such instructions, or somehow hide their true attitudes in the work, or make some compromises, although sometimes it is possible to "psychologically enlighten" some of their leaders (Sergeeva *et al.*, 2018b). Unfortunately, nowadays there are a lot of dubious trends in the Russian science which complicate its development (Ju *et al.*, 2017; Mischeeva *et al.*, 2017; Sergeeva *et al.*, 2017a), and professional orientation is not an exception. For instance, there is still no solid scientific center in the country where career counseling issues would be studied.

Based on the mentioned categories, we categorized the factors influencing self-definition as specialist's competence in two groups of internal factors and external factors. Internal harmonization is primarily aimed at reconciling different views between representatives of this aspect (between scientists, managers, or different positions of a particular self-determining person, etc.). "External" harmonization is aimed at convergence of people's positions representing different aspects.

Variants of "external" harmonization of career guidance between representatives of consolidated views representing different aspects are 1-invitation of representatives of various aspects of career guidance to important meetings (sittings, conferences, round tables), for example, invitation of scientists, professional consultants, customers to the meetings of HR managers; 2-development of a culture of collective discussions of personnel issues, when using of various incorrect methods in discussions (act of dishonesty, incomplete information, reference to authorities, moral and emotional pressure on the opponent) will be unacceptable; 3-development of a culture of "internal dialogue", which presupposes readiness to take the standpoint of one's opponent .

There are variants of "internal" harmonization of career guidance (between representatives of different views within each aspect: 1-the development of a culture of discussion based on the desire to see the positive things in other views and readiness to recognize their mistakes; 2- increase in the number of formal and informal meetings (forums, conferences, roundtables) between representatives of a particular school, direction, approach; 3-increasing the psychological competence of a particular person (scientist, practitioner, manager, client) as the basis for constructive cooperation with bearers of other views

4. Discussion

Even the role of a professional counselor psychologist may prove to be rather modest if a system of vocational guidance with the population has not been created. The key point is that this system must be managed. On the whole, the quality of any management depends on how the main resource of any organization (and any society) is used, it is people. A problem for any leader is the situation when there are active and talented people in the given social system (organizations), but it is not clear what they are occupied with, i.e. they do not use their potential for the development of system.

This allows us to put forward a thesis that any leader is primarily a career-oriented professional, whose main task is to create conditions for the identification, upbringing, education, employment and fair promotion of such active and talented people.

It should be noted that the above thesis has long been recognized in respectable organizations, where all personnel work (also known as “personnel management” or “human resource management” in large organizations) has long become an essential condition for the competitiveness of this organization (Samokhin *et al.*, 2018; Sergeeva *et al.*, 2018b). It should be also noted that career guidance work with schoolchildren is being developed in many large organizations (Rosatom, Sberbank and even Rosnano), and it worked in the 1970s and 1980s at large defense enterprises in the USSR, i.e. positive experience is just being revived. In France, for example, it is coordinated at the level of the interdepartmental National Bureau of Information on Education and Profession – ONISEP, which has representative offices in all departments, universities and colleges (Sergeeva and Nikitina, 2016). In the Soviet era, this work was supervised at the interdepartmental level, in the State Committee for Labour of the USSR (Bourina and Dunaeva, 2017). The problem is not to repeat those managerial mistakes that were made in the Soviet period.

Many employers often do not intend to invest in the development of their applicants and want to get a ready-made employee (Mikheeva, 2016). Nevertheless, we must also consider such primitive expectations of employers, especially since high-ranking officials also call for this, stating that universities should, first of all, be guided by manufacture requirements and specific employers.

There are often no well-founded plans for long-term (strategic) development against the background of short-term profit priorities in many organizations. If the professional counselors (human resource managers, coaches) or learned professionals are forced to work on the orders of specific employers, they are often limited in accessing the cultural and historical processes taking place in the country, focusing more on specific pragmatic tasks. Being free in determining their priorities, scientists and practitioners simply have to work, on the whole, and contribute to the development of human and labor resources at the level of the whole society, and help concrete people to find a worthy place in the economical and social life of the country.

5. Conclusion

Many efforts of different specialists are still aimed at harmonization of their actions, hence our essential idea is to propose the main variants of such coordination both in terms of “internal” (within each aspect) and “external” (between representatives of different aspects) harmonization. We believe that ignoring the problem of harmonization of various aspects can lead to imitation of a large but unintentional activity, and in the worst case, can discredit all career guidance (as an inefficient and even “stupid” direction).

The author is considering the main aspects of vocational guidance: the position of a self-determining personality, the different positions of psychologists, professional advisors, the different positions of methodologists and scientists in professional orientation, views on career and life success at the level of public consciousness (different social and professional groups), different positions of managers on personnel policy (management of personnel, human resources management), different expectations from career guidance from employers, as well as consideration of career guidance in the context of cultural and historical development of society. Relying on the analysis of possible points concerning the inconsistency of different positions, generalized variants of harmonizing the position of people representing, we propose different aspects of the studied phenomenon. In this case, the variants of harmonization are identified for “internal” harmonization (within each aspect) and “external” harmonization (between representatives of different aspects). Besides, the relevance of the proposed options of harmonization and their role in the overall socio-economic development of the country is indicated.

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