

## SOME ASPECTS OF PROFESSIONAL IMAGE DEVELOPMENT OF BELARUSIAN AND POLISH GRADUATES

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**ABSTRACT:** THE ARTICLE DESCRIBES THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF PROFESSIONAL IMAGE DEVELOPMENT; IT PRESENTS THE RESULTS OF THE AUTHOR'S RESEARCH DEVOTED TO THE LAST YEAR STUDENTS' CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE PROFESSIONAL IMAGE. THE RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED AT THE BELARUSIAN AND POLISH UNIVERSITIES. IT IS FOUND THAT GRADUATES OF BOTH COUNTRIES RECOGNIZE PERSONAL EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE, VERBAL SKILLS, THE ABILITY TO ESTABLISH PROFESSIONAL CONTACTS (COMMUNICATION SKILLS), AN INNOVATIVE CULTURE AS THE SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS OF THE PROFESSIONAL IMAGE. STUDENTS IN BOTH COUNTRIES BELIEVE THAT LIFELONG LEARNING IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS AS A PROFESSIONAL.

**KEY WORDS:** GRADUATES, IMAGE, IMAGEOLOGY, DEVELOPMENT, PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, STRATEGIES, IMAGE CONCEPTION

### INTRODUCTION

WHEN we speak about modern graduates we should not only take into account professional competence, knowledge, ability to put it into practice, but also the possibility to constructive self-development. In the modern world young professional who knows how to present himself, make a profit on their virtues is in a more favorable position. It's so called image of a person. Unfortunately, the university doesn't give the information how to create your own image. More than that imageology is a relatively new branch of human knowledge. That's why the given article is devoted to the problems of professional image development of graduates and theoretical basis of this phenomenon.

### DEFINITION OF THE TERM "IMAGE". ITS COMPONENTS

LET us consider the definition. Image is a purposefully formed integral form, conditioned to correspondence internal and external qualities of the subject, aimed at harmonious interaction of the subject with the outside world. Being the system of interrelated characteristics of the subject image becomes a means of personal and professional problems solution<sup>1</sup>. Characteristics which determine individual image fall into several groups:

- ✓ Natural personal qualities: sociability, empathy, reflectivity, eloquence –all that makes it possible to be liked by people.

<sup>1</sup> B. M. Bim-Bad, *Pedagogical dictionary*, Moscow 2002, p. 103

- ✓ Personal qualities formed due to education: moral values, psychical health, ability to communicate, to prevent and overcome conflict situations.
- ✓ Personal characteristics determined by person's life and professional experience<sup>2</sup>.

**I**n pedagogic literature following image elements are distinguished:

1. External part (from Latin *Habitus* – appearance): figure, clothes, shoes, hair style, make up.
2. Kinetic part which includes the way one moves, mimicry, gestures, face expression, look peculiarities.
3. Speech part subdivided into the level of oral and written speech, literacy, stylistic characteristics and handwriting.
4. Environmental part consisting of human habitat created by human himself (e.g. house interior, study design etc.).
5. Material part – products of labor of a certain person<sup>3</sup>.

**I**T should be taken into consideration that we need personal contact to receive information about the first three image components, whereas the information concerning the 4th and the 5th image parts can be obtained without it. These all image attributes form personal (human being as a personality) and professional (human being as a professional) image.

#### THEORETICAL BASIS OF IMAGE DEVELOPMENT

**O**NE'S image development is connected with human knowledge development about himself. According to Aronson<sup>4</sup> these are the main ways of development of knowledge about personality:

1. Introspection or the process of looking inside of one's own personality and investigation of thoughts, feelings and motives.

**W**HEN people carry out introspection, motives of their behavior may be hidden from consciousness. The theory of consciousness starts to realize when a person focuses attention upon himself estimating own behavior and comparing it with his inner norms and values. Self-consciousness can make us aware of our unfulfilled expectations. Such self-dissatisfaction can be painful, that's why a person often gives up self-analyses, plunging into everyday routine. But when we activate our self-consciousness, we carry out an accurate diagnostic of our own feelings and character peculiarities.

**B**UT bear in mind the fact that our schemes and theories can be inappropriate thus can lead to mistakable conclusions about the reasons of our behavior.

2. Own behavior observation.

**T**HIS is one of the ways to get the knowledge about your own personality. It can be explained with the help of the following theories:

- ✓ *Self-perception theory*: in case we are not sure of our feelings or attitude towards something or we have ambiguous position, to make an appropriate conclusion about the situation is possible through the observation of own behavior in this definite situation. Besides, the more examples of such behavior we can find in our personality, the more we

<sup>2</sup> V. M. Shepel, *Imageology: secrets of personal charm*, Moscow 1997, p. 390

<sup>3</sup> A. U. Panasiuk, *Image. Dictionary*, Moscow, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> E. Aronson, *Social psychology*, Moscow 2008.

will be sure of this character trait. By self-perception the following methods can be applied:

- Reflexive mimic influence – changing of face expression can lead to emotional changes;
- Reduction – conscious underestimation of one of our behavior motives, while the other motive is very distinct and can be easily defined;
- Inner motivation – takes place when we do something without any outward pressure or in order to achieve outward result, but in case we get satisfaction from the activity. When we take part in any activity at will we focus our attention upon this activity, block other stimulus perception and concentrate completely, as a result we form the sense of own importance;
- Outward motivation or participation in some activity caused by external motives; such motivation aims at an outward result. If inner motivation is substituted by external motives, we speak about lack of motivation.

✓ *Bifactorial theory of emotions* based on the fact that all the emotions are the result of bifactorial process of self-perception – at first people feel physical excitement and then they try to find reasonable explanation for it. In case this excitement is directed to the source of emotional nature, people feel appropriate emotions. It also should be taken into account that in case of very strong excitement we react negatively, because the related conditions are usually unpleasant. Psychologists caution against mistakable definition the excitement reasons. It's nothing but referring your own excitement to source that not exist, as a result we have fake or too strong emotion.

3. Schemes of own personality (schemes "I") related to our experience. These schemes are organized knowledge structures that contain the information about us and help us to understand, explain and predict our behavior. One of the structures – autobiographic memory which contains fragments connected with behavior, memory and feelings experienced later. It determines our behavior and vice versa, our behavior can influence our autobiographical memory. Schemes "I" help us to organize autobiographical memory about our activity in the past.

4. Social interaction. Here we can distinguish the following theories:

✓ "I" reflection is perception your own personality through the eyes of other people and including their opinions in the structure of your own personality

✓ Theory of social comparison according to which we learn about our abilities through the comparison with the others. We use this method when there is no objective standard, criterion according to which we can estimate ourselves and also when we are not self-confident in certain conditions. Here we distinguish:

- social comparison oriented upwards: we compare ourselves with the people who excel us in some aptitude or character trait; in this case we set a standard of perfection;
- social comparison oriented downwards: we compare ourselves with people who occupy lower level in some aptitude or trait; the aim of such social comparison is to reach self-satisfaction.

5. Impression management. It is conscious or unconscious projection of detailed presentation of own individuality which will make a certain impact corresponded to our aims and needs in communication with other people. The main method of impression management is self-presentation. Self-presentation is an attempt to inform others with the verbal and nonverbal means about the fact who we are or who we want to be.

**SCIENTISTS** who have worked on the problem of self-presentation, single out its strategies, not always positive, but still effective:

- Edinburgh strategy. The aim of this strategy is to make an impression that a worker does nothing but his work;
- Harvard strategy based on creation of trepidation among the colleagues through suggestion that we don't study anything but still get excellent marks;
- Self-offer is the process based on the fact that a person tries to produce positive impression describing own talents and demonstrating own knowledge;
- "Basking in somebody else's glory" is the desire to achieve success by means of contacts with successful people;
- Pleasing the people who occupy high social position in order to get respect;
- Searching for excuses to explain probable defeat. It is putting obstacles and making yourself excuses so that in case of failure have an explanation<sup>5</sup>.

**THE** given in this article theoretical bases of graduate's image creation can be used for image model construction as a complex of interconnected elements – inner, outer and procedural. Inner component consists of knowledge, skills, abilities, values, self-esteem, self-concept. Outer component include parts mentioned above: external, kinetic, environmental, material. Procedural component is the style of contact realization in the society.

#### RESEARCH GRADUATE STUDENTS' IMAGE CONCEPTION

**WHAT** knowledge about the professional image do the future specialists with high education possess? How did they manage to develop themselves during their study in the university? How do they work on their own image improvement? One of the aims of this research was to get the answers. The author conducted the research in belarusian and polish universities in 2012. The students of the last year from Brest (Belarus) and Bialystok (Poland) answered the questions according to worked out questionnaire. In this survey took part 260 students. The results one can find in the tables 1 and 2 below.

**Table 1.** Answers to the question "What are the components of professional image"

Answer	The number of respondents in Poland (%)	The number of respondents in Belarus (%)
Professional competence	79	85
Appearance	21	40
Personal culture	68	70
Verbal skills	63	68
Ability to establish professional contacts	37	56
Handwriting	5	12
Innovative culture	5	24
Foreign language skills	37	41
Skill of labor organization	58	74

*The source: own research*

<sup>5</sup> Niebrzydowski L., *O poznaniu i ocenianiu samego siebie*, Warszawa 2006, p.202

**THE** comparative analyses belarusian and polish students' knowledge about professional image is of great interest.

**BELARUSIAN** and polish students are aware of the fact that the notion of professional image is complicated and has certain structure. The students from both countries have the same opinion that image consists of certain components:

- Professional competence (79% of Poles and 85% of Belarusians);
- Personal culture (68% of Poles and 70% of Belarusians);
- Verbal skills (63% of Poles and 68% of Belarusians);
- Foreign language skills (37% of Poles and 41% of Belarusians).

**BUT** there are also certain differences of their opinions:

- Skill of labor organization (58% of Poles and 74% of Belarusians);
- Ability to establish professional contacts (37% of Poles and 56% of Belarusians);
- Appearance (21% of Poles and 40% of Belarusians);
- Handwriting (5% of Poles and 12% of Belarusians);
- Innovational culture (5% of Poles and 24% of Belarusians).

**THUS**, we can make a conclusion that graduates of both countries make great account for image of inner, professional characteristics: professional competence, personal culture, foreign language skills and verbal skills. But when we speak about so called outer part, Belarusian students of the last year attach more importance than their Polish colleagues to skill of labor organization, communicative skill, people's appearance. Innovational culture was not taken into account. It can be explained by the lack of knowledge about this phenomenon among university students.

**IT** is generally known that in modern world knowledge become out of date very quickly. According to different sources total update of information takes place every 3-5 years. It means that even after the graduation one should "learn" again. It is pleasant that the overwhelming majority of students of the last year understand the necessity to learn lifelong in order to achieve success (89% of Poles and 85% of Belarusians).

**THE** second question was connected with the features which students have managed to develop in course of their studies in the university. The results are given in the table 2.

**Table 2.** Answers to the question "What character traits have you managed to develop during the period of your study?"

Answer	The number of respondents in Poland (%)	The number of respondents in Belarus (%)
Creativity	63	32
Initiative	21	28
Diligence	47	47
Honesty	26	17
Responsibility	42	64
Sympathy skills	37	43
Labor organization skill	42	62
Decision making skills	37	55
Leadership qualities	0	7,5
Personal culture	26	51
Skills of establishing professional contacts	58	58



Receptivity to innovations	0	25
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*The source: own research*

**THE** answers to these questions characterize the students' desire to become a real professional, their motivation to self-actualization, aspiration to improve the image. Approximately the same percentage of young people from both countries notes that during their studies they managed to develop:

- Hardworking (47% of Poles and 47% of Belarusians);
- Initiative (21% of Poles and 28% of Belarusians);
- Sympathy skill (37% of Poles and 43% of Belarusians);
- Skills of establishing professional contacts (58% of Poles and 58% of Belarusians).

**MORE** creative as a result of their university studies became polish students (63% in comparison with 32% of Belarusians), more responsible – Belarusian respondents (64% in comparison with 42% students from Poland). Some results also vary (percentagewise):

- Honesty (26% of Poles and 17% of Belarusians),
- Labor organization skill (42% of Poles and 62% of Belarusians),
- Decision making skill (37% of Poles and 55% of Belarusians),
- Personal culture (26% of Poles and 7,5% of Belarusians),
- Leadership qualities (0% of Poles and 25% of Belarusians),
- Receptivity to innovations (0% of Poles and 25% of Belarusians).

**IT** should be noticed that polish student don't notice the development of their leadership qualities and innovational culture. But the ability to perceive everything new and progressive which comprises innovational culture is indispensable condition and obligatory characteristic of graduate as a personality.

**CERTAIN** questionnaire result also needs attention. It is connected with foreign language skills. This aspect seems to be extremely important and urgent in modern world.

**A** foreign language skill is obligatory characteristic of graduates in the West. It makes the graduate's integration in international educational community, allows to get and apply the latest information more quickly. Here is the general picture among the students: one foreign language can speak 63% of Poles and 83% of Belarusians, more than one – 37% and 11% respectively, less than one – 0% of Poles and 6% of Belarusians. Thus, polish students have better situation in this aspect. But speaking about the quality of the foreign language skills mark "3" and less gave themselves 95% of Poles and 43% of Belarusians.

**OF** course these results cannot be considered absolutely correct, because of: at-first, the respondents' number restriction and the absence of definite evaluation criteria, at-second, the society develops very quickly and the questionnaire results can become out of date even in several months. But there are certain general characteristics and tendencies to be said about.

## CONCLUSIONS

- 1) Given in this article theoretical basis of young graduate's image creation can be applied for image model construction as a set of interrelated components – inner, outer and procedural. Inner component consists of knowledge, skills, abilities, values, self-esteem, self-concept. Outer component include parts mentioned above: external, kinetic,

environmental, material. Procedural component is the style of contact realization in the society.

2) Both polish and belarusian students of the last year understand that the notion of image is complicated and has certain structure. Young Poles and Belarusians have the same ideas concerning image parts.

3) The graduates from both countries aware of great importance of inner, professional personal qualities for professional image development: professional competence, individual culture, foreign language skills and verbal skills.

4) The overwhelming majority of students are sure that to achieve success one must study during all the life.

5) Innovational culture is obligatory condition for competitive specialist's ability. There are some differences in evaluation of the innovational culture importance among the respondents from the two countries.

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