

# PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS AND RESOURCES OF THE FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS: THE COGNITIVE ASPECT

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim.** The article represents the results of research into the success of the students who are preparing themselves for teaching activity in the nearest future while obtaining their professional education. The aim of this research is to examine the notion of professional success, with the focus on the cognitive component of this process through the prism of purpose in life.

**Methods.** In accordance with a developed theoretical model of the professional success achieved by a person, empirical research was carried out on a sample of the future primary school teachers with the focus on the cognitive component. To realise the purpose and objectives of the paper, a set of tests (the Test of the Life-Sense Orientations; the Purpose-in-Life Test (PIL); and a questionnaire of early childhood decisions, etc. were used as diagnostic tools to find out the correlation between components of professional success. Statistical correlation was analysed with the use of Pearson's correlation coefficient.

**Results.** The results of the correlation analysis between the indicators of personal readiness for change and the scenarios show a reversed two-way correlation between the indicators of the Confidence scale and the attributes "Don't be, don't be alive", "Don't be yourself", "Be excellent"; between the metrics of the "Passion" scale and the "Don't grow up", "Don't be yourself".

**Conclusion.** It was found that meaningful orientations of the future primary school teachers and scenario settings like "Do Not Get Close, Don't Love, Don't Feel, Be Perfect, Try, function as psychological barriers to achieving professional success.

**Keywords:** psychological barriers, professional success, psychological resources, cognitive aspect, future primary school teachers

## INTRODUCTION

Ukraine is currently undergoing educational reforms, and its adaptation to the change is accompanied by professional transformations which come with the loss of psychological resources. This apparently lessens the chances for achieving professional success. In the context of the implementation of the tasks of the New Ukrainian School, this problem is particularly acute for the educational professionals, such as primary school teachers as they deal with the sensitive category of primary school students who can easily be affected by their actions, values and believes. According to Yuliia Ilyina, the chances of gaining professional success depend on the cognitive component, as it is a constituent part of success in life and is accompanied by a sense of growth and development, belief in oneself and one's capabilities (Ilyina, 2009). Larysa Pasechnikova expanded this view, defining the cognitive component along with the motivational, reflexive, and activity ones as those forming orientation (attitude) to success in life. She sees a cognitive component in the idea of oneself (Pasechnikova, 2009). Natalia Tatenko's view of this component differs, as he adds a wider sense to the notion, calling it the idea of one's life (Tatenko, 2007), which is surrounded with the lives of others, and comes with person's perception. After all, all cognitive processes generate meaning (Ivashchenko, 2006).

The sense and meaningfulness of life are often seen as the central resource of adaptation and psychological security, which according to Oleksii Bodalev, is one of the important criteria for achieving the acme (top) (Bodalev, 2004). Olena Shtepa's view of it is a little wider. The author gives it the definition of a mechanism of a personality resource (Shtepa, 2019) that contributes to the creation of the new goals, and therefore the formation of a positive psychological attitude to professional success. Success comes with one's capability to apply clear direction to real (existing as opposed to desired) opportunities, not from fortuitous events that makes success look like a sporadic accidental incident (Cleveland, 2002). In turn, rational settings perform the functions of psychological immunity (Pasichnyk et al., 2017), forming a sense of readiness for the perception of the future and, as a result, creating the high fulfilment of a person, while the irrational ones perform the functions of psychological barriers. However, it seems the way personality traits contribute to success in terms of objective reality is not completely understood (Farkas, 2003). The notion "psychological barriers" are understood by psychologists as scenario settings or attitudes that are formed in children under the influence of parental prohibitions and drivers and under certain conditions can be destructive for self-realisation (Handzilevska, 2018).

Purpose helps to make decisions and formulate life goals (McKnight & Kashdan, 2009). According to Patrick McKnight and Todd Kashdan, the purpose in life plays the list of roles: it stimulates behavioural consistency, invigorates psychological flexibility, generates target motivated behaviours, encourages personal resources allocation, and foments advanced cognitive processing (McKnight & Kashdan, 2009). Clear purpose comes with intentions, engagement, and pro-social reasoning, which stimulates personal accomplishments in pro-social domain which is 'interpersonal intelligence' (Moran, 2009). The person with a clear purpose in life can beware of their personal goals and the impacts of their decision on others, which appears to be essential for the primary school teachers in particular.

Arguably, scenario attitudes are likely to block the professional success of primary and secondary school teachers. In accordance with the professional standard of the elementary school teacher of the secondary education, which was published in Nakaz Ministerstva sotsialnoi polityky Ukrainy, such job functions as "reflection and professional self-development" are carried out with the help of several competencies, among which is the teacher's ability to use / popularise innovations in pedagogical science and practice" (Law about the ratification of the professional standard "Teacher of the primary forms of the secondary school #1143, 2018). The level of innovative readiness outlines the measure of individual activity in achieving success, predicts behavioural strategies, and expresses the person's attitude to themselves and others as professionals in their field. Therefore, this competence can be considered a leading cognitive indicator of primary school teacher resources in achieving professional success. In view of the

foregoing assumptions, the study of cognitive attitudes in the context of psychological resources and barriers becomes relevant for future primary school teachers at the time of reform.

## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The aim of the paper is to identify the psychological barriers and resources for achieving professional success among future primary school teachers with the regard to their cognitive sphere. Consequentially, the objective of this paper is to study the peculiarities of life-orientations of future primary school teachers as the main mechanism and indicator of their ability to achieve professional success. It appears interesting to study empirically the personal readiness for change and psychological position of future primary-school teachers in the context of resource potential for professional and students' success. A special focal point of this paper is the scenario as a psychological barrier in the ability to gain success.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The nature of the scientific interest, as well as the purpose and objectives of the paper, made it logical to use various diagnostic tools. To determine the degree of satisfaction with the level of self-fulfilment, control of life, the source of its meaning (an indicator of professional success of teachers) the Test of the Life-Sense Orientations (Leontiev, 2000) adapted version of the Purpose-in-Life Test (PIL) by James Crumbaugh and Leonard Maholik (Leontiev, 2000) were used. The test is a set of 20 scales, each of which is a statement that has two endings; these are two opposite endings with seven alternative gradations between them. The participants choose the most suitable ending that comes with a certain number to be marked. All the numbers in all 20 scales are ultimately added and are transformed into standardised meanings (percentiles). For the study of the scenario attitudes of students (psychological barriers to professional success), a questionnaire of early childhood decisions by S. Maksimova was applied. The latter, which is a modified version of Vadym Petrovsky's methodology "Children's Thoughts" (Maksimova, 2006) (adapted in Ukrainian by (Handzilevska & Nikitchuk, 2018), demonstrates scenario prohibitions and prescriptions. In this adapted version there is a set of 19 scales, 13 of which are prohibitions (they contain the message with "Don't"). With the aim to assess the components of readiness for change of teachers and students (key professional competence), the questionnaire "Personal readiness for change", developed by Ashley Rolnik et al. in the adaptation of Nataliia Bazhanova and Halyna Bardier (Bazhanova, 2005) was found resultative. The mentioned questioner allows to assess the following components of readiness for change: passion, ingenuity, optimism, courage, adaptability, confidence,

tolerance for ambiguity. Jane Powell's method "The completeness of life" (Powell, 1993), representing a set of basic ideas about self, life, and significant others in the world around a person (psychological position), was chosen as an indicator of the cognitive component of orientation toward the professional success of primary school teachers. The results of a correlation analysis were performed via Pearson's correlation coefficient indication.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

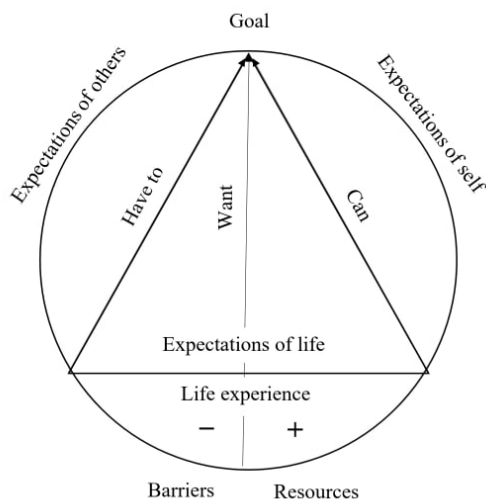
The paper was written as an illustration to the model of professional success achievement, the elements of which are described below. Usually, the scientific literature addresses success as the achievement of a certain expected result, which is significant for a person or makes sense to them. In connection with this central component and mechanism of the model of professional success achievement, the authors distinguish the individual's attitude for success, which makes sense to them and is equivalent to "I want". Focusing on the acmeological model of implementation of life scenarios of Ukrainian migrants through the prism of adaptation to change that was developed in our previous research (H. Handzilevska, 2018), the model of professional success achievement was developed. It presents the following: in order to achieve the goal (aim), the attitude/desire "I want" constructs professional success into a pyramidal structure, where the cognitive space represents the potential resources of life experiences and the barriers that need correction. The measure of activity is limited by the self-esteem of professional competences ("I can"), expectations of others ("have to") and the idea of one's own life and attitude towards it, oneself and others (psychological position). Cognitive space is understood as a sphere of human cognitive activity, the basic unit of which is the cognitive structure that accumulates the results of cognitive processes. It is the structure of knowledge representation (Lozova, 2013).

An empirical study was conducted in accordance with the theoretical model. The empirical sample included 50 students who at the moment when the study was conducted in 2020 were in preparation to become primary school teachers in Volyn region (44 women and 6 men); the average age of the respondents is 19.82 years. The scores in Life-Sense Orientations Test are low, middle and high which ranges from 20 for low to 140 for high with higher scores indicating a greater sense of purpose. According to the results of the Test of Life-Sense.

The inverse correlation between the indicators of the sense of life reference points and the future primary school teachers with their scenario settings are demonstrated in the table (Table 1).

**Figure 1**

*Theoretical model of professional success achievement of a person through the cognitive prism*



Source. Own research.

**Table 1**

*Correlation between Meaningful Life Indicators and Students' Scenario Choices*

The Test the Sense-of-Life Orientation		Don't approach, Don't love	Don't feel	Be perfect	Try hard!
Subscale 2 (Process)	Pearson correlation (2-tiled)	-,284* ,045	-,284* ,045	-,230 ,108	-,002 ,990
Subscale 3 (Result)	Pearson correlation (2-tiled)	-,405** ,004	-,164 ,255	-,304* ,032	-,054 ,707
Subscale 4 (Locus control I)	Pearson correlation (2-tiled)	-,194 ,178	-,283* ,047	-,118 ,414	-,316* ,026
Subscale (Locus Control Life)	Pearson correlation (2-tiled)	-,179 ,215	-,327* ,020	-,087 ,546	,036 ,804
Overall rate of SL	Pearson correlation (2-tiled)	-,309* ,029	-,276 ,053	-,147 ,309	-,010 ,943

Source. Own research.

The results allow the authors to identify the following commands "Do not get close, do not love", "Do not feel", "Be perfect", "Try hard!" as psychological barriers to the professional success of the students who are going to become future primary school teachers. A direct correlation between the indicators of completeness of life of students, in particular the scale "What life" and the general index of meaningful life guidelines (, 362 \*\*,  $p = ,010$ ), in particular between the indicators of the scale "What life" and the scale "Process" life or interest and emotional richness of life, "that is, whether the experienced process of life perceived as interesting, emotionally intense, and full of meaning (, 410 \*\*,  $p = ,003$ ); between the indicators of the What Life Scale and the score of the Scale of Life or Satisfaction with Self-Realization, which demonstrates an assessment of the passed life segment, a sense of how productive and meaningful it was (, 365 \*\*,  $p = ,009$ ), an indicator of the Locus Control I, high level of which demonstrates the idea of oneself as a strong person with sufficient freedom of choice to construct their life in accordance with their goals and understanding of meaning (, 304 \*,  $p = ,032$ ). At the same time, an inverse correlation between the completeness of students and the scenario prohibitions (settings) was found. The results in Table 2 show the inverse correlation between the completeness indicators of the "What I Am" scale with the scripts "Do not get close, do not like," between the indicators "Other" and "Don't be healthy," "What life" and "Don't be meaningful," "Don't be, don't live," "Don't get close, don't love".

**Table 2**

*Correlation between Life Fulfilment and scenario choices of students*

		I	Others	Life
<b>Scenario Choices</b>				
Don't exist, don't live	Pearson correlation (2-tiled)	-,118 ,415	-,205 ,153	-,332* ,018
Don't get cloze, don't love	Pearson correlation (2-tiled))	-,312* ,027	-,176 ,222	-,487** ,000
Don't be healthy	Pearson correlation (2-tiled)	,035 ,809	-,285* ,045	-,052 ,718
Don't be important	Pearson correlation (2-tiled)	-,041 ,778	-,172 ,232	-,303* ,032

Note. \*.Correlation on the rate 0.05 (2-tailed), \*\*. Correlation on the rate 0.01 (2-tailed).

There is a direct correlation between the overall index of sense-of-life orientations and the indicator of personal readiness for changes in the scale "Tolerance", and indicators of the scale "Process of life or interest and emotional situation of life" and the indicator of personal readiness for changes in the scale "Tolerance" (, 293\*,  $p = ,039$ ; 425\*\*,  $p = ,002$ ). In addition, a direct correlation was found between personal preparedness for changes in students, the Passion and Confidence scales and the Scale score and "What



I am" of the Life Fulfilment (respectively ,547\*\*,  $p = ,000$  and ,283\*,  $p = ,047$ ), which testifies to the importance of developing the self-esteem of students for their innovative readiness.

In the context of this study, our previous scientific work results appear interconnected. We have found that the scenarios also determine the ability of modern and early reform teachers to use / disseminate innovation in pedagogical science and practice (Handzilevska et al., 2020). At the empirical level, a correlation between the indicator of the scale of personal readiness for change ("Optimism") and the prohibition "Do not create" was revealed. Accordingly, the need to develop personal readiness to change elementary school teachers is identified. It has been shown that scenario settings lead to personal readiness for change in students (Handzilevska et. al., 2019).

Thus, the results of the correlation analysis between the indicators of personal readiness for change and the scenarios made using the Pearson correlation coefficient show a reversed two-way correlation between the indicators of the Confidence scale and the attributes "Don't be, don't be alive," "Don't be yourself," "Be excellent"; between the metrics of the "Passion" scale and the "Don't grow up," "Don't be yourself"; Indicators of the Adaptability Scale and "Do Not Do," "Don't Be Healthy," Try Indicators of the Inventiveness and "Do Not Be" scale; Indicators of the Boldness scale and "Try!" indicators of the Tolerance Scale and the "Try It" Prescription. Moreover, a direct correlation between the indicators of the scale of "Confidence" and the prescription "Try" was revealed, which indicates the resource potential of this prescription for one of the components of the phenomenon under study.

In terms of reaching success in life, studies suggesting the options that influence one's job performance (Barrick et al., 2001) and quality of life (Kern & Friedman, 2011; Roberts et al., 2005) are quite numerous. However, special attention needs to be focused on the early childhood or the memories that form adolescence. The role of children's experience, in particular the interaction of the child with the parents, is characterised in the writings of Jeffrey Young (Young et al., 2003), according to which maladaptive (dysfunctional) schemes are a consequence of unmet children's needs, and certain traumatic experiences that are attached to scripting behaviour. It is worth mentioning the works of Uliana Humeniuk (Humeniuk, 2011), who managed to reveal empirically the connection between irrational beliefs considered by the scientist in the context of the motive of avoidance, with meaning-making processes. Dmytrii Uznadze explores scenario settings in the context of psychological barriers as self-defence, unconsciousness, which compensates for the potential of personality activity and expresses the absence of positive reactions or negative attitudes (setting to "old") (Uznadze, 1981). These and other studies point to the importance of screenwriting adjustments and optimisation of personal readiness for change, meaningful life orientations, positive attitude



towards oneself, other teachers and students in achieving professional success.

The analysis of the received results makes it possible to notice low level of the "Goal in Life" scale, indicating that there are psychological barriers to professional success. The inverse correlation between the indicators of meaningful orientations of the students and their scenario settings, revealed the psychological barriers to professional success, in particular, such as "Don't be successful," "Don't be healthy," "Don't be yourself," "Don't be mean," "Don't think" (for elementary school teachers) and "Don't get close, don't love," "Don't feel," "Be perfect," "Try" (for students). In addition, the assumption that innovative readiness activates the professional success of students is confirmed empirically. This hypothesis is confirmed by the correlation between the overall index of future life and the scale of "Tolerance" of personal readiness for change and indicators of the scales "Process of life or interest and emotional saturation of life" of SL and personality.

## CONCLUSIONS

Indicators of the cognitive component of career orientation in of the group of respondents found a positive trend. They were explored as a potential group in achieving professional success as primary school teachers. Thus, a direct correlation between the indicators of personal readiness for changes of students, in particular the indicators of the Passion and Confidence scales, and the indicator of the scale "I am" of completeness of life, indicates the resource potential of self-worth for achievement of their professional success, and hence demonstrates possible directions for optimising this process. The importance of a positive psychological position for this process is confirmed by the direct correlation between indicators of completeness of life, in particular the scale "What life" and the general index of meaningful life reference of students and between indicators of the scale "What life" and the scale "Process of life or other scale" and Emotional Saturation of Life, Scales of Life Effect or Satisfaction with Self-Realization, Scales of Locus of Self Control. The inverse correlation between the completeness indicators and the scripted settings allowed the authors to highlight the psychological barriers to forming a positive attitude towards oneself, others, and one's life, which is important in achieving professional success, which need correction (prescriptions "Do not approach, do not want," "Don't Be Healthy," "Don't Be Meaningful," "Don't Be, Don't Live," "Don't Get Close, Don't Love." The prospect of further exploration is seen in the development of technologies of psychological support for the future primary school teachers during the reforms.

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