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«SOFT SKILLS» У ФОРМУВАННІ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ МАЙБУТНІХ СОЦІАЛЬНИХ ПРАЦІВНИКІВ

Анотація. Статтю присвячено траєкторії розвитку «soft skills» у формуванні професійної компетентності майбутніх соціальних працівників.

На основі аналізу наукової літератури висвітлено сутність концепту «soft skills», під яким ми розуміємо сукупність професійно та соціально значущих навичок, які студенти опановують під час професійно-орієнтованого навчання у ЗВО, що забезпечує їх конкурентоспроможність у майбутній професійній діяльності.

Встановлено, що у тріаді навичок майбутнього соціального працівника: hard skills, soft skills і digital skills – soft skills є підґрунтям для ефективного засвоєння hard skills, а digital skills – спрямовувальним вектором сучасних професійних компетентностей.

Узагальнено найважливіші «soft skills» для формування професійної компетентності у майбутніх соціальних працівників, а саме:

– навички комунікації (публічні виступи, презентація, особистий бренд, самопрезентація, ведення переговорів, управління конфліктами, сторітеллінг, міжособистісне спілкування, ділова етика, професійна етика, міжкультурна компетентність, нетворкінг);

– навички управління (лідерство, командування, мотивація, управління проектами, організація/організованість, ціле покладання, орієнтація на результат, планування, тайм-менеджмент/управління ресурсами, громадська активність, наставництво/ фасилітація, контроль);

– навички особистої ефективності (емоційний інтелект, емпатія, вирішення складних ситуацій, розвиток впродовж життя, стресостійкість, швидке реагування, ефективність в умовах ризику, клієнтоорієнтованість, креативність, рефреймінг, ініціативність, інноваційність);

– навички опрацювання інформації (гнучкість мислення, критичне мислення, пошук/аналіз/синтез даних, медіа грамотність, спостереження, розсудливість, аналітичне мислення, логічність міркувань, моніторинг, тенденції у професійній сфері, опрацювання великого обсягу інформації, встановлення взаємозв'язків);

– стратегічні навички (тактичне мислення, стратегічне мислення, прийняття рішень, винахідливість, імідж, альтернативні варіанти, пріоритет, системне мислення, структурне мислення, науково-дослідне мислення, проблемно-орієнтоване мислення)

Зроблено висновок, що одним з найважливіших аспектів формування професійної компетентності майбутніх соціальних працівників є «soft skills», що дозволяє підготувати їх до роботи в інноваційних умовах жорсткої конкуренції на ринку освітніх послуг.

Ключові слова: «soft skills», «hard skills», соціальний працівник, компетентність, професійна компетентність, ЗВО.



«SOFT SKILLS» IN THE FORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF FUTURE SOCIAL WORKERS

Abstract. The article is devoted to the trajectory of «soft skills» development in the formation of professional competence of future social workers.

Based on the analysis of scientific literature, the essence of the concept of «soft skills» is highlighted, by which we mean a set of professionally and socially important skills that students acquire during vocationally oriented education in higher education institutions, which ensures their competitiveness in future professional activities.

It is established that in the triad of skills of the future social worker: hard skills, soft skills and digital skills - soft skills are the basis for the effective mastery of hard skills, and digital skills are the guiding vector of modern professional competencies.

The most important soft skills for the formation of professional competence in future social workers are summarized, namely:

- communication skills (public speaking, presentation, personal brand, self-presentation, negotiation, conflict management, storytelling, interpersonal communication, business ethics, professional ethics, intercultural competence, networking);

- management skills (leadership, team building, motivation, project management, organization/organization, trustworthiness, result orientation, planning, time management/resource management, civic engagement, mentoring/facilitation, supervision);

- personal effectiveness skills (emotional intelligence, empathy, solving difficult situations, lifelong development, stress resistance, quick response, effectiveness under risk, client focus, creativity, reframing, initiative, innovation);

- information processing skills (flexibility of thinking, critical thinking, data search/analysis/synthesis, media literacy, observation, prudence, analytical thinking, logical reasoning, monitoring, trends in the professional field, processing of large amounts of information, establishing relationships);

- strategic skills (tactical thinking, strategic thinking, decision-making, resourcefulness, image, alternatives, priority, systemic thinking, structural thinking, research thinking, problem-oriented thinking).

It is concluded that one of the most important aspects of the formation of professional competence of future social workers is «soft skills», which allows them to prepare for work in innovative conditions of fierce competition in the market of educational services.

Keywords: «soft skills», «hard skills», social worker, competence, professional competence, higher education institution.

INTRODUCTION

The problem formulation. According to our research activities, until recently, higher education institutions did not pay due attention to the development of soft skills in students. The curricula were overloaded with disciplines that develop students' «hard skills» related to knowledge of special disciplines, practical training, etc. At the same time, according to domestic and foreign social work practice, in the third decade of the 21st century, modern society requires social workers to be able to interact with various groups of clients: children, adolescents, youth, the elderly or people with special needs, deviant or delinquent behavior, substance abuse, victims of violence, war, natural disasters, prisoners, etc. For this purpose, a social worker must have the skills of effective communication, conflict-free communication, self-control, empathy, listening, persuasion and decision-making, critical thinking, complex problem solving, etc., i.e., soft skills that, complementing hard skills, ensure high quality and efficiency of work.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The review of scientific and methodological literature has shown that at the present stage the problem of soft skills development is poorly understood. This issue has mainly been intensified in the context of training IT specialists (A. Vlasjuk, N. Dlugunovych, L. Ivanova, K. Koval, O. Skorniakova, etc.); communicative training (learning a foreign language) (I. Zaitseva, N. Hrebynyk, A. Karapetyan, etc.), professional training of future social workers (L. Mandro, H. Mykhailyshyn, V. Stynska, etc.) Thus, the problem of the role of «soft skills» in the formation of professional competence of future social workers has not been addressed by researchers, which determines the relevance of the topic of the scientific publication.

THE AIM AND RESEARCH TASKS – to analyze the importance of «soft skills» in the process of forming the professional competence of future social workers.

RESEARCH METHODS: systematic analysis, scientific-pedagogical and special literature synthesis and generalization.

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

At the present stage, quality education is considered as one of the indicators of high quality of life, a tool for social and cultural harmony, economic growth and is declared at both international and domestic levels.

Today, an important area of improving the quality of education is the competency-based approach, which means a reorientation from the process to the result of education in the activity dimension. The term «competency-based approach» refers to the focus of the educational process on the formation and development of key (basic) competencies of the future specialist's personality. Thus, the competence approach allows to shift the emphasis from the knowledge-oriented component to the acquisition of holistic experience in solving educational problems, performing key functions and social roles (Stynska V., Competence Approach, 2021, p. 140).

The concept of «professional competence» is currently at the epicenter of global thought, as it opens up qualitatively new perspectives. Professional competence is based on the idea of educating a competent person and employee who possesses not only the necessary knowledge and high moral qualities, but also knows how to act appropriately in appropriate situations and apply this knowledge.



Professional competence has an active nature of generalized skills combined with subject skills and knowledge in specific areas; it is manifested in the ability of a person to make choices based on an adequate assessment of oneself in a particular situation. A professionally competent specialist is focused on the future, anticipating changes, and is oriented towards self-education. An important feature of professional competence is that it is realized in the present, but is oriented towards the future.

The beginning of the 90s of the twentieth century, according to E. Sadovska, was marked by the emergence of a number of definitions of the essence of the category «professional competence», namely:

- a criterion of the quality of training of graduates of higher education institutions (D. Chernilevsky);
- constant updating of knowledge, mastering new information for the successful solution of professional tasks at the present time and in the given conditions (O. Kozyrina);
- a specific ability necessary for the effective use of specific activities in a particular subject area, which contains highly specialized knowledge, specific subject skills, thinking skills, as well as an understanding of responsibility for one's actions (J. Raven) (Sadovska E., 2018, p. 7–8).

To summarize, professional competence is a set of different types of competencies that are designed to ensure the ability of a university teacher to solve tasks in the professional field (Stynska V., Competence-based approach, 2021, p. 141).

Our scientific research has shown that today a social worker requires special training, because his or her activities are primarily aimed at social protection of the individual as the highest value, at maintaining and strengthening his or her moral, mental and physical health, and at all-round development. The immediate practical tasks of working in the social sphere are to improve the social well-being of a person, improve their living conditions, and ensure a decent, comfortable existence. Therefore, in view of the above, it is advisable to note that the formation of professional competence of social workers has a certain specificity. In particular, soft skills play an important role in the process of professional competence development.

According to T. Kochubey, the concept of «soft skills» is a collective term that takes into account many behaviors that help people in their professional activities, including teamwork, and contribute to successful socialization. It covers a number of universal or non-cognitive competencies. In particular, some researchers (Rana, K.) emphasize the ability of a future specialist to interact interpersonally, as well as the personal characteristics of an individual. Others (Paajanen, G.) define «soft skills» as character traits that improve a person's ability to successfully interact with others, their ability to work and contribute to the professional career of a specialist (Kochubey T., 2021).

Summarizing various approaches, the concept of «soft skills» is understood as a set of professionally and socially important skills that students acquire during vocationally oriented education in higher education institutions, which ensures their competitiveness in future professional activities (Stynska V., «Soft skills», 2021, p. 102).

In the triad of skills of a future social worker: hard skills, soft skills, and digital skills – soft skills are the basis for the effective mastery of hard skills, and digital skills are the guiding vector of modern professional competencies (Kochubey T., 2021).

The analysis of the source base showed that «soft» skills are associated with the «hard» skills. However, studies conducted at the Harvard and Stanford universities revealed that only 15% of success is provided by the level of professional skills, while the other 85% depend on the «soft skills» (What is Soft Skills?, 2017). Unlike «hard» skills, which can be acquired and developed later, «soft» skills are difficult to learn from books or simply by performing your functional duties. N. Borysenko states that these skills are not associated with particular profession, specialty or occupation, but are important for the sense of quality of life, personal and professional success, development and implementation of career strategy (Borysenko N., 2020, p. 61).

Let us consider the specifics of social soft skills. Since different types of professional activities require different groups of skills, there is no classification of soft skills and no single, consistent list of soft skills for future professionals.

As mentioned above, the group of soft skills for future specialists includes individual, communication and social skills. In particular, the list of soft skills includes such skills as: the ability to effectively implement interpersonal communications, work effectively in a team, think critically, objectively assess situations and make optimal decisions, and solve extraordinary problems.

According to Y. Drozdova and O. Dubinina, a generalized list of soft skills for future social workers to master should include communication skills; teamwork skills; time management

(time management skills); flexibility; adaptability and ability to change; leadership qualities; personal qualities (skills related to interpersonal relationships - the ability to plan and manage one's career, creative and critical thinking, emotional intelligence, ethics, honesty, patience, perseverance, self-confidence, respect for others, stress resistance) (Drozdova Y., 2020, p. 33).

In addition to social and personal «soft skills,» V. Stynska noted that L. Hrebynnyk attaches great importance to mental (creativity in solving problems, multidisciplinary thinking) and organizational (self-discipline, teamwork, presentation skills) skills (Stynska V., «Soft skills,» 2021, p. 102).

The need for future social workers to have such «soft skills» as: the ability of future social workers to quickly and effectively organize and implement relationships (both business and personal) with different people; focus on expanding the scope of interaction; desire to participate directly in collective activities; ability to positively influence people; desire to implement their own initiative, etc. is proved (Zaika V., 2021, p. 150).

The summarizing study is the work of L. Mandro, who systematized the most important «soft skills» for the formation of professional competence in future social workers, namely:



- communication skills (public speaking, presentation, personal brand, self-presentation, negotiation, conflict management, storytelling, interpersonal communication, business ethics, professional ethics, intercultural competence, networking);
- management skills (leadership, team building, motivation, project management, organization/organization, goal setting, result orientation, planning, time management/resource management, social engagement, mentoring/facilitation, supervision);
- personal effectiveness skills (emotional intelligence, empathy, handling difficult situations, lifelong learning, stress resistance, quick response, risk performance, customer focus, creativity, reframing, initiative, innovation);
- information processing skills (flexibility of thinking, critical thinking, data search/analysis/synthesis, media literacy, observation, prudence, analytical thinking, logical reasoning, monitoring, trends in the professional field, processing large amounts of information, establishing relationships);
- strategic skills (tactical thinking, strategic thinking, decision-making, ingenuity, image, alternatives, priority, systemic thinking, structural thinking, research thinking, problem-oriented thinking) (Mandro L., 2022, p. 150).

According to the researcher L. Mandro, the mechanism of forming «soft skills» of future social workers in the conditions of professional training should be aimed at developing all components of «soft skills» («Orientation to changes in the field of social work», «Operating knowledge and resources of social work», «Ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of professional activity», «Application of communication tools in the performance of professional duties», «Management for the effectiveness of social work», «Comprehensive solution of problem situations and determining the perspective», «Impartial processing of information»), and their improvement provides the necessary professional qualities, the embodiment of abilities, the realization of values in social work (Mandro L., 2023, p. 80). Therefore, we consider the formation of professional competencies in future social workers as a specially organized process of quality training of future social workers, based on constructive social change as a value of social work, the desire for effective partnership and teamwork, opportunities to expand social work, knowledge and resource management and ensures the development of a system of soft professionally important skills of students.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Thus, one of the most important aspects of the formation of professional competence of social workers is «soft skills», which allows to prepare them to work in innovative conditions of fierce competition in the market of educational services. Prospects for further research are to study the system of training future social workers.

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