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## **STUDENT YOUTH OF UKRAINE: THE VALUE ORIENTATIONS IN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL FIELDS**

The article describes the social features of modern students and analyzes the main trends in the establishment of value orientations of students in the educational and professional sphere in recent years. The main trends are identified in youth employment and set of students motivation in the education and employment spheres. The article also defines new professional strategies that will assist the youth with higher education not only to adapt to the situation on the labor market, but also to achieve career goals despite the current unfavorable conditions.

**Key words:** sociology of youth, students, values related to education and employment.

**Problem definition.** In the modern conditions of implementation of market relations, the current socio-cultural and economic changes require from population and youth among them new educational and professional skills standards. The need for higher education become more relevant as getting an education in Ukraine as well as among many other countries is a measure of respective level of social status in society. A youth employment is one of the major problems of the modern labor market. The social and economic transformations taking place in Ukraine reflect primarily at young Ukrainian generation. A difference between higher education standards and requirements and the labor market offers caused a loss of value of students diplomas of many specialties in the labor market and increased an unemployment among graduates. The growth of number of graduates and lack of employment opportunities result the imbalance in the employment sector.

**Review of research and publications.** The problems of students have been actively studied and viewed from different sides in domestic social science. The problems of higher education institutes, students and personality formation are explored in researches of Ukrainian sociologists among which are V.Astakhova, Y.Holovakha, A.Ruchka, O.Iakuba.

The modern educational motivation and professional ambitions of students are described in studies of Y.Pachkovskiy, A.Iakovenko, O.Butylina. The value orientations of students are analyzed in researches of L.Sokurianskyi, O.Pimenova, O.Holikov, T.Pylaiev, Y.Farin, M.Iakovenko among others have explored issues related to modern lifestyles and analysis of various aspects of behavior and innovative activity of students.

The youth labor market situation and analysis of the conditions and opportunities of its development are considered by E.Libanova, O.Abashyna, N.Skrypnyk, A.Maikovska. An employment problems and behavior features of young people in the new social and economic environment, particularly at the time of getting the education are actively explored by D.Dmytruk, O.Balakirieva, O.Iaremenko, S.Oksamytna, O.Vynohradov, L. Malysh.

Despite considerable theoretical and methodological foundation, the need for continuous analysis among available researches regarding value orientations of modern students becomes essential in the current environment conditions of significant transformation processes taking place in Ukraine.

**The purpose of this article** is to explore the main trends in value orientations of students in the educational and professional sphere in recent years and to set the different professional strategies that will enable young people with the higher education quickly adjust to the difficult situation on the labor market.

**The main part.** Mainly, the privileged position of youth in the labor market is determined by educational level. The majority of young people realize that getting an appropriate education is necessary if they expect to be engaged into in financial or commercial activities. A problem of interaction between education and youth employment shall be clarified in two main questions: first, what positions of labor market could be applied for young people depending on their getting of education or not, and, secondly, what are the trends the youth is focused on in education and, indirectly, in employment. The modern system of education has changed and became more self-sufficient. The researchers of Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine state that the educational institutions are guided rather by effective demand than the needs of the labor market.

Mainly, a youth focuses on the professions which in their opinion will quickly provide a material well-being. Therefore, the number of higher education institutions offering knowledge and skills being requested by youth is growing. Such specialties as economist, accountant officer, manager, lawyer remain popular. Meanwhile the market is congested by such specialists. The number of graduates of law institutes has increased in 14.5 times in 2010 compared to the nineties and in five times for graduates of economic, accounting and commercial institutes according to the research data shown by Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. At that time the number of specialists of technical disciplines who are expected to implement new technologies, economy innovation shown has growth only for 15%<sup>1</sup>.

The same trends remain unchanged in 2016 year. A social status and occupational prestige constitute a main impact on the occupational choice. The "Economics and Entrepreneurship", "Law", "Humanities" remain the most requested specialties during occupational choice according to the results of social research "Social and economic students profile" in 2016. Although it should be noted that the ratio of students who choose "Informatics and Computer Hardware" is increasing over the last years comparing to "Economics and Entrepreneurship" specialty<sup>2</sup>.

The most popular professions for youth were Programmer/IT Specialist (62%), entrepreneur/businessman (29%), manager (28%), lawyer/prosecutor (27%) according to data of Research Centre of the International Recruitment portal held in 2015. The respondents identify drivers/taxi drivers, nonprofessional occupations (plumber, lathe operator, fitter), service occupations (cook, hairdresser, waiter) among unpopular professions. The majority of vacancies are offered in such specialties as trade, information technology, marketing and advertising and administrative staff.

Today the occupational choice is mainly affected by students own preferences. Therefore, most students (50%) have chosen the specialty because they are interested in it, and almost a third part of respondents (29%) as a result of its popularity, employment opportunities and acceptable salary. At the same time, 16% of respondents have chosen the profession as they follow parents or friends advice, taking into consideration the cost of attendance and opportunities for state-subsidized education<sup>3</sup>. At that time the results of survey "The higher Education in Ukraine: public opinion of students" conducted in 2015 have shown that 46% of students are assured that they will work within their specialty in the future, while 34% of students expect to be employed in respective sphere only in case of acceptable salary<sup>4</sup>.

Accordingly, young people continue to look for professions that are the most popular from their point of view, but not those that are requested by employers. As the result, the number of graduates increases, but a disbalance between supply and demand in the labor market becomes more significant.

However, the system of vocational-oriented education has been seriously changed either quantitative or qualitative over the last years. Since 2010 year the number of Vocational Educational Institution decreased up to 798 in 2015 comparing with 940 institutions in 2010 (15%) and the number of students have reduces by one third (27%). These changes are results of reorganization of Vocational Educational Institution to the institutions of the first and second accreditation level and loss of interest from the side of the youth to vocational-oriented education. Despite the need of labor market in skilled employees, during 2014/2015 academic year only 8 out of 10 graduates (79.1%) of Vocational Educational Institution were employed within their specialty<sup>5</sup>. Students are a special category within the youth. It is the most uniform group in relation to age and social specifics, the basic activity of which is active learning and future career education. In Ukraine the number of students is about 2.39 million or 5.2% from the total population.

<sup>1</sup> Лібанова, Е.М. (2010). *Молодь та молодіжна політика в Україні: соціально-демографічні аспекти*. Київ: Інститут демографії та соціальних досліджень ім. М. В. Птухи НАН України, 154.

<sup>2</sup> Жерьобкіна, Т., Куделя, М., Самохін, І., Стадний, Є., Когут, І. (2016). Соціально-економічний портрет студентів: результати опитування. *CEDOS\_ Аналітичний центр*. <<https://www.cedos.org.ua/uk/osvita/sotsialno-ekonomichnyi-portret-studentiv-rezultaty-opytuvannia>> (2017, March, 05).

<sup>3</sup> Ціннісні орієнтації сучасної української молоді. Щорічна доповідь Президенту України, Верховній Раді України про становище молоді в Україні (за підсумками 2015 року). *Держ. ін-т сімейної та молодіжної політики*. <[http://dsmsu.gov.ua/media/2016/11/03/22/Shorichna\\_dopovid.pdf](http://dsmsu.gov.ua/media/2016/11/03/22/Shorichna_dopovid.pdf)> (2017, March, 05).

<sup>4</sup> Вища освіта в Україні: громадська думка студентів. *Фонд «Демократичні ініціативи» ім. Ілька Кучеріва, фірма «Юкрейніансоціолоджі сервіс»*. <<http://dif.org.ua/article/vishcha-osvita-v-ukraini-gromadska-dumka-studentiv>> (2017, March, 03).

<sup>5</sup> Ціннісні орієнтації сучасної української молоді. Щорічна доповідь Президенту України, Верховній Раді України про становище молоді в Україні (за підсумками 2015 року). *Держ. ін-т сімейної та молодіжної політики*. <[http://dsmsu.gov.ua/media/2016/11/03/22/Shorichna\\_dopovid.pdf](http://dsmsu.gov.ua/media/2016/11/03/22/Shorichna_dopovid.pdf)> (2017, March, 05).

During 2012-2013 years about 520,7 thousand students graduated from higher education institutions of the third and fourth accreditation level and 92,2 thousand students graduated from higher education institutions of the first and second accreditation level. Nowadays in Ukraine the majority of students is presented by those who are studying at higher education institutions of the third and fourth accreditation. The minor decrease of this number was noted only during the beginning of nineties, thereafter only a high growth was noticed during each year.

After such notable increase, especially in a number of students of higher education institutions of the third and fourth accreditation during the latter half of nineties and at the beginning of current decade, the number of students of higher education institutions began to decrease in our country over the last years. Consequently, such reduction at higher education institutions of the first and second accreditation began in 2004 year and during 2000-2009 years the number of students has become a third less (while the reduction of institutions amount was by 23%). The reduction among the number of students at higher education institutions of the third and fourth accreditation began in 2008 year. At the beginning of 2009/2010 academic year 2245.2 thousand of students were studying at 350 higher education institutions of the third and fourth accreditation in Ukraine. This figure is less for 127.3 thousand comparing with data in 2007/2008 academic year. This trend has continued. At the beginning of 2012/2013 academic year 2129,8 thousand of students were studying at 334 higher education institutions of the third and fourth accreditation in Ukraine. This figure is up to 115.4 thousand less than in 2009/2010 years<sup>1</sup>.

In 2015 the trend of recent years regarding decrease in the amount of higher education institutions and the number of students has kept. In 2015 year the number of young people who entered the higher education institutions of the third and fourth accreditation was 259,904 persons and this figure was less for 11% than respective data in 2014 year (291 647 persons). Among 659 higher education institutions that continue to operate in 2015 year, 19 were displaced from the temporarily occupied territories of Donbass and Crimea.

Kyiv is what is called 'the capital' of higher education in Ukraine. The young people who arrive to Kyiv to get a higher education generally don't return to their hometowns and villages. On the one hand, higher education should be available to talented young people, regardless the place they were born and are living today. On the other side, the need for highly-qualified personnel exists not only in the capital and regions where institutes are located.

In 2014 and 2015 years the ratio of employment among young people as well as among the total labor population reached its lowest level in a decade. This decrease in the level of employment could be explained by difficult economic and political situation in the country: an armed conflict in the eastern region of Ukraine, which leads to the decrease in production level of the region; deterioration of conditions for attraction of additional financing to areas which are under the control of Ukraine in Donetsk and Luhansk regions; problems arising on the labor market throughout the country. Also the main impact on the labor market in the country is made by the huge number of internally displaced persons from the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk regions and Crimea (as of August 1, 2016 it was registered over 1.7 million of unwilling migration persons or 1.4 million families from Donbass and Crimea)<sup>2</sup>.

The different experts are actively studying issues related to the value of professional occupation and socio-professional plan of youth. The values relating to education and employment occupy a high position in the hierarchy of life priorities Ukrainian youth during the last decade. These results are confirmed by the various studies in recent years.

V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University regularly explores the issues related to the students' values. The university experts conducted a research "The value of professional occupation and socio-professional plan of modern students" during 2000-2002 years. This research has shown the high level of students' interest related to professional activity as a means of achievement of material wealth and opportunity to develop their abilities<sup>3</sup>. During 2003-2004 years experts of V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University also studied the "The formation of the elite among the students". The results illustrated that

<sup>1</sup> Державна служба статистики України. <<http://ukrstat.gov.ua>> (2017, March, 05).

<sup>2</sup> Ціннісні орієнтації сучасної української молоді. Щорічна доповідь Президенту України, Верховній Раді України про становище молоді в Україні (за підсумками 2015 року). *Держ. ін-т сімейної та молодіжної політики*. <[http://dsmsu.gov.ua/media/2016/11/03/22/Shorichna\\_dopovid.pdf](http://dsmsu.gov.ua/media/2016/11/03/22/Shorichna_dopovid.pdf)> (2017, March, 05).

<sup>3</sup> Орлова, О. (2002). Цінності професії та соціально-професійні плани сучасного студентства. *Методологія, теорія та практика соціологічного аналізу сучасного суспільства*: збірник наукових праць. Харків: ВЦ ХНУ ім. В. Н. Каразіна, 567.

the salary holds the first position among students rating, the career is on the second position, and then by a significant margin follow the opportunity to be self-supporting, self-development opportunity and the possibility to work within speciality<sup>1</sup>. In 2004 year scientists of National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" conduct a research "The valuable measurement of spiritual culture of students of technical universities in transformational society". The study has shown that by the students of National Technical University of Ukraine "Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" the importance of getting the higher education was estimated on one level with the importance of getting the popular profession (96%). In addition, these figures have a high level of correlation between them. This means that students realize the influence of good education on rewarding career<sup>2</sup>.

In 2007 year experts of Zaporizhzhya National University conducted a study "The dynamics of value orientations of students of pedagogical university". According to the received results, it was defined that that material wealth is for students a ground for their own self-attitude. These students also have current needs in achievements and commitment to personal growth. A large part of students has a need to save their own personality that signifies their desire of self-sufficiency and desire to save the originality of own opinions and beliefs<sup>3</sup>.

The research "Life strategy of NAU students" of National Aviation University in 2008-2009 years demonstrated that in the hierarchy of life priorities of students the desire to have a career is on the first place (24%) and desire to get a good education and professional occupation on the fourth. And among the evaluation criteria of the work – the first position takes high wages<sup>4</sup>.

According to the survey results conducted by Ptoukha Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in 2010 year, 70% of respondents indicated that "very important" for them is professional occupation and availability of good employment. Many of respondents admitted among "very important" category such closely related to economic activity and employment values as economic independence ("very important" for 63%) and material well-being (77%). The ratio of students who marked among the "very important" values education and knowledge was 53%<sup>5</sup>.

The same trends have kept in 2015 year. According to the results of sociological research "The higher education in Ukraine: public opinion of students", among students prevails the view that after graduating of university in order to become employed they need to receive a good education, high level of knowledge (45%) and do not rely on social contacts (36%)<sup>6</sup>.

Also as per results of a special survey "The youth of Ukraine-2015" conducted by Gfk Ukraine for Ministry of Youth and Sport of Ukraine and with the financial support of UN in Ukraine within the hierarchy of values and priorities of young people aged 14-19 years, including that a significant ratio was represented by students, the top of three most important values included "self-education" (43%), "employment as avocation" (43%), "earning enough money" (25%). Also according to the above research results, 49% of respondents among Ukrainian youth have got higher education (higher education institutions of the third and fourth accreditation level) and 53% of respondents would like to have a higher level of educational attainment. Among the main reasons for this are an opportunity to get a better job – 53%, personal need to improve the level of education – 53% and the possibility to increase the income – 50%<sup>7</sup>.

Today the interest of young people to higher education is primarily due to the possibility of better employment. For the majority of respondents consider that the most important in future employment is

<sup>1</sup> Лисиця, Н. Скориніна, О., Кислова, О. (2005). Формування еліти в середовищі студентської молоді. *Український соціум*, 2-3 (7-8), 63.

<sup>2</sup> Мельниченко, А., Пиголенко, І. (2005). Ціннісні виміри духовної культури студентів технічного ВНЗ у трансформаційному суспільстві. *Український соціум*, 1 (6), 35.

<sup>3</sup> Іванова, Л., Овсяннікова, В. (2007). Динаміка ціннісних орієнтацій студентів педагогічного вузу. *Практична психологія та соціальна робота*, 4, 18.

<sup>4</sup> Прокопчук, І. (2009). Життєві стратегії студентів НАУ: кризь призму соціології. *Журнал Верховної Ради України «Віче»*, 19, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Лібанова, Е.М. (2010). *Молодь та молодіжна політика в Україні: соціально-демографічні аспекти*. Київ: Інститут демографії та соціальних досліджень ім. М. В. Птухи НАН України, 144.

<sup>6</sup> Вища освіта в Україні: громадська думка студентів. Фонд «Демократичні ініціативи» ім. Ілька Кучеріва, фірма «Юкрейніансоціолоджі сервіс». <<http://dif.org.ua/article/vishcha-osvita-v-ukraini-gromadska-dumka-studentiv>> (2017, March, 03).

<sup>7</sup> Волосевич, І., Герасимчук, С., Костюченко, Т. (2015). *Молодь України-2015*. Київ: ООН в Україні. *Держ. ін-т сімейної та молодіжної політики*. <[http://dmsu.gov.ua/media/2015/12/09/5/Molod\\_Ukraine\\_block.pdf](http://dmsu.gov.ua/media/2015/12/09/5/Molod_Ukraine_block.pdf)> (2017, March, 03).

the level of salary (84% of employed respondents), only 35% of respondents mentioned the interest to work and 24% – the possibility of achievements. Trying to reach the high level of salary the majority of students is studying abroad. In 2013/2014 academic year 46'591 persons were studying abroad, among them 14'951 persons in Poland (Ukrainian students ratio is about 42% among the number of all foreign students studying in Poland). A significant part of Ukrainians studied in Germany (9'212 persons), Canada (2'053 persons), Czech Republic (2'019 persons). Social surveys have shown that desire of main part of students to study abroad is growing from year to year (69% in 2015 year, 55% in 2011 year). The main difficulties for studying abroad are lack of funds, this was mentioned by 71% of students in 2015 year (in 2011 year this ratio was 52%) and insufficient knowledge of foreign languages – 37.5% of students (in 2011 year this ratio was 34%).

According to the results of online research of British Council conducted in 2014 year, 12% of young people have planned to study abroad and 44% of respondents have mentioned an interest in this. The most part of the young people about 44% have planned to get further higher education abroad, 34% – the main education. A desire to learn English (50% of respondents), a desire to get qualitatively higher education (47% of respondents), a desire to be employed abroad (44% of respondents) or a desire to find better job offer in Ukraine (39%) prevailed among interests of studying abroad<sup>1</sup>. This data represents that young people who are interested in getting main and further education abroad, also realize the necessity to improve their professional skills and get new knowledge.

**Conclusions.** Summing up the reviewing of different sociological studies in recent years relative the analysis of value orientations of students regarding their future professional occupation it was noted that the main socio-cultural orientation of modern youth is a focus on getting of high-quality and prestigious education as a means of further success, a factor of competitiveness in the system of market relations, career development, welfare, social status and occupational prestige.

The value of professional employment is also one of the main priorities in the life of modern Ukrainian students. The results of social interviews demonstrated the economic interests of youth in labor relations as well as in career development. The main characteristics of acceptable employment for youth work are its high level of salary, their interest to work, the opportunity of career achievements and acceptable work schedule.

However, today the lack of demand in the biggest regional labor markets among most part of professions that are got by a students, low salary and lack of career development quickly lead to the situation that many graduates are employed in other the fields than their specialties and requalification is mostly the only way to get a job.

The existence of such problems requires from graduates to look for other employment opportunities, propose and implement new professional strategies that will assist them not only to adapt to the situation on the labor market, but also become helpful during achievement of career goals despite the current conditions and even overcoming them. A certain steps and opportunities for this have been identified. Today young person with several diplomas of higher education is not guaranteed a successful employment, but on the domestic or international labor market such specialist will be more valued. Moreover searching for new career perspectives even out the current position should be relevant for those who look for more opportunities.

Today employers have a clear understanding of the skills and abilities that are important in order to succeed in their organizations and look for them among young professionals. Notwithstanding the dynamics of the labor market the main selection criteria's for employers remain unchanged. The modern students choose a strategy of combination of studying and employment in the specialty trying to get necessary professional skills and quickly adapt to the current labor market. This strategy enables to get professional experience and the ability to simultaneously form the base of professional knowledge and basic soft skills that are required by today's labor market.

At the same time another trend regarding correspondence of education specialty and current position occurs. The person with the economic education should not apply for the dozens of different positions from accountant officer to marketing specialist. Difficult and unfavorable conditions of the Ukrainian labor market only forced such trends. Yesterday's graduates, especially those who got wide specialization profile (for example manager), not always are aware of where their knowledge might be used and to what job

<sup>1</sup> Ціннісні орієнтації сучасної української молоді. Щорічна доповідь Президенту України, Верховній Раді України про становище молоді в Україні (за підсумками 2015 року). *Держ. ін-т сімейної та молодіжної політики*. <[http://dsmsu.gov.ua/media/2016/11/03/22/Shorichna\\_dopovid.pdf](http://dsmsu.gov.ua/media/2016/11/03/22/Shorichna_dopovid.pdf)> (2017, March, 05).

vacancies should they apply for. Not many graduates agree on temporary or low skilled jobs, most would like to become top managers or skilled specialist in large companies in the short-term outlook. The employers facing with slight knowledge of the candidates require a respective professional education. So having a good knowledge together with respective professional is the best case.

A significant number of Ukrainian students choose a strategy to study abroad aiming to obtain professional qualification, fair wages and extensive employment opportunities. The article describes the various studies regarding this issue. Some students try to reconcile studying at domestic universities and abroad in order to have not just two degrees, but also more opportunities for future employment. This professional strategy shows not only the active position of today's youth, but also confirms that young people who want to develop, get basic and additional higher education abroad, realize the need for ongoing professional advancement and getting of new knowledge. In foreign countries these need are satisfied by extensive system of lifelong education.

Today's students requires not only professional teaching from lecturers of higher educational institutes that could help to establish future professionals the necessary professional skills and abilities, but also the support for state which should create acceptable conditions for more quickly adaptation of young people with higher education to the new conditions of the modern labor market.

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