

ПСИХОЛОГІЯ ОСОБИСТОСТІ

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O. HULIAIEVA (Olena Huliaieva)
 Candidate of Psychological Sciences (PhD in Psychology),
 Associate Professor of Department of Applied Psychology,
 V.N. Karaz'in Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv, Ukraine
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6134-3726>
 e-mail: evgulyaeva@karaz.in.ua

K. POLTAVSKA (Kateryna Poltavska)
 master of Psychology,
 V. N. Karaz'in Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv, Ukraine
 e-mail: kateryna.poltavska@student.karaz.in.ua

SOCIAL MATURITY AS A FACTOR IN THE PROFESSIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION OF AN ADOLESCENT PERSON

The article presents the results of an empirical study focused on the relationship between social maturity and professional self-determination in early adolescents. Theoretical criteria of social maturity—reflection, autonomy, and environmental management—are discussed as crucial aspects of personal development. The activity of a mature personality manifests in active creativity through processes of cognition, activity, and communication. Personal reflection involves self-awareness, self-discovery abilities, and self-directedness in interpersonal relations. Autonomy refers to the capability to resist majority opinions and to make conscious and independent decisions. The total sample of respondents aged 17-18 years was divided into two groups. The first group consisted of 32 graduates of the 11th grade; the second group consisted of 30 first-year university students. The results of the empirical study showed that graduates of the 11th grade who are in a crisis of professional development tend to rely on the opinion of society and build their lives according to the accepted standards. Those who have determined their professional direction demonstrate interest to self-knowledge but are characterised by passive social behaviour. First-year students, facing a crisis of choice, try to maintain their autonomy and uniqueness. Students with an established professional position try to be useful to society while remaining true to their values. A statistically significant difference was found in the level of development of reflexivity in adolescents. It was found that students are characterised by a higher level of self-acceptance, a higher level of self-esteem, etc. It has been established that reflexivity is an important quality that influences successful professional self-determination.

Keywords: *social maturity; reflection; professional self-determination; professional identity; adolescence.*

Problem definition. Competition in the Ukrainian labour market, which has increased significantly during the period of full-scale war, requires young people to make a well-founded, responsible choice of profession and educational institution that can ensure a high level of competitiveness of future professionals. Timely and appropriate professional self-determination of Ukrainian schoolchildren will contribute not only to the restoration of the country's economic well-being, but also to the realisation of young people's potential, professional self-fulfilment and improvement of their material status, among other benefits. Haphazard career choices can lead to disappointment, reluctance to study, and the pursuit of a second or third higher education. As a result, the country may end up with either low-level professionals or specialists who enter the profession rather late.

It is the adolescent age that involves the formation of a personality aimed at understanding their needs and interests for further career choices. Young people are challenged to be flexible, to rethink their values in the light of what is happening in the country, and to build a career that matches their skills and aspirations. An important factor in choosing a future career at a young age is the level of maturity of the individual.

Analysis of the latest research and publications. The current stage of development of the concept of social maturity is marked by a number of achievements of Ukrainian psychology. The psychological analysis and clarification of this construct is carried out both in terms of the nature of this phenomenon (Г. Komar), criteria and levels (Zh. Kysliuk, 2022), and in terms of the attributes of social maturity (Zh. Virna, O. Ivanashko, 2021).

An analysis of current theoretical concepts and empirical studies shows that social maturity is understood as a process of development and realisation of personal potential, which is manifested in self-determination, social responsibility and social activity (Radul, 2017; Omelchuk, 2022; Kysliuk, 2022); a set of personal qualities that characterise a person as able to interact with others to achieve common goals (Koptieva, 2016); awareness of himself as a subject of own life, able to solve daily tasks independently and effectively (Pizyk, 2014).

Among researchers, there is no consensus on the structure of the phenomenon of social maturity. The model of structural components of social maturity (Komar, 2018) consists of three main components – cognitive-emotional, reflective, and operational-technological. The cognitive-emotional component reflects the established system of a person's value

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orientations, social intelligence, unconventional thinking, planning of life paths, and choice of professional activities. The reflective component is manifested in independence, awareness of the full range of social roles, psychological literacy, self-regulation, and responsible behavior. The operational-technological component represents the existing life experience of interaction with society and skills of effective communication with others. Similar criteria of social maturity have been proposed by other researchers. Criteria are understood as sufficient and necessary conditions for studying a specific psychological phenomenon. In particular, such criteria (Virna, Ivanashko, 2021) include activity, reflection, responsible behavior, independence (autonomy), and the ability to interact constructively with the environment. The activity of a mature personality is manifested in active life creation through processes of cognition, activity, and communication. Personality reflection involves self-awareness, the ability for self-knowledge, and self-reference in relationships with others. Independence is the ability to resist the opinion of the majority and to implement consciously and independently made decisions. The opposite concept is conformity, characterized by a lack of personal opinion and the inability to resist society pressure. Effective environmental management involves maintaining the boundaries of himself, the ability to establish flexible relationships with external objects, and the ability to organize own daily life in the most successful way to meet his own needs.

Amidst the various interpretations of social maturity, the uniqueness of this phenomenon lies in the self-determination of the individual and the beginning of his or her professional activity. Professional self-determination is the central new formation of the adolescent's personality and represents a dynamic process that does not stop at the stage of choosing a profession, but develops throughout a person's life. This new formation helps to determine professional choice and to build the steps for future professional development.

E. Erikson introduced into psychological science the concept of «identity», which in foreign sources is similar to the term "self-determination". By identity, Erikson meant a person's sense of completeness and integrity of personal structure. A person who successfully overcomes an identity crisis feels consistent regardless of the social role he plays. The uniqueness of identity lies in the fact that a person, while belonging to the world and to others, is aware of his uniqueness and individuality. In the process of seeking self-

determination, an individual defines his values and establishes certain norms necessary for existence in society. It is at this stage that the realisation of self-worth and competence occurs.

The results of an empirical study (Marcia, 2007) indicate the existence of four possible identity statuses in adolescence. The researcher understands identity as an internal structure of habits, beliefs and identifications with others that develops through life decisions and practical situations. The author distinguishes four statuses: 1) achieved (mature) identity – indicates the course of the identity crisis and the transition from self-search to self-actualisation; 2) moratorium – a period of building own identity, characterised by a crisis of choice; 3) withdrawn identity – an attempt to accelerate the process of self-determination without overcoming the crisis; 4) diffuse identity – characterises a person who avoids life choices and independent decisions.

The purpose of the empirical study was to establish the relationship between social maturity and professional self-determination of a person in adolescence.

The research methods included psychodiagnostic techniques: the test-questionnaire by A. G. Gretsov and A. A. Azbel «Study of Professional Identity Statuses» (modified by O.V. Radzimovska), the method of psychodiagnostics of value orientations «Questionnaire of Terminal Values» by I. G. Senin, the questionnaire by A. V. Karpov and V.V. Ponomaryova «Methodology for Diagnosing the Level of Reflexivity Development», and the «Psychological Well-Being Scale» by C. Ryff (adapted by M.M. Lepeshinsky, focusing on the scales «Autonomy» and «Environment management»). The obtained data were processed using mathematical and statistical methods: statistical analysis (Mann-Whitney U test) and Spearman's correlation analysis.

Experimental basis of the study. To conduct the empirical study, 2 groups of respondents were formed. The first group included the 11th grade graduates in the amount of 32 people, and the second group included first-year students of higher education institutions in the amount of 30 people. in the amount of 30 people. The total number of respondents is 62. The age range of the sample is 17-18 years.

Results of the study. According to the obtained data on the determination of professional identity statuses (Fig. 1), half (50%) of secondary school graduates have a «moratorium» status, indicating a crisis of choice.

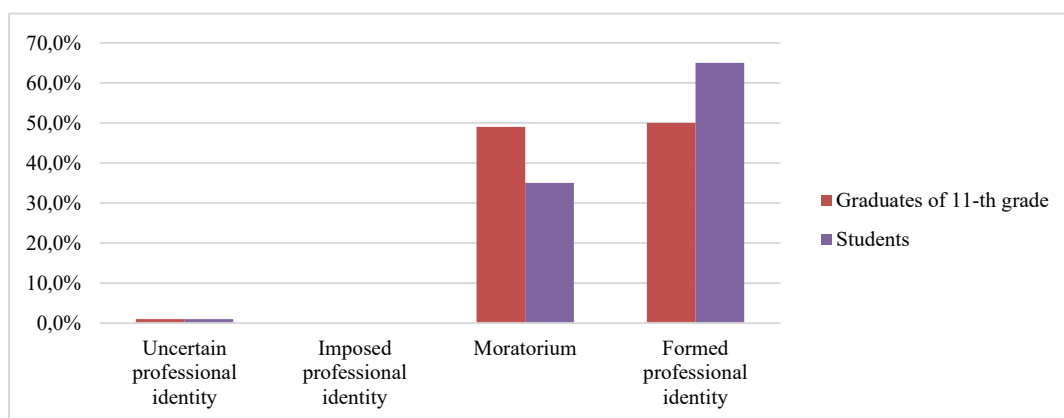


Figure 1. Comparison of respondents' professional identity statuses

At the time of graduation from the high schools, this half of the subjects are still in the process of searching for their professional purpose. The other half of the graduates have been diagnosed with a «formed» professional identity status, which indicates that the subjects already have a clear understanding of their future profession. Their professional choice has been made independently and consciously, taking into account their interests and aspirations. These individuals have chosen a specific specialty, a higher educational institution, and have clear professional goals.

65% of students have made a conscious professional choice, are actively building their future career goals and have the status of a «formed» professional identity. At the same time, 35% of the respondents in this group were diagnosed with the status of «moratorium», which indicates that they have not made a final decision about their chosen profession.

None of the respondents have an «imposed» professional identity, indicating a non-independent approach to choosing a profession and an educational institution.

The diagnostics of the terminal values of high school pupils showed that the dominant terminal values are

«spiritual satisfaction», «preservation of own individuality», and «self-development». For first-year students, the dominant terminal values are «spiritual satisfaction», «preservation of own individuality», and «active social contacts». The diagnostics of the individual value of life spheres showed (Fig. 2) that hobbies are significant for both groups of respondents. However, it should be noted that the sphere of professional life is more important for first-year students than for school graduates.

The diagnostics of the level of reflexivity (Fig. 3) showed that 72% of school graduates and 63% of students have an average level, and 19% of schoolchildren and 17% of freshmen have a low level. The results show that the respondents are aware of their individual characteristics at a superficial, shallow level, and are rather uncritical in their judgements. The subjects are not able to critically evaluate their behaviour and activities and analyse them. The subjects may have difficulty understanding the behaviour, actions, and positions of others, as their understanding is characterised as approximate.

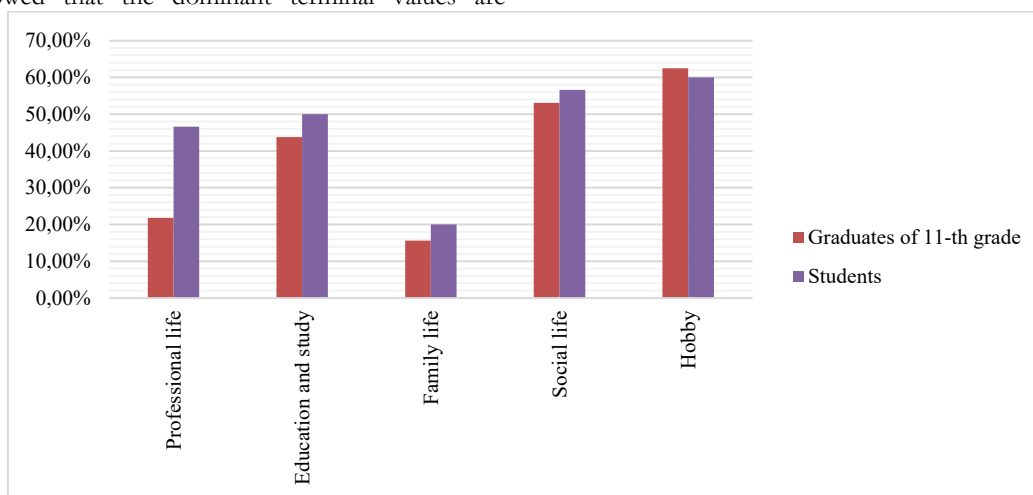


Figure 2. Expression of the significance of life spheres in the respondents

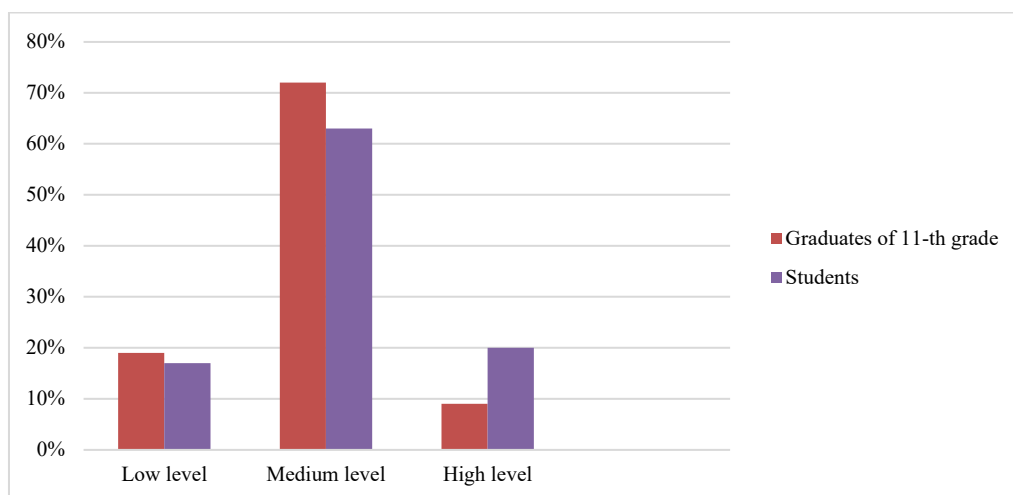


Figure 3. Level of development of the respondent's reflexivity.

The respondents with a high level of reflexivity (9% of school graduates and 20% of students) are capable of productive and deep analysis of their own mind and the mind of other people.

Based on the results of the comparative analysis, statistically significant differences in the level of reflection between the two groups of subjects were established ($p \leq 0.05$). First-year students tend to exhibit better

reflective skills: they have a deeper understanding of the consequences and causes of their actions and behaviors, better analyze their mistakes, predict their future actions, and are more proficient in planning their activities.

The assessment of the development of autonomy and environmental management among the respondents indicates an imbalance between these attributes in both groups. An average level of autonomy (37.5% among the 11th-grade graduates and 43% among first-year students) and a high level of autonomy (53% among school students and 37% among university students) characterize them as independent and self-reliant individuals who are not afraid to oppose their opinions to others, even if supported by a minority. However, an average level of environmental mastery (69% among secondary school graduates and 50% among first-year students) and a low level (28% among school students and 40% among university students) indicate a lack of personal resources necessary for successful and effective engagement in various activities. Consequently, respondents feel fairly confident and competent in managing their daily affairs and possess skills to leverage certain life circumstances to their advantage. Nonetheless, they may experience a certain inability to cope with life challenges that they subjectively feel unable to influence.

The analysis of correlations among the group of the 11th grade graduates experiencing a career choice crisis revealed a statistically significant correlation between the variables of social maturity and terminal personal values. Specifically, a positive correlation was found between «environmental management» and «personal prestige» ($r=0.552$, $p\leq 0.05$). This suggests that students can organise their activities and meet their needs in accordance with societal expectations. According to the results, students can anticipate social pressures that make it seem impossible for them to improve their lives. The respondents experience a crisis of vocational choice, as a key feature of their choice of future occupation is the desire for approval from others. Planning their activities does not provide the predictability or satisfaction that would help them to succeed. In order to feel socially valued and to receive appropriate rewards for their actions, they need to act in ways that are deemed correct and acceptable by their family and acquaintances.

Among pupils with a formed professional identity, statistically significant inverse correlations were found between the variables of social maturity and the variables of terminal values and life domains of the individual: «reflection» and «personal prestige» ($r=-0.641$, $p\leq 0.05$), «reflection» and «active social contacts» ($r=-0.646$, $p\leq 0.01$), «reflection» and «professional life domain» ($r=-0.529$, $p\leq 0.05$), «reflection» and «family life domain» ($r=-0.756$, $p\leq 0.01$), «reflection» and «social life domain» ($r=-0.632$, $p\leq 0.05$). A formed professional identity is characterized by the graduates' focus on themselves and the analysis of their own activities, while they are not concentrated on building connections for maximum engagement in society.

In the group of pupils with a formed professional identity, a statistically significant direct correlation was also found between the variables of social maturity, namely, between autonomy and environmental management ($r=0.616$, $p\leq 0.05$). Autonomy in decision-making, responsibility and independence from the majority opinion have a positive impact not only on the planning of life paths

by graduates of secondary education institutions, but also determine their behaviour in the implementation of professional plans and goals.

In the group of students with the status of professional identity «moratorium», statistically significant direct correlations were found between the variables of social maturity and the variables of terminal values with life spheres. A connection was found between «reflection» and «preservation of individuality» ($r=0.807$, $p\leq 0.01$). The crisis of choice is determined by the first-year students' belief in their own uniqueness and originality, unwillingness to adapt to the framework of society regarding the idea of choosing a profession for life.

Statistically significant strong positive correlations were established between «autonomy» and the following values: «creativity» ($r=0.774$, $p\leq 0.01$), «spiritual satisfaction» ($r=0.939$, $p\leq 0.01$), and «hobbies» ($r=0.660$, $p\leq 0.05$). Students attempting to overcome a professional choice crisis are characterized by independence and a desire to constantly experiment with new behaviors. Such individuals are generally creative. Therefore, the choice crisis may be caused by students' openness to new experiences, which broadens their search for possible professional activities. Autonomous students consider it essential to live life to their own satisfaction, with their main value being to derive pleasure from life. Maximizing their personal benefit from their time may not always align with specific professional activities. For independent students, hobbies are of great importance, and it can be assumed that the predominance of hobbies over professional life leads them to postpone making a final decision regarding their future specialization.

In the group of students with defined professional identity, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between «reflection» and «active social contacts» ($r=0.497$, $p\leq 0.05$). Students with a defined professional status are characterized by a high level of social maturity in terms of self-awareness and understanding of their social environment, as well as well-developed socially coherent behavior, which is expressed in performing socially significant actions, working in teams, and so forth.

In the same group, a statistically significant negative correlation was found between «autonomy» and «personal prestige» ($r=-0.462$, $p\leq 0.05$). This indicates that the higher the level of independence among students with a defined professional identity, the less they rely on social approval of their choices, starting from their family.

Thus, secondary school graduates experiencing a crisis of professional self-determination are characterised as insufficiently socially mature individuals. This level of social maturity is due to insufficient formation of values, low self-awareness, lack of ability to make independent decisions and build a life path, and inability to create conditions to meet their needs.

Graduates who have formed a professional identity are characterised by a focus on their own values, self-acceptance rather than the opinions of others, but at the same time they show passive social behaviour - indifference to professional, family and socio-political life.

The perspective for further research could be an empirical study of gender-specific aspects of professional self-determination in early and late adolescence.

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О.В. ГУЛЯЄВА (Гуляєва Олена Володимирівна)
кандидат психологічних наук, доцент ЗВО,
кафедра прикладної психології,
Харківський національний університет імені В.Н. Каразіна,
майдан Свободи 4, м. Харків, Україна
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6134-3726>
e-mail: evgulyaeva@karazin.ua

К.В. ПОЛТАВСЬКА (Полтавська Катерина Володимирівна)
магістр психології
Харківський національний університет імені В.Н. Каразіна
Майдан Свободи, 4, Харків, Україна.
e-mail: kateryna.poltavska@student.karazin.ua

СОЦІАЛЬНА ЗРІЛІСТЬ ЯК ЧИННИК ПРОФЕСІЙНОГО САМОВИЗНАЧЕННЯ ОСОБИСТОСТІ ЮНАЦЬКОГО ВІКУ

У статті представлені результати емпіричного дослідження, присвяченого взаємозв'язку соціальної зрілості та професійного самовизначення в осіб раннього юнацького віку. Теоретично обґрунтовані критерії соціальної зрілості: рефлексія, автономія, управління середовищем. Активність зрілої особистості проявляється в активній життєтворчості через процеси пізнання, діяльності та комунікації. Рефлексія особистості полягає в усвідомленні себе, здатності до самопізнання, зверненні на себе у відносинах з іншими тощо. Самостійність (автономія) – це вміння протистояти думці більшості, вміти реалізувати свідоме і незалежно прийняте рішення. Загальну вибірку респондентів віком 17-18 років було поділено на дві групи. До першої групи увійшли учні-випускники 11 класу закладів загальної середньої освіти в кількості 32 особи, до другої – студенти першого курсу закладів вищої освіти в кількості 30 осіб. За результатами емпіричного дослідження було встановлено, що випускникам 11 класу, які знаходяться в кризі професійного становлення, властиво спиратися на думку суспільства і будувати своє життя в залежності від прийнятих стандартів. Випускники 11 класу, що визначилися зі своїм професійним спрямуванням, виявляють цікавість до самопізнання, проте характеризуються пасивною соціальною поведінкою. Студенти 1 курсу із кризою вибору прагнуть до збереження автономності та власної унікальності. Студенти зі сформованою професійною позицією намагаються бути корисними для суспільства, залишаючись вірними своїм цінностям. Визначена статистично значуща різниця за рівнем розвитку рефлексивності в осіб юнацького віку. Встановлено, що студенти характеризуються більш високим рівнем самоприйняття, більш високим рівнем самооцінки тощо. Встановлено, що рефлексія є визначною якістю, яка впливає на успішне професійне самовизначення.

Ключові слова: соціальна зрілість, рефлексивність, професійне самовизначення, професійна ідентичність, юнацький вік.

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