

## PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN THE FORMATION OF PROFESSIONALISM OF PRINCIPALS OF GENERAL SECONDARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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**Abstract.** *The article deals with the structure of professionalism of principals of general secondary education institutions, which contains the cognitive component of professionalism of management activity (system of knowledge about the essence, structure of management activity of the principal); motivational and value component (principal's motivation to professional activity, positive attitude and desire to develop their professionalism in management, high level of readiness for management, interest in it, professional values, vocation to management activity,); operational and technological component (a set of skills, abilities, methods of action, techniques, technologies to ensure the development of professionalism). The psychological factors of formation of professionalism of principals of general secondary education institutions are described. The dependence of the formation of professionalism of principals on their gender, age and work experience is revealed. Male principals pay more attention to non-standard ways of solving problems, are guided in decision-making by logic rather than feelings, prefer intrinsic motivation, acutely experience periods of meaningless existence. Women principals use their intuition more often than men, they are more communicative, have deeper emotional experiences, more often smooth out conflict situations, prefer external motivation. With aging, the importance of such values as the social authority and recognition, the possibility of self-development, self-improvement, the creative nature of management increases. The instrumental value of executive discipline, responsibility, intransigence to one's own shortcomings and the shortcomings of subordinates also increases, the values of self-control and the availability of free time decrease. Principals with 11 to 15 years of experience have the greatest hope for success, and those with more than 21 years of experience have the least hope. Limitations of principals of different genders, ages and length of service in management positions, which hinder the development of their professionalism, are also described.*

**Key words:** professionalism, structure of professionalism, factors of professionalism development, general secondary education institutions, limitations in development of professionalism.

**JEL Classification:** I23, J20, J44

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**Introduction.** The issues of the structure of professionalism and the influence of various factors on its development are the least covered in domestic scientific research.

New requirements for the professionalism of principals of general secondary education institutions, contradictions that complicate their implementation, indicate the need to substantiate the scientific and psychological foundations of the professionalism of principals, developing its structure.

The importance of studying professionalism is that society needs principals with a high level of professionalism, but at the same time not always take into account all the factors that affect this development. The psychological factors of achieving a high level of professional development include: 1) objective factors – psychological requirements for the profession, the external environment, the state of education in the country, region etc.; 2) subjective factors – the ability of the principal as a prerequisite for professional activity; 3) objective and subjective factors – temporary ones, which determine the unevenness of professional development depending on age, gender, length of service, professional situation.

**Literature review.** In recent decades, the problem of professionalism became the subject of detailed consideration of psychological science (O. Bondarchuk, A. Derkach, H. Yelnykova, L. Karamushka, A. Markova, I. Synhaivska, A. V. Shuldyk etc.). According to A. Markova, an independent direction was formed – the psychology of professionalism, which “reveals the conditions and patterns of human promotion to professionalism in its work, changes in human psyche in the process of ascension to professionalism” [1, p.118]. Psychology of professionalism in such an understanding describes the criteria and levels of professionalism.

Study of genesis of the concept of “professionalism” in domestic and foreign research allowed to state that it characterizes a high level of professional activity. According to the most general definition given in the interpretation dictionary of the Ukrainian language, professionalism is mastering the basics and depths of any profession [2, p. 62]. According to A. Derkach, the process of implementing acmeological reserves is carried out as personal and professional development, and its result is the achievement of professionalism [3]. O. Bondarchuk studies the peculiarities of personal development of principals of general secondary education institutions and their professional competence [4, 5]. L. Karamushka explores the psychological features of educational management in detail [6]. The research of I. Synhaivska is about the professional success of teachers – high school teachers, about personal qualities of a teacher as a prerequisite for professional success and professionalism, about the ratio of concepts and phenomena of professionalism and professional success [7, 8]. A. Shuldyk studies the effectiveness of management activities of the principals of general secondary education institutions as an important component of their professionalism. In his papers, the structure and factors of development of professionalism of principals [9, 10] are highlighted. The works of H.V. Yelnykova and others are about modeling the professional competence of principals of educational institutions [11].

During the in-depth analysis of scientific research on the problem of professionalism formation and in accordance with the Order of the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine on approval of the professional standard “Principal (Director) of the general secondary education” [12], the difference in understanding this concept, as well as the lack of a holistic understanding of its structure were determined. The influence of such factors as age, gender, and work experience in the development of professionalism is not studied in detail; there are no limitations on the development of professionalism and ways to overcome them.

**Aim.** The aim of article is to study the influence of various factors on the formation of professionalism of principals of general secondary education institutions and discover limitations that slow down its formation.

**Methods.** Based on the analysis of psychological literature, we consider it expedient to distinguish three structural and functional components in the structure of professionalism and fill them with the relevant content.

*The cognitive component of the professionalism of management activity* is a system of professional competencies that the principal should have (statutory and regulatory competence; competence of strategic management of educational institution and personnel; quality of educational activity competence, principalship competence; emotional and ethical competence; health protection competence; inclusive competence; project competence, innovative competence; ability to learn through life; information and digital competence etc.).

*The motivational and value component of the professionalism of management activity* is to induce a principal to professional activity, a positive attitude and desire to develop their professionalism in management activities. This is a high level of readiness of the principal to management activities, interest in it. This is a professional position, goals, professional-value orientations, vocation to management activity, public activity, social optimism etc.

*Operational and technological component of the professionalism of management activity* of the principal is a collection of abilities, skills, methods, techniques, technologies to ensure the development of professionalism. These are management skills to analyze, plan, predict, and monitor the activities of an educational institution.

The factors belonging to the micro level (gender, age, experience of management activity) and influencing the formation of the above structural components of professionalism of principals are investigated. The sampling of respondents amounted to 88 principals of institutions of general secondary education of Uman district.

Influence of the *gender* of principals on their professionalism.

According to a comparative analysis of two groups of principals (male principals and women principals), there are statistically significant differences between them ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) in accordance with certain indices of professionalism. According to some indices, a group of men is in advance of a group of women, according to the others – lags behind. Such indices were one third of all established indices. Thus, analyzing the level of knowledge about the cognitive component of professionalism of principals and its components, it was found that the following knowledge of men predominate: about professional competence – by 1.6%, about the efficiency of management activity – by 13%, about the quality of management activity – by 1.8%, about a professional career – by 17.1%, about professional abilities – by 2.2%. However, women predominate with knowledge of professionalism by 0.4%, about professional maturity – by 3.2%, about professional self-consciousness – by 2.3%.

According to TAT test, the female principals have the so-called “pure hope” for success (the difference between hope for success and avoiding fear of failure) – 42.9% than the male principals – 25%.

We used the Woodcock Fransis Toolkit “By yourself”, “Others”, “Work”. Except principals themselves, their deputies, teachers and heads of education department also took part in these tests. Having matched the results of three tests, we have discovered the limitations of principals of different gender, which are distinguished by the frequency of their manifestation. Among the female principals (63.6%), such limitations were identified: *blurred personal values, inability to manage themselves, inability to teach, low ability to form a team, insufficiency of a creative approach, insufficiency of skills to solve problems*. Among the male principals (36.4%): *inability to teach, inability to manage themselves, blurred personal values, insufficient understanding of their own management activities, lack of skills to solve problems*.

As we see, the principals of different gender are inherent in almost identical limitations, but they manifest themselves with a different frequency.

Also, for a female sample, a higher level of brightness of manifestation of self-acceptance, contact, depth of experiences, empathy and egocentricity is typical. In a male sample there was a more acute experience of insecurity existence, a larger significance of the internal motive and the motive for assessing its potential.

**Results.** Comparative analysis of the results showed the need for optimal balance of required number of male principals and female principals in the general secondary education institutions. If the principal is a man, his deputy should be a woman and vice versa. The male principals pay more attention to unconventional ways of solving problems, guided decision-making logic more than emotions, give preference to internal motivation and feel the periods of useless existence deeply. Women in management tend to use their intuition more, they are more sociable, have deeper emotional experiences, smooth conflicts more often and prefer external motivation. Our study proved the research of L.M. Karamushka that men are more able to creatively work, but they need to pay more attention to the development of control functions, the ability to educate teaching staff, and to control themselves. Women are more prone to standardized, reproductive activity, according to given instructions, can patiently perform monotonous routine work, they are also subject to careful monitoring the activities of subordinates. Female principals should pay more attention to overcome such limitations as blurred personal values, inability to control them, an inability to teach, low ability to form a team.

Thus, the results of studies indicate that gender of a principal affects the formation of his/her professionalism. The results of the research should be taken into account in the control process of general secondary education institutions.

*Influence of age of principals of general secondary education institutions on the formation of their professionalism.*

During the study of the influence of age on the formation of professionalism of principals, we distinguished three age groups: 1) from 30 to 40 years old; from 41 to 50 years old; from 51 to 60 years old. With the help of three tests by Woodcock

Fransis Toolkit, the limitations of the principals of all ages are revealed. We found that the following limitations are the most common:

*30 to 40 years old (22 principals – 25%) – the lack of creative approach, blurred personal values, inability to control themselves, lack of understanding of their own management activities, lack of skills to solve problems;*

*41 to 50 years old (42 principals – 47.7%) – inability to teach, blurred personal values, low ability to form a team, inability to control themselves, lack of skills to solve problems, inability to influence people, lack of creative approach etc.*

*51 to 60 years old (24 principals – 27.3%) – inability to manage themselves, blurred personal values, insufficient understanding of their own management activities, slowed self-development, low ability to form a team, inability to teach.*

Among three age categories of principals there are the following limitations: *blurred personal values, inability to control themselves.*

Comparison of value-based orientations of principals aged 30 to 40 years (work experience up to 5 years) and principals aged 41 to 50 years old (work experience from 6 to 10 years) indicates that with the acquisition of social experience and practical skills grows the meaning of such values as the *social authority and recognition* (39.5% of the investigated principals under the age of 40 favored the named value against 61.4% - aged 41 to 50 years), *the possibility of self-development, self-improvement* (54.8% and 73.2% respectively), *the creative nature of management activity* (37.4% and 52.7%). Also increases the instrumental value of performing discipline, responsibility, irreconcilability to their own shortcomings and disadvantages of subordinates, decreases the values of self-control and free time.

We have established that with an increase in the age of the principal of general secondary education institutions *decreases* his/her *hope for success*. According to the age category, pure hope for success have 45.5% of the respondents aged from 30 to 40 years old, 47.6% of the principals of 41 to 50 years. The principals aged of 51 to 60 years have significantly decreased the hope for success – only 16.7%.

A comparative analysis showed that the principals of general secondary education institutions aged from 41 to 50 years get ahead of the principals of other age groups on a significant number of indices of professionalism. In particular, in comparison with the other age groups of principals, they have higher managerial competence and high positive effectiveness in managerial activity, high level of professional and personal maturity. They show a creative approach to solving managerial problems, understand their values and goals and are able to make successful decisions, able to moderate to risk, rapt in their management activities. The principals of this age think systematically, seek to cover all aspects of the problem and all factors that affect it, combine the benefits of accumulated experience with the original, innovative methods of principalship and respond quickly to changes of the educational institution management. They have great opportunities for self-development and self-improvement. They associate professionalism with skills, effectiveness, personnel development, creativity and innovation. It should be taken into account that principals up to *40 years old* also have signs of successful management activities. They have positive attitude to the development of their

professionalism, are sure of their success, inclined to take risk, show responsibility. *After 50 years old* principals do not require public authority and recognition. They think more stereotypically, their desire to achieve success decreases, the level of risk decreases during decision-making. They associate professionalism with skill and freedom.

However, regardless of age, all principals should pay attention to overcoming such limitations as blurred personal values and inability to control themselves. In general, the results of research indicate that the age of principals affects the formation of the main component of professionalism. The most productive for the development of professionalism for the principal is the age of 40 to 55 years.

*Influence of the work experience of management activity of principals on the formation of their professionalism.*

With the help of Woodcock Fransis Toolkit, we have identified the limitations of the principals of the general secondary education institutions with a different experience of managerial activity.

**Table 1. The frequency of manifestation of principals' limitations**

№	Principals' limitations	Frequency of manifestations of limitations (122 manifestations total).
1	Inability to control oneself	18 (14,7% )
2	Blurred personal values	18 (14,7 %)
3	Unclear personal goals	4 (3,3%)
4	Slowed self-development	6 (4,9%)
5	Lack of problem-solving skills	15 (12,3 %)
6	Lack of creativity	14 (11,5%)
7	Inability to influence others	8 (6,6%)
8	Insufficient understanding of management	13 (10,7%)
9	Inability to teach	10 (8,2%)
10	Weak principalship skills	4 (3,3 %)
11	Low ability to form a team	12 (9,8%)

*Source: developed by the author*

Principals having from 1 to 5 years of experience (32 principals – 36.4%) have the following limitations: *low ability to form a team, inability to teach, weak principalship skills, blurred personal values, lack of problem-solving skills, inability to control themselves, lack of creative approach.*

Principals having from 6 to 10 years of experience (26 principals – 29.5%): *inability to teach, low ability to form a team, lack of creativity, lack of understanding of their own management activities, inability to control themselves.*

Principals having from 11 to 15 years of experience (10 principals – 11.4%): *inability to control themselves, blurred personal values, lack of skills to solve problems.*

Principals having from 16 to 20 years of experience (12 principals – 13.6%): *inability to teach, inability to control themselves, low ability to form a team, blurred personal values.*

Principals having from 21 to 25 years of experience (8 principals – 9.1%): *blurred personal values, slowed self-development, lack of creativity.*

As it can be seen, the number of limitations on the way to the formation of professionalism decreases with the acquisition of experience. However, principals, regardless of their experience in management, should pay attention to overcoming such limitations as inability to control themselves and blurred personal values, the frequency of which is the highest.

Using the TAT methodology, we found that the so-called “pure hope” for success have only 25% of principals with the work experience up to 5 years, 53.8% of principals with experience from 6 to 10 years, 60% of principals with experience from 11 up to 15 years, 20% of principals with experience from 16 to 20 years. 50% of principals with the work experience from 21 to 25 years have no hope of success. As we see, with the increase of work experience, the hope for success decreases.

**Discussion.** Using the tests on the standardized methodology of Ye. Z. Zharikov the following features of thinking of the principals of general secondary education institutions with different length of service were revealed:

- Principals having up to 5 years of experience show low response, antinomy, efficiency and ability to set tasks for subordinates. But they show little method, do not always distinguish opinion from facts, do not see difficulties in solving problems;

- Principals having from 6 to 10 years of experience think problematically, cover the subject of study from all sides, taking into account all the factors that affect it. They predict the consequences of decisions, are inertialess, operational;

- Principals having from 11 to 25 years of experience apply knowledge in accordance with the business needs, regardless of the presence or absence of tasks. They show lack of initiative, inertia of thinking. They are also characterized by stereotypical thinking, i.e. cognition, perception and evaluation of the subordinate is based on the personal experience. This allows them to reduce the time to clarify and respond to management situations, but the conclusions made in such circumstances can be erroneous, incomplete, subjective, which will lead to inappropriate actions. Extremely dangerous outdated stereotypes of thinking block the perception of new ideas.

Some principals have difficulties in making effective decisions and solving problems effectively:

- principals having up to 5 years of experience – do not involve the team to prepare important decisions, do not always take responsibility for making important decisions, make decisions that are not always useful for the team, make decisions quickly, often without considering them;

- principals having from 6 to 15 years of experience involve the team to prepare important decisions, do not always take the responsibility for decision-making, decisions are made quickly and boldly, use modern technology;

- principals having from 16 to 25 years of experience involve the team to prepare important decisions, take responsibility for making important decisions, make decisions that are not always useful for the team, make decisions thoughtfully, slowly, there is a tendency to stereotypes.

A comparative analysis of principals with different management experience showed that there are statistically significant differences between them ( $p < 0.01$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) under certain components of professionalism. According to the results of the study for all principals in our sample, regardless of experience in management, there are the following limitations: *blurred personal values, low ability to form a team, inability to teach. The lack of creativity was shown by principals having up to 5 years of experience and after 21 years of experience.* Principals having from 11 to 15 years of experience have the greatest hope for success, and principals with more than 21 years of experience have the least hope.

The most optimal features of thinking are shown by the principals having from 6 to 15 years of experience. They think problematically, cover the subject of study in all matters, taking into account all the factors that affect it, predict the consequences of their decisions. They are inertial and operational.

After 21 years of experience, inertia and stereotypes are manifested in thinking.

**Conclusions.** According to the results of the study it is advisable to draw the following conclusions:

1. It is established that for the development of the components of professionalism of principals, their *age* should be taken into account. The most productive for the development of professionalism was the age of principals from 41 to 50 years.

2. *Gender differences* in management should be taken into account as the effectiveness of these activities depends on them. The development of professionalism of female principals is positively influenced by their qualities such as sociability, depth of experience, propensity for consistent control, diligence in performing tasks, including reproductive ones. And for the development of professionalism of male principals we should take into account their non-standard thinking, creative approach to decision-making and problem solving and their logic.

3. *Experience* of management activity from 6 to 15 years most effectively affects the development of professionalism. After 20 years of experience, the manifestation of the main components of principals' professionalism decreases.

**Author contributions.** The authors contributed equally.

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